



Agudath
Israel
of America
אגודת ישראל באמריקה

December 15, 2011

BY FAX (202-456-2461) & OVERNIGHT MAIL

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Last year, by letter dated December 14, 2010, I conveyed to you the plea of Agudath Israel of America that you grant executive clemency to Jonathan Pollard. I respectfully take this holiday-season opportunity to renew that plea.

In my letter of a year ago, a copy of which is enclosed, I made several substantive points in support of clemency. In brief:

1. The exceptional severity of Pollard's life sentence is difficult to comprehend, particularly in light of the fact that it was imposed after a plea bargain, and that the country for which he was charged with spying – Israel – was and is a staunch ally of the United States. As others have pointed out, there is great disparity between Pollard's life sentence and the sentences imposed on others convicted of similar crimes.

2. There were several ways in which the government did not play fair in the process leading up to the imposition of Pollard's life sentence. The prosecutorial tactics employed in this case were inconsistent with basic tenets of fundamental fairness. This warrants your humane consideration in the context of executive clemency.

3. Pollard's lawyers' inexplicable failure to appeal his life sentence constituted a strategic blunder of tremendous proportion, as acknowledged by the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals in its ruling denying Pollard's motion to withdraw his guilty plea. Humanitarian considerations dictate that Pollard should not be made to spend the rest of his life in prison because of his lawyers' terrible mistake.

Each of these points is discussed in detail in my letter of last year, which I once again respectfully commend to your attention.

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At this occasion, though, I wish to add a simple humanitarian plea, one that reflects the overwhelming consensus of Agudath Israel's national constituency of Orthodox Jews.

Jonathan Pollard is no hero. He committed a serious crime. But he has already been punished severely. He has languished in prison for 26 long and debilitating years. His health has dangerously deteriorated. He is a broken man. He is remorseful for his actions. He seeks only to live out the remaining years of his life as a free man.

Mr. President, 'tis the season – to display compassion, to dispense generosity, to honor human dignity. Please, Mr. President, grant Jonathan Pollard his freedom.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Zwiebel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "David" being more prominent.

Rabbi David Zwiebel, Esq.
Executive Vice President

DZ/aa
Enclosure