

Is U.S. Foreign Aid Supporting Terrorists?

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Teaneck AIPAC Members Discuss U.S. Foreign Aid with Rep. Rothman

Pictured (L-R): Federica Vallabrega (Rome, Italy); Dr. Reuben Gross (Teaneck); Professor Stefano Vallabrega (Rome, Italy); Donna Gross (Teaneck); David Schlusel (Teaneck); Ronda Weinberg (Teaneck); Dr. Mort Fridman, Vice President of NORPAC (Teaneck); Congressman Rothman; and Dr. Bob Goodman.

(Washington, DC)—Congressman Steve Rothman (D-Fair Lawn), a member of the House Appropriations Committee's Foreign Operations Subcommittee, yesterday met with a number of his constituents from Teaneck, New Jersey, who were in the nation's capital for AIPAC's annual policy conference. They thanked Rep. Rothman for his long-time support for strengthening the U.S.-Israel relationship, particularly for his efforts to secure vital U.S. military and economic assistance to Israel.

Additionally, Rep. Rothman expressed his concerns about recent news reports published in the Washington Times and Wall Street Journal highlighting instances of U.S. foreign aid being allocated to universities and media outlets that have endorsed or glorified terrorism. Last Thursday, March 9, 2007, Director of U.S. Foreign Assistance, Ambassador Randall L. Tobias, testified before the Foreign Operations Subcommittee. During the hearing, Rep. Rothman pressed Ambassador Tobias about the matter, but was not pleased with Tobias' response.

"Based on what I have learned, it appears that USAID has violated our policy against supporting terrorists with U.S. tax dollars—regardless of whether Mr. Tobias feels the 'letter of the law' was followed. I am unimpressed with his response to my questions and will continue to work with Chairwoman Nita Lowey (D-NY) on closing any loopholes that may exist," said Rothman after the hearing.

Rep. Rothman's statement and question to Ambassador Tobias follows:

"During your appearance before our Subcommittee last year, I asked you about USAID's work with the American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA) organization, which provides funds to organizations in Gaza and the West Bank. ANERA then works jointly with other organizations to complete the projects.

"Last year, we discussed two of ANERA's partners—the Al-Ihsan Charitable Society and the El-Ehssan Society—which are listed as specially designated global terrorists and are connected to Palestinian Islamic Jihad. In the follow-up to the hearing, I was assured by USAID and ANERA that once these organizations were designated as terrorist organizations, their funding was cut off.

"However, a recent article in the Washington Times highlights that, in fact, USAID via ANERA has been channeling more funding to organizations affiliated with terrorism. USAID has provided more than \$140,000 in assistance to Hamas-controlled Islamic University in Gaza, as well as \$2.3 million to Al-Quds University, which last month held a week-long celebration of the men credited with designing and building the first suicide bomber belts. This is absolutely unacceptable.

"Considering this alarming pattern of funding allocation, I want to know precisely what USAID's safeguards are to ensure that the NGO's funded with U.S. dollars are not connected to terrorists? If so, where is the oversight failure?"

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