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AIPAC APPLAUDS SENATE PASSAGE OF \$2.44 BILLION IN U.S. FOREIGN AID TO ISRAEL

AIPAC President Howard Friedman and Executive Director Howard Kohr released the following statement regarding the Senate approval of the annual foreign aid bill.

“The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) applauds the Senate’s approval of \$2.44 billion in U.S. aid to Israel, including \$2.4 billion in military aid and \$40 million in assistance for the resettlement of refugees from the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and Ethiopia.

“The funding was included as part of the Fiscal Year 2008 (FY08) Foreign Operations Appropriations bill, which passed the Senate by a vote of 81-12.

“The U.S.-Israel relationship is the keystone of America's policy in the Middle East, and our enduring partnership with our democratic ally Israel is one of our nation's key strategic assets. Support for this year’s aid package sends the strong, unambiguous, message that Congress and the American people continue to stand firmly behind Israel and underscores the strength of the U.S.-Israel bond.

“Aid to Israel bolsters a reliable U.S. ally in a volatile and critically important region. As the lone democracy in the Middle East, Israel stands solidly with the United States in our common fight against terror and Islamic extremism by providing invaluable intelligence, sharing proven military tactics and contributing sophisticated military technologies.

“This year's package holds heightened significance as Israel faces new challenges from Iran's drive to acquire nuclear weapons as well as the growing influence of radical forces to Israel's south in Gaza and to the north in Lebanon.

“The FY08 funding represents the last year of a 10-year plan between Israel and the United States which phases out economic aid to Israel while gradually increasing the amount of military aid. This past August, the Bush Administration announced a landmark Memorandum of Understanding between the two allies that will, with congressional approval, provide Israel with \$30 billion in security aid over the next decade.”

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