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October 17, 2023

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

We, the undersigned, submit that the Administration's response thus far to the ongoing Israeli/Hamas war is profoundly unbalanced and ill-conceived, and bodes badly for the vanquished, the victors, co-belligerents, and partisan nations in the longer run. With you and your cabinet members saying that there can be no military solution to the Palestinian crisis, only a political solution, you nonetheless are engaged almost entirely in pursuing the military buildup that increases the risk of miscalculation, especially without any ongoing negotiations.

Among other opportunities, we urge a very time-sensitive initiative. The time for humane diplomacy never goes away even with Israel's overpowering destruction of the Gaza Strip and its people. Given the conditions of bombardment, and the orders of the Israeli Defense Minister, "no electricity, no food, no fuel," nothing is off limits from being turned into bloody rubble – not even hospitals, ambulances, well-identified United Nations relief sites, electric networks, water mains, not to mention homes, apartment building, schools, and mosques. Everything is in a free-fire zone.

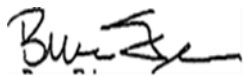
There needs to be an urgent pause in the interests of all the combatants and their allies. Use your influence *to arrange for a brief truce* (recall there was a five-day *truce* in 2014) during which there is a life-saving exchange of the civilians and soldiers Hamas took prisoners with the many Palestinians, including youths, who have been languishing in Israeli prisons without due process or charge.

This initiative would be greeted with wide approval, not just by the desperate families over the fate of their loved ones, but by those millions in the world looking for diplomatic leadership from the United States. This is not a time to hesitate due to who gets the blame when the hostages and their immediate guards lose their lives in the torrential release of missiles and bombs in all directions, including the deadly bunker-buster bombs being mentioned on their way from you to Israel. It is not about who can assign the most credible blame; it is about freeing people and youngsters on both sides and possibly tempering the wanton descent into annihilation that could metastasize into a wider theatre of warfare as has occurred numerous times in our country's history.

On the principle that none of us is smarter than all of us, please be advised of many sagacious citizens in the U.S. with experience and prescience who stand ready to extend their advice. We do not wish to have our President be associated with the extermination of large numbers of innocent children, mothers, and fathers while pursuing belligerency. Your mentions about Israel needing to adhere to the laws of war, (which include the Genocide Convention) contradict your unconditional promise that Israel has your back.

Do not be AWOL from an immediate striving through diplomatically negotiated exchanges to save the lives of nearly two hundred Israelis held by Hamas in areas vulnerable to violent indiscriminate explosions from air, sea, and land forces.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce Fein".

Bruce Fein

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ralph Nader".

Ralph Nader