

Prominent American Jews Embrace Kerry Peace Talks

More than 100 prominent Jewish Americans with varying religious and political viewpoints have thrown their support behind the Israeli government's decision to restart long-stalled peace talks with the Palestinians.

In a letter to Israeli Prime Minister **Benjamin Netanyahu**, the 140 signatories—including former Sen. Joseph Lieberman; professor Alan Dershowitz; philanthropist Charles Bronfman; and Republican Jewish Coalition board member Morris W. Offit—said they appreciated the risks the government is taking to achieve peace.

While not everyone in the American Jewish community supports territorial compromise with the Palestinians, the letter represents a fairly broad consensus that Israel must take some risks to reach a peace deal.

American Jews donate tens of millions of dollars every year to support Israeli institutions and programs. They also advocate on Israel's behalf on Capitol Hill.

The letter was initiated by the Israel Policy Forum, a nonpartisan American organization that supports a two-state solution, and it thanks Netanyahu for “embracing” the process brokered by Secretary of State John Kerry.

“We recognize that achieving a two-state solution will require a territorial compromise that provides for a Palestinian state without jeopardizing Israel's security,” the letter said. “It is our hope that (Palestinian) President Mahmoud Abbas will be similarly prepared to make the difficult decisions that achieving an agreement will require.”

David Halperin, Israel Policy Forum's executive director, said

the organization sought support from such a diverse group of Democrats, Republicans and centrists, and Jews from every religious spectrum “to demonstrate the broad base of support among American Jews for Prime Minister Netanyahu’s entering the diplomatic process.”

Senior Rabbi Andy Bachman of Congregation Beth Elohim in Brooklyn, N.Y., said he signed the letter because “as a Jew deeply committed to Israel’s peace and security, it is critical for both Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Obama to know that we support their efforts to forge a lasting peace. I spend every summer in Israel and my sense is that the majority of Israelis and Palestinians desperately want peace.”