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Why Should the U.S. Fund the Palestinian Authority?

The Palestinians spurn peace talks with Israel and now plan to align with Hamas terrorists. Should we be sending them more than half a billion dollars a year?

Despite all efforts by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, the Palestinian Authority (P.A.) has rejected U.S. diplomatic efforts and a negotiated peace with Israel by unilaterally signing on to 15 international agreements. Even more alarming, the P.A. just announced a merger with the Islamic terror group Hamas. Currently the U.S. sends some \$440 million dollars annually in direct aid to the P.A., plus an additional \$225 million in funding through the U.N. Is this the best use of American tax dollars?

What are the facts?

Since 1979, the United States has expended untold diplomatic capital to forge an Israeli-Palestinian peace. Yet every time peace has seemed at hand—including the U.S.-brokered Oslo accords in 1993, and Israel's historic Camp David offer in 2000 of a Palestinian state with a capital in East Jerusalem—the Palestinians have refused to make peace. In 2008, following the Annapolis summit, Israeli Prime Minister Olmert again offered the Palestinians a state based on 1967 borders and a capital in Jerusalem, but P.A. President Mahmoud Abbas walked away without a counter offer. In 2010, in order to bring the parties together for new peace talks, President Obama convinced Israel to enforce a moratorium on building in the Jerusalem suburbs for ten months. For eight months, P.A. President Abbas refused to take part in talks, and eventually walked out. Now the Palestinians have again effectively ended peace talks with Israel unilaterally by seeking international recognition and a unity government with the Hamas terrorist faction.

In addition to its diplomatic investment, the U.S. has over the decades given the Palestinian Authority more than five billion dollars in aid. Today, the United States provides more than \$665 million annually in direct aid and funding through the United Nations.

Yet despite this generous diplomatic support and financial largesse, Mahmoud Abbas and Palestinian Authority officials have verbally attacked the United States and snubbed U.S. aid. In 2011, the Palestinian Authority announced a “boycott of the American consulate, its diplomats, and the American institutions in Jerusalem,” adding that Americans “cannot extort the Palestinian people and humiliate it with a bit of aid.” Referring to these huge U.S. financial grants, Abbas said, “This does not mean that they [the U.S.] dictate to us whatever they want.”

The Palestinian Authority did indeed reject requests by the United States not to form an alliance with Hamas terrorists in

By allying with the terrorist group Hamas, abandoning peace talks with Israel, and taking its case for statehood unilaterally to international bodies, it's clear that the Palestinian Authority has no respect for the interests of the United States in the Middle East, including peace with Israel. With today's ailing economy and soaring budget deficits, isn't it time for Congress to stop spending more than half a billion American tax dollars annually supporting the rogue Palestinian Authority?

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2011: President Abbas proceeded to seal that agreement anyway—though the deal later fell apart—knowing full well that it is against U.S. law for Congress to fund any organization with terrorist ties. Now Abbas has announced a new merger with Hamas, the faction that openly advocates the conquest of every inch of Palestine, cleansing it of Jews, and establishing a fundamentalist Islamic caliphate. Above all, Hamas refuses to

accept the state of Israel and condemns any efforts to negotiate peace.

In 2011, President Abbas rejected pleas from the Obama administration and the European Union to return to negotiations with Israel and refrain from making a bid for unilateral recognition of a Palestinian state at the U.N. Instead, Abbas proceeded to the U.N. and made his request. Now he has signed documents requesting additional recognition by 15 U.N. and other international organizations.

Time to stop aid to U.S. enemies. In 2011, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated that “We will not deal with nor in any way fund a Palestinian government that includes Hamas unless and until Hamas has renounced violence, recognized Israel and agreed to follow the previous obligations of the Palestinian Authority.” In fact, annual U.S. foreign appropriations bills expressly forbid funding for “assistance to Hamas or any entity effectively controlled by Hamas or any power-sharing government of which Hamas is a member.”

Both houses of Congress have already overwhelming passed resolutions that threaten withdrawal of aid from the Palestinian Authority if it persists in efforts to circumvent direct negotiations with Israel by turning to the United Nations for recognition—which it has done—and if the Palestinian Authority shares power with a recalcitrant Hamas. According to the chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, “Despite decades of assistance totaling billions of dollars, if a Palestinian state were declared today, it would be neither democratic, nor peaceful nor willing to negotiate with Israel.”

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