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To "Michela.Alioto-Pier@sfgov.org"
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"david.campos@sfgov.org" <david.campos@sfgov.org>,
cc "bill.barnes@sfgov.org" <bill.barnes@sfgov.org>, Sheila
Chung Hagen <Sheila.Chung.Hagen@sfgov.org>,
"judson.true@sfgov.org" <judson.true@sfgov.org>, Cammy
bcc

Subject anti-Israel resolution

History: This message has been replied to.

Hi Michela, David, David, Carmen, Bevan, Sean, Eric and Sophie,

First, please excuse the group email. As you have heard me talk about ad naseum I am leaving in a couple of days for Israel to celebrate my daughter becoming a bat mitzvah. I don't like excuses, but that is why I won't be here to meet with you about this anti-Israel resolution that you're discussing this coming Tuesday, and why time is such that I need to condense my communication to this one email. It is not an impersonal email, however. Trust me when I say I am putting my heart and soul into sharing my deepest feelings with you right now. As you know I typically prefer to address you in the formality as I discuss one client or another, but because this is about my life, not my work, I'm taking the liberty of addressing you as friends. I hope you are not offended by it, because I mean it in the warmest fashion.

Second, please excuse it's length. I can think of no way to keep this short.

As you probably know my greatest passion in my life other than my family is my people, and the degree of passion is so close it's hard to say one of them is stronger than the other. Because, frankly, my children represent the future of my community so these two passions are intimately intertwined. Israel is the heartbeat of my community and it deeply pains me to see it attacked unfairly. A fair question you should be asking now, is how is this resolution unfair.

You are considering a resolution condemning Israel for the May 31st incident off the coast of Gaza. Tragically nine Turkish activists died and many people were wounded, including Israeli commandos. I do not want to argue the legitimacy of the blockade (which, as you can imagine, I'm quite prepared to argue), nor do I need to articulate the fact I strongly believe Israel handled the particular situation poorly. Further, I am also well prepared to argue why Israel should have a right to defend herself and that she is in fact, defending herself, but that is not what I'm arguing here.

As with any life, I regret the loss of these lives. I also regret the need for Israel to have this blockade, I regret the lives lost and ruined by the thousands of rockets Hamas has launched into Israel, I regret the lives lost and ruined by Israel's actions against Gaza, I regret the lives lost and the brutality faced by the residents of Gaza at the hands of Hamas. As then candidate for President, Barack Obama said, "No one has suffered more than the Palestinian people at the hands of the Palestinian government." But that is not the issue here.

My greatest wish is the organization I'm so closely associated with, AIPAC, no longer needs to exist because we have finally reached a peace with two states living side-by-side, and Middle East countries more concerned about its citizens than whether Jews can have their homeland on this little sliver of

property. I can't wait for the day all AIPAC activists look at each other and say "what do we do now?" And this comes from the son of two of AIPAC's founders and the Chair Emeritus of AIPAC's Northern California Board. I will never stop fighting to see this dream realized. But in the meantime it is nothing less than my moral obligation to defend Israel's right to exist and defend herself.

While I regret the loss of life on the one ship (as you hopefully know five ships docked at the Israeli port of Ashdod and transferred its goods for delivery to Gaza), I also point out that many on board were waiting to attack, were prepared to fight, and were not on a humanitarian mission. All one has to do is see clips from Turkish TV and Al Jazeera. Forget the videos you've seen from Israel over and over. Watch the video shown with pride on their own TV channels.

This one-sided and ill-informed resolution condemning Israel is at best misguided, and at worse (and I hate to say this) virulently anti-Semitic. Why do I say this? Why do I make an accusation that I am among the most reluctant to make? Because Israel, and only Israel, always gets singled out for attack and condemnation. Where is the condemnation of North Korea for murdering 46 sailors recently? Where was the resolution condemning the Iranian President for standing up at the UN and calling for the extermination of an entire country (Israel)? Where was the condemnation of Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Turkey, Russia, China, Zimbabwe or any other of hundreds of places around the globe for the abuse and/or slaughter of hundreds upon hundreds of their citizens?

And to say that this resolution just reflects the UN is also a false argument for me. I assume if one makes this argument we are talking about the same UN who promised to stop Hizbullah from rearming only to watch estimates of at least 40,000 rockets be shipped from Iran to the south of Lebanon all aimed at Israel, many of them able to reach Tel Aviv. I assume this is about the same UN who has also remained silent with regards to North Korea or any of the other nations I've mentioned plus more. I assume this is the same UN who allows human rights champions like Libya and Syria, among others, to have a seat on the Human Rights Council. I assume this is the same UN that stays silent as Hamas closes UN run schools in Gaza because they won't teach fundamental Islam. The UN has a long history of condemning Israel while staying silent on atrocities around the world, so parroting the UN on Israel is not a valid argument.

This resolution gives lip service to peace, and briefly acknowledges that Israel needs to "protect its southern region against rocket attacks from Gaza" (it actually reads that Israel is using it as an excuse but I have to find something that gives some consideration towards Israel) but other than that it is little more than an eight page anti-Israel screed. For examples it holds an openly pro-Hamas organization, IHH, as a representative of the human rights community and it takes the word without question of a flotilla participant who claims he was beaten six times by Israeli captors without offering one shred of evidence. I can go on and on giving you examples directly from the resolution, but this email is already long enough.

Had this resolution contained any context, any semblance of balance, any acknowledgement of the realities of the situation Israel is faced with, any mention of the far more egregious violations of human rights taking place all over the globe, it might have some moral leg to stand on. But it doesn't.

Israel, and only Israel, always gets singled out for condemnation. And I'm not talking about criticizing a particular government's policies or actions. I criticize the Israeli government when I

disagree. Hell, Israelis criticize the Israeli government more than any other human beings on earth.

What I'm talking about is there is never even a real attempt to see if blame could be anywhere else. No indication there's even an acknowledgment that the governing charter of Hamas calls not only for the destruction of Israel but of all Jews everywhere. No mention that the head of Hizbullah once said he hopes all Jews move to Israel so it can be easier to kill them all. This is why I say when Israel is isolated for attack it can feel like anti-Semitism.

I hope you will take a serious look at this resolution and resoundly defeat it. It is wrong, divisive, hurtful and morally indefensible.

Thank you very much for your consideration. I look forward to seeing you when I return and hopefully be able to thank you again, this time for voting against it.

All my best,

Sam