



September 17, 2009

Dear Rabbis, community leaders and friends:

This month, Jews throughout the world will celebrate the New Year of 5770. Both Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur instruct us to reflect on our previous year and prepare for the year to come.

This past year, Israel has made significant accomplishments. Our scientists are unlocking the secrets of the human body to discover new cures for diseases. Israeli art, film, and literature received prestigious recognition from internationally renowned institutions. The Israeli economy was one of the first countries to emerge from the economic recession.

In spite of a year of many achievements in a variety of fields, these are challenging times for the State of Israel and the Jewish people. The direst threat to Israel—indeed to the Middle East and the world—is a nuclear armed Iran.

Iran's support for terrorism, its commitment to Israel's destruction, and its determination to produce nuclear weapons represents the most pressing issue of our time. Iran has repeatedly demonstrated its refusal to accept norms of democracy and civility. Iranian security forces killed dozens of their fellow citizens in the aftermath of the recent elections and Iranian judges routinely sentence juvenile offenders to death. Last month, President Ahmadinejad appointed an internationally-wanted terrorist, the mastermind of the murderous attack on the Jewish Center in Buenos Aires in 1994, as his defense minister. The president has publicly called for a world without Zionism and America.

While uniting against the Iranian threat, Israel also seeks American and international support in moving toward a permanent, sustainable peace. Israel will continue to reach out to Palestinian leaders without preconditions in the hope of realizing this dream in our lifetime.

We are facing a critical juncture in our history. The Jewish community must confront this unprecedented threat before it is too late. I urge you as leaders of the Jewish community to impress this situation on your congregations. It is imperative to act now, at the start of a new year, and to join our voices in doing what absolutely necessary to stop the Iranian nuclear threat.

L'Shana Tova U'Metuka,

Michael Oren
Israeli Ambassador to the United States

**EMBASSY OF ISRAEL
WASHINGTON, D.C.**



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