

Congressman Rothman: US was Right to Halt UNESCO Funding

Abbas Must Stop Statehood Bid at the UN and Negotiate with Israel

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 1, 2011

CONTACT: Aaron Keyak

office: (202) 225-5061

cell: (202) 905-6361

aaron.keyak@mail.house.gov

Washington, DC -- Today, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ), a member of the House Appropriations State and Foreign Operations Subcommittee, praised the decision by the United States to withdraw its funding from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) after UNESCO chose to admit "Palestine" as a Member State.

"This week, we were reminded that the Palestinians continue to refuse to make peace with the Jewish State of Israel, America's best friend and strategic ally in the Middle East, and UNESCO's actions lend support to the Palestinians in that effort," said Congressman Rothman.

Yesterday, the US Department of State announced that US contributions to UNESCO, which make up 22% of its annual budget, will be immediately halted, including a \$60 million payment that had been planned for November. "Following through on our promise to withdraw US funding for UNESCO is a good first step, but President Abbas and UNESCO clearly haven't gotten the message. President Abbas must stop his unilateral actions and reckless determination to undermine the security interests of our nation and the Jewish State of Israel," said Congressman Rothman.

Congressman Rothman has repeatedly urged the Palestinians to get back to the negotiating table and not unilaterally seek to upgrade their status within UNESCO or any UN body. Earlier this month, Congressman Rothman sent a letter to UNESCO which was signed by each member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations, the House panel that appropriates UNESCO's US funding. The letter, initiated by Congressman Rothman, urged UNESCO not to admit "Palestine" as a Member State. The letter warned and rightly predicted that "any recognition of Palestine as a Member State would not only jeopardize the hope for a resumption of direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, but would endanger the United States' contribution to UNESCO."

###