

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Congress Boosts Aid to Israel *Locks-in First Increase Under New 10-year, \$30b Agreement*

AIPAC released the following statement applauding Congressional action boosting U.S. aid to Israel for FY09, by including the funds for the slated increase under America's new 10-year aid agreement with Israel in the Supplemental Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2008 and the Bridge Fund Supplemental Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2009, which passed the Senate Thursday night and the House last week.

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) applauds Congress for its approval of \$170 million in increased U.S. assistance to Israel – part of the Supplemental Appropriations Acts of Fiscal Years 2008 and 2009, ensuring the increase in U.S. aid to Israel, \$2.55b for FY09, up from \$2.38b in FY08.

Given the likelihood that Congress will enact a Continuing Resolution at the end of this fiscal year, keeping all programs, including aid to Israel, at fiscal year 2008 levels, leaders in Congress decided to include Israel's aid increase in the supplemental, in line with the first year of the new 10-year, \$30 billion security assistance agreement reached between the United States and Israel last August.

The supplemental funding bill includes \$170 million in security assistance to Israel, providing the increase in Israel's aid for fiscal year 2009 to \$2.55 billion, in line with our commitment to Israel's security under the new 10-year, \$30 billion aid agreement signed last year.

The supplemental also provides economic and security aid to the Palestinian Authority – aimed at strengthening President Abbas' commitment to reign in terrorist activities within the territories. Under strict oversight, Palestinian funding is aimed at improving economic conditions on the ground as well as security, political, governmental, and developmental reforms.

Speaking at the AIPAC Policy Conference on June 4th, Speaker Pelosi announced her intent to ensure that Israel got the full increase in aid called for under the new 10-year plan by including the additional aid funds in the supplemental, explaining "The bill recognizes...that Israel's national security is a priority for the United States and it recognizes the request for increased security assistance for Israel."

The U.S. commitment to maintaining Israel's qualitative military edge is the cornerstone of American policy in the region. The effort to secure this vital increase in American aid to our ally Israel could not have happened without the active support of the bipartisan leadership of the House and Senate and AIPAC applauds their effort.

With both the U.S and Israel challenged by ever intensifying pressures and mutual threats in the Middle East, America's relationship with the region's most stable nation and lone democracy is an increasingly vital strategic asset.

This year's package holds heightened significance for U.S. security interests, as the U.S and Israel face new challenges from Iran's drive to acquire nuclear weapons as well as the growing influence of radical anti-western forces to Israel's south in Gaza and to the north in Lebanon.

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