

RELEASE IN
PART B5,B6

From: Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>
Sent: Friday, February 4, 2011 7:39 AM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Letter from Livni

Fyi - just saw this email.

From: Shapiro, Daniel B. [redacted]
To: Sullivan, Jacob J
Sent: Fri Feb 04 01:01:26 2011
Subject: Letter from Livni

B6

Jake [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted] -- Dan

B5

Excellency,

Recent events in Egypt and across the Middle East have compelled me to write to you, on a personal basis, on a subject we initially discussed on your first visit to Israel as Secretary of State in early 2009, and subsequently at the Saban Forum last December.

While the situation is fluid and complex, and full of potential dangers for Israel, the US and others, I wanted to draw specific attention to the challenge and opportunity presented by the calls for democratic change in Egypt and elsewhere in the region.

You may recall in our initial conversation about this, I raised with you my firm conviction that truly democratic elections required a commitment by the parties running for office to some core democratic values. I discussed my frustration that in the case of Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon, the international community had limited its definition of democracy to the technical conduct of voting and failed to insist that those who sought the benefits of the democratic process accept its underlying principles as well. The result, as you know, was to give a measure of democratic legitimacy and power to forces that were plainly not committed to democratic principles and that continue to pose a danger to their own societies and to their neighbors.

I was encouraged that President Obama in his Cairo speech in early 2009 stipulated that “elections alone do not make true democracy”, as well as by recent statements in this vein from Washington as events in Egypt unfold. At the same time, my sense is this may be an opportune, possibly critical, moment to seek some form of international endorsement for a clearly articulated statement of principle that embraces this idea (before it is too late).

As I mentioned to you in our meeting, I have long advocated that the international community adopt at the global level what true democracies apply at the national one — a universal code for participation in democratic elections. This would include requiring every party running for office to renounce violence, pursue its aims by peaceful means and commit to democratic values, binding laws and international agreements. The legislation of most democratic countries (Israel included) includes parameters for participation in the democratic process, and it seems more than appropriate that they be given expression at the international level as well.

Such a code, if adopted in appropriate international fora, could guide elections monitors and individual nations in deciding whether to accord parties the stamp of democratic legitimacy, and signal to voters that electing an undemocratic party would have negative international consequences for their country.

The intent here is not to stifle disagreement, exclude key actors from the political process or suggest that democracy be uniform and disregard local cultures and values. The goal is to make clear that the democratic process is not a free pass — it is about responsibilities as well as rights.

A clear, US-led, international policy that supports democratic change but demands that those that seek democracy's legitimacy meet its demands, seems especially important at this moment as more radical forces in our region see a potential opening to advance their anti-democratic agenda. By casting these principles in universal terms, it would be clear that the intention is not to target a specific state. From my own conversations with international and regional leaders on this issue, I believe such an initiative would be well received internationally, included by countries in the Middle East who are reluctant to allow for democratic reform at least in part out of fear that it will end up empowering extremist forces.

As you know well, Egypt is an key strategic ally for both our countries and a critical element in advancing peace and stability in this volatile region. It is certainly appropriate to pursue the progressive development of democracy in Egypt, and elsewhere in the region. But this must be done within a

framework that protects democratic values and denies those that seek to use the democratic process against itself from gaining legitimacy or international support.

I hope you will consider the ideas expressed here as a potential way forward in dealing with some of the difficulties posed by recent events. I wish you much success in navigating what are genuinely complex challenges and welcome the opportunity to discuss this further with you, at the appropriate time.

Yours sincerely,

Tzipi Livni