



Congressional Update

Roxanne Perugino
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I. Palestine/Israel

Anti-Israel Incitement by the PA. On November 2, the House passed **H.Res. 293**, a resolution expressing concern over “anti-Israel” and “anti-Semitic” incitement within the Palestinian Authority by voice vote. The bill was introduced on June 3 by Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Florida), Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa with 71 cosponsors. It is interesting that the resolution has only 71 cosponsor and that it was passed by voice vote. Usually pro-Israel resolutions are passed by roll-call votes demonstrating the overwhelming support in the House for Israel. Click here for a copy of the resolution: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-114hres293eh/pdf/BILLS-114hres293eh.pdf>

Prime Minister Netanyahu – backed by AIPAC – has made this issue a priority in his meetings with Congress and the Administration during his upcoming visit to Washington. Representatives Ed Royce (R-California) and Eliot Engel (D-New York) the Chairman and Ranking Democrat, respectively, are seeking cosigners on a letter (backed by AIPAC) to President Abbas blaming PA incitement for inflaming the situation on the ground and stating, “*Now is the time for the Palestinian Authority to take concrete steps to avoid further violence. This starts with a sustained effort to publicly and officially repudiate these attacks, ending the unacceptable incitement to violence emanating from Palestinian Authority officials and institutions, continuing important security cooperation with Israel and agreeing to unconditionally renew direct talks with the Israelis.*” The letter is the main action item on the AIPAC website with AIPAC urging people to write to their representatives to urge them to sign the letter.

Safety and Security of Jewish Communities in Europe. On November 3 the House passed **H.Res. 354**, a resolution expressing the sense of the House regarding the safety and security of Jewish communities in Europe by a vote of 418-0. The bill was introduced in July by Representative Chris Smith (R-New Jersey) with 89 cosponsors.

Support for Israel: On November 3, Senators Richard Blumenthal (D-Connecticut); Kelly Ayotte (R-New Hampshire); Ron Wyden (D-Oregon); Lindsey Graham (R-South Carolina); Michael Bennet (D-Colorado); Mark Kirk (R-Illinois); Patty Murray (D-Washington); Marco Rubio (R-Florida), Charles Schumer (D-New York); John Cornyn (R-Texas), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-New York); Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska); Ben Cardin (D-Maryland); Pat Toomey (R-Pennsylvania); Rob Portman (R-Ohio); and Dean Heller (R-Nevada), introduced **S.Res. 302**, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate in support of Israel and in condemnation of Palestinian terror attacks.

The Committee is likely to approve the resolution, followed by a vote of support by the full Senate before Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu arrives in Washington next week. Passage of the resolution is an AIPAC action item. The text of the resolution:

- (1) Condemns Palestinian terror attacks in the harshest terms possible;
- (2) Welcomes Israel's commitment to the continued maintenance of the status quo on the Temple Mount;
- (3) Urges the President and the international community to join in forcefully condemning these Palestinian terror attacks;
- (4) Declares that there is no justification for these attacks and that there is a direct correlation between the recent upsurge in violence and Arab incitement regarding the Temple Mount;
- (5) Stands with the people of Israel;
- (6) Supports Israel's right to self-defense and rejects any suggestion of the moral equivalence of Israeli security personnel protecting its citizens from senseless violence and terrorists intent to deliberately take innocent lives;
- (7) Supports the agreement reached to install surveillance cameras on the Temple Mount according to the arrangements to be determined between the parties;
- (8) Calls upon President Abbas to stop all incitement by Palestinian officials and by Palestinian media, to strongly and unequivocally demand an end to the violence, and to take all steps necessary to halt these attacks;
- (9) Expresses support and admiration for individuals and organizations working to encourage cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians;
- (10) Encourages President Abbas to continue strengthening and maintaining security cooperation with Israel;

(11) Reiterates that Palestinian political goals will never be achieved through violence; and

(12) Calls on all parties to return to the negotiating table immediately and without preconditions, as direct discussions remain the best avenue to ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

II. Other Legislation of Interest

Designate Muslim Brotherhood a Foreign Terrorists Organization (S.2230): Introduced on November 3 by Senator Ted Cruz (R-Texas), the “Muslim Brotherhood Terrorist Designation Act” would require the Secretary of State to submit a report to Congress on the designation of the Muslim Brotherhood as a foreign terrorist organization. The Obama Administration has designated several members on the terrorism list. Cruz, in introducing the legislation, claimed “Now we can reject the fantasy that their parent institution is a political entity that is somewhat separate from these violent activities.” Cruz also noted that Egypt, Russia and Saudi Arabia have described the group as a terrorist organization. The bill has been referred to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for action.

House members have introduced an identical resolution. The House bill (**H.R. 3892**) was introduced on November 3 by Representatives Mario Diaz Balart (R-Florida); Louie Gohmert (R-Texas), Randy Weber (R-Texas), Diane Black (R-Tennessee) and Mike Pompeo (R-Kansas). The resolution has been referred to the House Judiciary Committee for action.

Both bills, however, would not automatically designate the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organization. The bills express the “sense of the Congress”, which is non-binding language, that the group meets the criteria for designation as a terrorist organization. The State Department would then have 60 days within which to explain to Congress whether or not it agrees. Should State decide against designating the group, it would have to provide a detailed justification that the criteria has not been met.

Restrict Funding for Military Action in Syria (S.2239): Introduced on November 4 by Senators Tom Udall (D-New Mexico); Mike Lee (R-Utah) and Chris Murphy (D-

Connecticut), the bill would restrict funding related to “escalating” US military involvement in Syria. The bill has been referred to the Senate Intelligence Committee for action.

The bill, which the three senators first introduced in June 2013, would ban the Department of Defense, the Central Intelligence Agency, the National Security Council, the National Security Agency and all other intelligence agencies from supporting directly or indirectly any military, paramilitary or covert operations in Syria. The legislation would not affect humanitarian aid or intelligence gathering efforts.

All three senators have strongly opposed deploying American troops to Syria. They also opposed the Pentagon's failed \$500 million program to train and equip Syrian rebels, which the Obama Administration ended earlier this month. Udall, Lee and Murphy had written a letter to Secretary of State John Kerry and CIA Director John Brennan, urging an end to the program. Udall and Murphy, both members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, voted in committee against authorizing the president to arm and train Syrian rebels. And, as a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Lee authored an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act that would have prohibited this program.