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December 8, 2003

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Uses Position On Influential House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Foreign Operations To Obtain Military & Economic Assistance

Washington, DC - Vowing to continue to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with American's number one ally in the Middle East, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ9) today helped get the U.S. House of Representatives to pass a \$2.69 billion military, economic, and refuge assistance package for Israel. Rothman helped push the measure through the different legislative steps in the House using his position on the influential House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, which is responsible for allocating all U.S. foreign assistance.

"By providing Israel with \$2.69 billion, the Congress is demonstrating just how critical a militarily and economically strong Israel is to the well-being and security of the United States," Rothman said. "As our strategic military partner, ally, trusted friend of 55 years, and only democracy in the Middle East, Israel needs the support of the United States as it works to secure its people from Palestinian and other terrorists who seek Israel's destruction."

Rothman worked with his colleagues on the Foreign Operations Subcommittee and the full House Appropriations Committee to secure \$2.16 billion in military assistance and \$480 million in economic assistance for the State of Israel. In addition, the Foreign Operations Appropriations bill includes \$50 million for the resettlement of Russian, Eastern European, Ethiopian and other refugees in the State of Israel. The measure also continues restrictions on aid to the Palestinian Authority.

"I was very pleased to once again use my position on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, to demonstrate to my colleagues why it is in the strategic interests of the United States to provide sufficient aid to Israel," Rothman said. "While I am pleased with the new assistance the House passed today for Israel, I am very disappointed in the Bush Administration's decision to reduce the amount of the separate U.S. loan package to Israel based on how much Israel spends to construct a protective West Bank fence. Israel should not be penalized in any way for taking steps to guard its citizens from terrorist attacks."

These funds for Israel are part of the final spending bill for Fiscal Year 2004. The Senate is expected to approve the measure after the holidays in January. The measure then moves to the White House where President Bush is expected to sign the bill into law.

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