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January 18, 2021

The Honorable James E. Risch
Chairperson
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
423 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Bob Menendez
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
528 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairperson Risch and Ranking Member Menendez:

In advance of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee confirmation hearings, we write to express the ADL's strong support for Antony Blinken to serve as Secretary of State. We believe that as a result of his deep expertise and experience, Mr. Blinken is an excellent choice to represent America to the world. He has a proven track record of professionalism, strong strategic and execution abilities, and he has served well and honorably in roles that prepared him for this one. We note also Mr. Blinken's deep commitment to national security, democracy, the rule of law, and fair treatment to all.

Confirming a qualified Secretary of State is especially crucial as the world continues to grapple with the worst pandemic in generations, along with the associated economic disaster, scapegoating, and violent unrest. In the wake of the deadly insurrection at the U.S. Capitol earlier this month, the world is looking for reassurance that America remains committed to our alliances, principles, and a responsible international leadership role, for example to coordinate a multilateral effort to combat violent white supremacy and conspiracy theorists. The combination of strategic ability to meet an unprecedented moment in history along with a steady head and hand at the helm is essential.

Of course, the Senate has a crucial role to play in raising important policy questions of all nominees. We certainly urge you to do everything in your power to facilitate such serious conversations, while also ensuring a timely process – and course, we sincerely hope with a maximum of bipartisanship and a minimum of political posturing.

I had the personal privilege of working with Mr. Blinken in government and can confidently attest to his integrity, diligent service, and meticulous care. His deep foreign affairs experience on Capitol Hill, in the White House, and at the State Department have prepared him thoroughly for this job, and I know he can be counted on to defend American interests, to support our allies, and to support vulnerable communities around the world against antisemitism, hate, xenophobia, extremism, and terrorism of all kinds.

I particularly appreciate Mr. Blinken's heartfelt articulation that "a secure Jewish homeland in Israel is the single best guarantee to ensure that never again will the Jewish

people be threatened with destruction.”¹ And that America “opposes any effort to delegitimize or unfairly single out Israel, whether it's at the United Nations or through the BDS movement” and must “never walk away from Israel’s security.”²

Iran will pose one of Mr. Blinken’s greatest tests in this regard. He has repeatedly emphasized the importance not just that Iran “retur(n) to strict compliance” with the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action but, crucially, that it must also be bound by “longer and stronger” prohibitions. ADL too believes such longer and stronger prohibitions are urgent and imperative. Mr. Blinken also has committed to strengthening the international coalition to “effectively push back against Iran’s other destabilizing activities,” which unfortunately continue. These include support for terrorism and widespread and virulent antisemitic and anti-American propaganda which remain hateful, violent, and widespread. As such they constitute a preeminent danger to peace or even stability in the region, as well as an ongoing lethal threat to countless lives of Americans and civilians and our allies in the region.³

By his own telling, one of the principles that guides Mr. Blinken’s philosophy of public service is the lesson forged from his family’s terrible experience of the Holocaust. That experience infuses his vision that America has a moral obligation to make the world a better place, to stand up against tyranny and to protect the most vulnerable from abuse and atrocities. He knows that when dictators and extremists threaten another Holocaust, that they need to be taken deadly seriously. And he knows America must rally the free world against such threats.

At this time of such difficult challenges, we believe Mr. Blinken is an excellent nominee for Secretary of State. We have confidence he will serve our nation with distinction.

We urge the Committee to act promptly and favorably on this nomination.

Sincerely,



Jonathan A. Greenblatt
CEO and National Director

¹ Jacob Magid, “Biden Aide on UAE F-35 Sale: Only Israel was Meant to Have those Jets in Region,” *Times of Israel*, November 1, 2020. (<https://www.timesofisrael.com/biden-aide-on-uae-f-35-sale-only-israel-was-meant-to-have-those-jets-in-region/>)

² Ibid. and Ali Harb, “Biden Will Oppose ‘Singling Out Israel’ at UN, Campaign Tells Arab Activists,” *Middle East Eye*, July 10, 2020. (<https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/biden-will-oppose-singling-out-israel-un-campaign-tells-arab-activists>)

³ For example, Antony Blinken, “Foreign Policy Choices for 2021 and Beyond,” Remarks at Aspen Security Forum, August 5, 2020. (<https://www.c-span.org/video/?474516-7/aspens-security-forum-deputy-secretary-state-antony-blinken>)