

## UNITED STATES

**D1. PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA, SPEECH TO THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, NEW YORK, 23 SEPTEMBER 2009 (EXCERPTS).**

*Obama's first speech before the UN General Assembly laid out four "pillars" of international diplomacy: nonproliferation and disarmament; peace and security promotion (in which he addressed the Arab-Israeli conflict); ecological preservation; and the global economy. The excerpts below concern the Israeli-Palestinian situation. The full speech is available online at [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov).*

... I will also continue to seek a just and lasting peace between Israel, Palestine, and the Arab world. We will continue to work on that issue. Yesterday, I had a constructive meeting with Prime Minister [Benjamin] Netanyahu and President [Mahmud] Abbas. We have made some progress. Palestinians have strengthened their efforts on security. Israelis have facilitated greater freedom of movement for the Palestinians. As a result of these efforts on both sides, the economy in the West Bank has begun to grow. But more progress is needed. We continue to call on Palestinians to end incitement against Israel, and we continue to emphasize that America does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements.

The time has come—the time has come to relaunch negotiations without preconditions that address the permanent status issues: security for Israelis and Palestinians, borders, refugees, and Jerusalem. And the goal is clear: Two states living side by side in peace and security—a Jewish state of Israel, with true security for all Israelis; and a viable, independent Palestinian state with contiguous territory that ends the occupation that began in 1967 and realizes the potential of the Palestinian people.

As we pursue this goal, we will also pursue peace between Israel and Lebanon, Israel and Syria, and a broader peace between Israel and its many neighbors. In pursuit of that goal, we will develop regional initiatives with multilateral participation, alongside bilateral negotiations.

Now, I am not naïve. I know this will be difficult. But all of us—not just the Israelis and the Palestinians, but all of us—must decide whether we are serious about

peace, or whether we will only lend it lip service. To break the old patterns, to break the cycle of insecurity and despair, all of us must say publicly what we would acknowledge in private. The United States does Israel no favors when we fail to couple an unwavering commitment to its security with an insistence that Israel respect the legitimate claims and rights of the Palestinians. And nations within this body do the Palestinians no favors when they choose vitriolic attacks against Israel over constructive willingness to recognize Israel's legitimacy and its right to exist in peace and security.

We must remember that the greatest price of this conflict is not paid by us. It's not paid by politicians. It's paid by the Israeli girl in Sederot who closes her eyes in fear that a rocket will take her life in the middle of the night. It's paid for by the Palestinian boy in Gaza who has no clean water and no country to call his own. These are all God's children. And after all the politics and all the posturing, this is about the right of every human being to live with dignity and security. That is a lesson embedded in the three great faiths that call one small slice of Earth the Holy Land. And that is why, even though there will be setbacks and false starts and tough days, I will not waver in my pursuit of peace. . . .