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Dear Friends,

We are meeting together at a time when Israel is, once again, under attack. Fresh from celebrating the 60th anniversary of the birth of the state, we once again see Israel's very legitimacy being brought into question, with anti-Israel demonstrations around the world, public condemnation, and the familiar singling out of Israel for criticism.

Israel's actions to defend itself against attacks from the Iranian backed Hamas terrorist regime has been misrepresented and misunderstood around the world. And the events of the last months have also had an effect on our communities throughout the Diaspora.

We will be meeting over the next days to analyse this worrying phenomena, from different angles: the delegitimization of Israel, the threat posed by Iran, Durban II, the impact the events in Gaza have had on Israel and on our communities throughout the world. We will hear from Israeli President Shimon Peres, Prime Minister Olmert, Foreign Minister Livni and Minister Herzog, and from the leader of the opposition, Bibi Netanyahu. But we also want to hear from you, the representatives of our affiliated communities and organisations, of the concerns of your constituencies. But this is a time for action. We must return to our communities with a re-invigorated spirit to stand by and support Israel, and to challenge the misconceptions and misrepresentations evident in parliaments, press and dinner tables, around the world.

I am looking forward to exchanging views with you over the next days, and am sure that the world Jewish community will stand as one, and send a clear message of solidarity to the people of Israel.

Yours,

Ronald S. Lauder
President