

In a highly publicized speech this week, President Obama declared his belief that a potential Middle East peace agreement should establish borders for Israel and Palestine that are “based on the 1967 lines with mutually agreed swaps.” I believe this policy proclamation—which went beyond what any U.S. President has said before—was the latest verbal jab against Israel’s interests offered by the Obama Administration. It had previously been U.S. policy that the final borders contained in a peace agreement should come as the result of negotiations between Israeli and Palestinian leaders—not pressure from the United States or anyone else.

By taking an explicit position on the important borders issue before negotiations even begin, I’m concerned that the President minimized Israel’s security concerns with a return to the 1967 lines. Indeed, it is essential that Israel have defensible borders. Further, while I commend President Obama for spelling out several of the concessions that Palestinians will need to make for a peace agreement to be possible
— including that the terrorist group Hamas must recognize Israel’s right to exist

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I’m disappointed that he

[once again](#)

furthered a false notion that Israel is unwilling or incapable of making their own important concessions. The reality is that Israel has taken proactive steps to advance the cause of peace, such as unilaterally leaving Gaza in 2005, and is willing to make major concessions as evident by their peace accords with Egypt and Jordan. It is time for President Obama to begin treating that nation as a staunch ally that’s committed to peace, regional security, and democratic values.