

# PRESS RELEASE

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## AIPAC APPLAUDS FINAL CONGRESSIONAL PASSAGE OF THE PALESTINIAN ANTI-TERRORISM ACT

AIPAC President Howard Friedman and Executive Director Howard Kohr released the following statement regarding today's House passage of S. 2370, the Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act of 2006.

"AIPAC applauds today's final passage of the Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act, bipartisan legislation that bans direct aid and contact with the Hamas-controlled Palestinian Authority until Hamas renounces violence, recognizes Israel's right to exist, and agrees to abide by previous agreements.

"PATA, approved by voice vote in the Senate in June, was approved today in the House by voice vote. An earlier version passed the House in May on a vote of 361-37. The bill will now be sent to the president for his signature.

"PATA halts U.S. aid to the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority, but allows limited U.S. assistance to be provided to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. It also allows for the unfettered delivery of humanitarian assistance and the continued funding of important programs of support for the Palestinian people on a case-by-case basis.

"This legislation sets out a clear path for the Hamas-run government – end its support for terrorism and recognize Israel's right to exist and it will be recognized as a legitimate member of the international community. If Hamas changes its policies or steps down, normal relations could resume with the Palestinian Authority.

"Though many portray Hamas as a pragmatic group, its own leadership clearly espouses a radical position. Earlier this spring, Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh of Hamas said, 'We will not recognize Israel, we will not recognize Israel, we will not recognize Israel.' Additionally, Hamas spokesman, Fawzi Barhoum was quoted just last month, saying, 'We reject the two-state solution, which is the vision of U.S. President George Bush, because it represents a clear recognition of Israel... Our position in this regard remains unchanged. We reject joining in any government that recognizes Israel.'

"Hamas is a terrorist organization, whose involvement in the governmental process has not altered its stated goal of destroying Israel. Despite a ceasefire agreement brokered by last week by Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, rockets fired by Gaza-based terrorists continue to fall on Israeli population centers. Hamas members were also involved in the June attack on an Israeli military base along the Gaza border, which resulted in the killing of two Israeli soldiers and the kidnapping of Israeli Cpl. Gilad Shalit.

"Despite this, Israeli Prime Minister Olmert last week stepped forward to once again articulate Israel's willingness to take far-reaching steps for peace. In a major address last Monday, Prime Minister

Olmert pledged to work for the creation of a sovereign Palestinian state, living in peace with Israel and called for renewed dialogue and the cessation of violence.

"AIPAC commends the Republican and Democratic leadership of the House and Senate for their efforts to secure today's final passage of this critical bill. AIPAC particularly thanks the bill's House and Senate sponsors, Reps. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) and Tom Lantos (D-CA) and Senators Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and Joe Biden (D-DE)."

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