

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 22, 2011

President Barack Obama
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to express our serious concerns regarding the May 4, 2011 reconciliation agreement signed in Cairo between Fatah Chairman Mahmoud Abbas, who is also president of the Palestinian Authority (PA), and Hamas Leader Khaled Meshaal.

Under current law, no U.S. assistance is permitted to go to a power-sharing PA government that includes Hamas unless you have certified that such a government, including all ministers, has accepted two fundamental principles included in Section 620K of the Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act of 2006 (PATA), Public Law 109-446: (1) recognition of the Jewish State of Israel's right to exist and (2) acceptance of and adherence to all previous Israeli-Palestinian agreements. Similarly, the Quartet, comprised of the United States, the European Union, the United Nations, and Russia, will not deal with Hamas unless and until it accepts Israel's right to exist, commits itself to all previous Israeli-Palestinian agreements, and renounces terrorism.

In your May 19th speech, you noted that the unity agreement between Fatah and Hamas "raises profound and legitimate questions for Israel" and asked "how can one negotiate with a party that has shown itself unwilling to recognize your right to exist?" In his address to Congress on May 24th, Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, answered this question: "peace can only be negotiated with partners committed to peace." It is clear Hamas is not committed to peace.

Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh commemorated Israeli Independence day in May, by stating: "Palestinians mark the occasion this year with great hope of bringing to an end the Zionist project in Palestine." Soon after the agreement between Fatah and Hamas was signed, senior Hamas official Mahmoud Zahar declared that "our plan does not involve negotiations with Israel or recognizing it."

Hamas is the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, and is sponsored by Iran in all aspects of its operations. It is committed to the destruction of Israel and terrorism is the essence of its foreign policy.

It must never be forgotten that Israel's security is both the starting point and the goal of any peace process that the U.S. seeks to facilitate. The presence of Hamas within the PA, and the possible future presence within the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), as much as the desire by Fatah to seek an accord with Hamas over peace with Israel, is a fatal blow to the foundations of this process, both in terms of the trust needed for Israel to negotiate and in terms of the statutory limitations on U.S. taxpayer assistance to the PA.

As long as Hamas remains involved in the PA, we cannot imagine how such a coalition can meet the most basic requirements of U.S. law or the Quartet conditions. We therefore urge you to immediately suspend U.S. taxpayer assistance to the PA unless and until it can be certified that a new government and all its ministers recognize the Jewish State of Israel's right to exist in peace and security, accept and adhere to all previous Israeli-Palestinian agreements, and renounce all forms of terrorism and anti-Israel violence.

Sincerely,

John Bozeman

Terry Moran

Mike Johnson

Jim McClellan

John Hoven

Gregg Hays

Kelly A. Ayotte

Vean Heller

Lyndie Weicker

Susan Collins

John Barrasso

Tom Kuy

Pat Roberts

Clara Kim

Mark

Chuck Grassley