

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 07, 2011

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chairwoman, House Appropriations
Subcommittee on the Department of State,
Foreign Operations, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member, House Appropriations
Subcommittee on the Department of State,
Foreign Operations, and Related Agencies

Dear Chairwoman Granger and Ranking Member Lowey:

As strong and consistent supporters of robust and reliable U.S. aid to Israel to ensure its security and qualitative military advantage, we are writing to urge you not to suspend or terminate assistance to the Palestinian Authority (P.A.) in the final Fiscal Year 2012 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Agencies appropriations bill. Such a step, we believe, would diminish prospects for peace and regional stability in the Middle East.

While there are many issues in dispute among U.S., Israeli and P.A. officials, numerous Israeli and American security experts have highlighted the direct link between U.S. assistance to the P.A. and Israeli security. Lt. Gen. Mike Moeller, the U.S. Security Coordinator for Israel and the Palestinian Authority, has testified that U.S. assistance and cooperation made the P.A. security forces a “trusted, capable partner for the Israeli security establishment” that “continue to conduct effective security operations and pursue bad actors across the West Bank, including members of Hamas”. The Shin Bet, Israel’s internal security agency, concluded that Israeli co-operation with U.S. trained P.A. security forces helped make 2010 the most terror-free year in a decade.

Maintaining U.S. assistance to the P.A. is thus in the essential strategic interest of Israel and the United States, independent of current policy disagreements. We understand the developments that have led some to call for a suspension or termination of aid to the P.A. As you know, the House of Representatives recently adopted with broad bipartisan support a resolution (H.Res.268) expressing concern about the efforts of P.A. President Mahmoud Abbas to seek full membership or an upgrade of status at the United Nations. We also remain concerned about the possible emergence of a Palestinian government that refuses to recognize Israel’s right to exist or to renounce violence against innocent civilians.

However, these legitimate concerns must be weighed against the essential role that U.S. assistance to the P.A. plays in providing security and stability for Palestinians and Israelis as well as critical humanitarian relief to the Palestinian people—and the potential consequences if this assistance were terminated. Simply put, the suspension or ending of U.S. aid could undermine the very foundations of a future Palestinian state, undoing the progress that has been made in recent years toward

strengthening the P.A.'s security and governance institutions. It would increase the likelihood of instability and violence, in turn threatening Israel's security. As the outgoing chief of the Shin Bet has warned, "If we, the Americans and the West do not give money [to the P.A.], there will be no Palestinian Authority – this is a matter for strategic decision making."

We therefore encourage you to ensure that essential U.S. assistance to the P.A. is maintained despite ongoing diplomatic disagreements. As President Obama has already clearly stated, the U.S. government will enforce all applicable restrictions in existing law regarding aid to the P.A. We also acknowledge that recent and future developments may warrant additional restrictions. At the current moment, however, we believe that a complete suspension or termination of assistance would be a serious mistake that would put near-term diplomatic disputes ahead of our long-term interests in the region, as well as the interests of our ally Israel. Indeed, as the outgoing chief of Shin Bet also recently stated, "As long as the Palestinian Authority remains in status quo, there is no reason to change our policies toward them or the security arrangements we have with them."

We understand that you face many difficult decisions at this time of great uncertainty in the Middle East. As steadfast friends of Israel and longtime supporters of Israeli-Palestinian peace process, we urge you to maintain the assistance that has been so essential to enhancing Israeli and Palestinian security and promoting stability and moderation throughout the region.

Sincerely,



DAVID PRICE
Member of Congress



PETER WELCH
Member of Congress



EARL BLUMENAUER
Member of Congress



BRUCE BRALEY
Member of Congress



LOIS CAPPS
Member of Congress



MICHAEL CAPUANO
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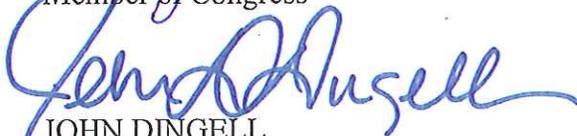
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Member of Congress



STEVE COHEN
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DANNY DAVIS
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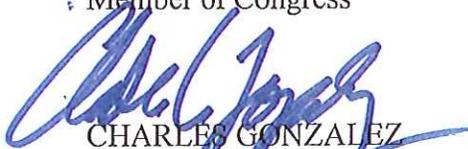
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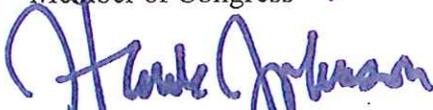
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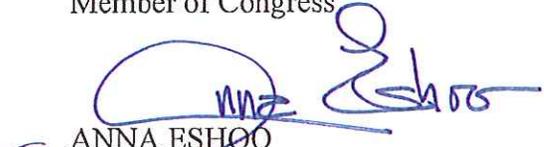
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PETER DeFAZIO
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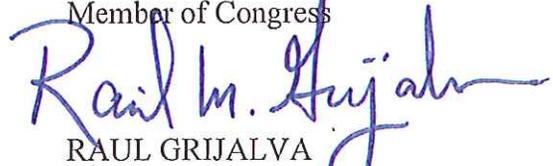
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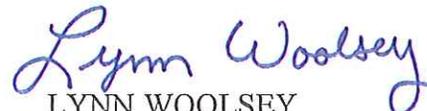
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Edolphus Towns

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