

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 20, 2007

Mr. Javier Solana
High Representative of the European Union
Council of the European Union
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat, 175 B-1048 Brussels

Dear High Representative Solana:

We are writing to express our appreciation for the efforts of the European Union (EU) to strengthen transatlantic relations, combat global terrorism and promote stability and peace in the Middle East. We strongly believe that given our mutual security interests cooperation between the United States and EU in these matters is crucial.

In the past two years, US-EU cooperation has yielded positive results in a number of areas, including joint counterterrorism operations, Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon and growing opposition to Iranian nuclear development at the United Nations (UN). As we continue to work together to help create a stable, peaceful and prosperous Middle East, it is more important than ever that the Quartet remain unified, particularly as it relates to the soon-to-be formed Palestinian unity government and the continued intransigence of the terrorist organization Hamas.

As you know, the leadership of Hamas and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas recently met in Mecca, Saudi Arabia and agreed to form a Palestinian unity government. While this agreement may reduce the ongoing violence between Palestinian factions in Gaza, it does nothing to encourage a peace process between the Israelis and the Palestinians, and it fails to meet the most basic conditions of the international community: recognition of Israel; a renunciation of terrorism; and adherence to already existing agreements between the Israelis and the Palestinians. We have deep reservations and ongoing concerns about the intentions of a government led by a hostile Hamas that rejects the basic premise under which diplomatic relations could be conducted and remains committed to the destruction of Israel. In fact, the Hamas leadership recently restated its unwillingness to recognize Israel, saying "the position of Hamas is well known: non recognition of the Zionist entity." Nor did it renounce, "the struggle against the occupation," their well known code words for the use of violence and terror.

Recently, the US Department of State announced that it is American policy not to engage with the Palestinian Authority (PA) until such time that it formally and unequivocally meets the Quartet's basic conditions. We strongly support this policy that precludes the distribution of American aid to the P.A. government until such time. As members of Congress who support a renewed Israeli-Palestinian peace process under appropriate conditions and moderate responsible Palestinian leadership that renounces violence, we believe that there must continue to be restrictions on American, European and international aid.

We were encouraged by the February 21 Quartet statement that "reaffirms past Quartet statements regarding its support for a Palestinian government committed to nonviolence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the road map." We greatly appreciate your commitment to a peaceful future for Israel and the Palestinian people based on a two state solution, and reiterate our strong reservations about the utility of engaging with a Palestinian government that opposes such an outcome. In that regard, we strongly urge you to maintain restrictions of direct aid to any Palestinian government until such time as that government fulfills its Quartet obligations.


Sincerely,



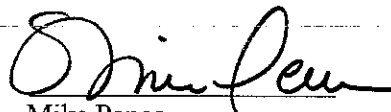
Robert Wexler
Chairman
Europe Subcommittee



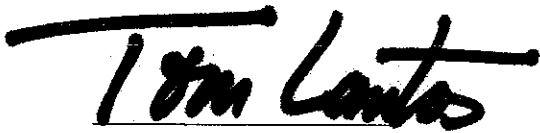
Elton Gallegly
Ranking Member
Europe Subcommittee



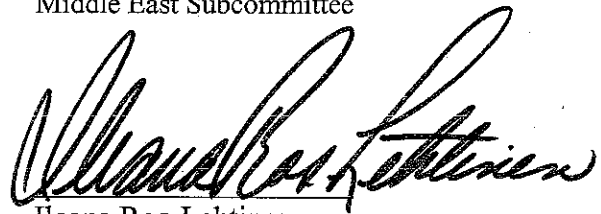
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