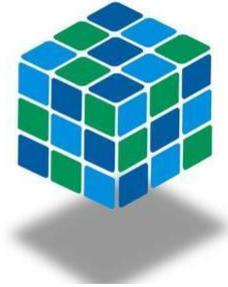


# מזרח תיכון חכם

www.smart-middle-east.org.il



## **ATTN:**

### **AIPAC**

Howard Kohr, Executive Director  
Richard Fishman, Managing Director

### **AJCommittee**

Richard Sideman, President  
David A. Harris, Executive Director

### **AJCongress**

Richard S. Gordon, President  
Matthew Mark Horn, Acting Co-Executive Director  
Marc D. Stern, Acting Co-Executive Director

### **ADL**

Abraham H. Foxman, National Director

### **Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations**

Alan Solow, Chairman  
Malcolm I. Honlein, Executive Vice Chairman

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### **About the Forum**

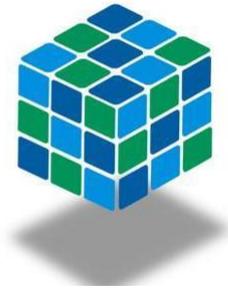
The **Smart Middle East Forum** was established in the course of the year 2008, with the aim of developing processes that would help create a different operational atmosphere in the Middle East.

The Forum took upon itself the task of dealing with the mode of operation concerning the processes taking place in the Middle East, rather than with their results. Its approach is based on change in our *modus operandi*, on creative thinking and on an understanding of the cultural foundation of this region. Another objective of the Forum is to bring about change in the decision-making process and in the way we deal with regional issues – and, at the same time, to reach out to public opinion in the Arab world through the regional Arab media.

The Forum has an advisory board comprising people from the fields of defense, diplomacy, academia and the media, who are engaged in a variety of subjects connected with the Middle East. The Forum's membership of 9,000 is drawn from all walks of life in Israeli society.

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[www.smart-middle-east.org.il](http://www.smart-middle-east.org.il)



Monday, March 13, 2010

Dear Friends,

The current crisis in Israel-US relations constitutes, for all of us, a wake-up call.

The unfortunate mistake, and the misunderstanding that came in its wake, during Vice-President Biden's visit to Israel were rectified in the clearest terms by Prime Minister Netanyahu: There had been no intent to embarrass the United States; what we are dealing with here is an extensive bureaucratic process and a poorly timed announcement.

Our particular concern stems from the fact that even after Vice-President Biden had, on the last day of his visit, indicated, in a spirit of good will, that he accepted the Prime Minister's explanation, the Secretary of State launched a pressure campaign that included a harsh and lengthy telephone conversation – the upshot of which appears to be that Prime Minister Netanyahu is expected to take some sort of action to “prove” his commitment to peace, presumably by canceling the announced building plans for Jerusalem.

Apparently the United States wants to backtrack on its understandings with Israel, based on a temporary freeze on settlements (not including Jerusalem), during which time the Arab states were to take steps towards the normalization of relations with Israel – something they have not done by any means.

The crisis that has been created is bound to bring about a radicalization in the Palestinians' position and will seriously jeopardize the prospects of moving ahead with peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians.

Even as unfortunate and poorly timed an announcement as this one cannot justify the treatment to which Israel is currently being subjected by the United States – and it certainly cannot justify jeopardizing the chances for the resumption of peace talks.

Eli Avidar, Chairman

Smart Middle East Forum