

113TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 177

Urging the Palestinian Authority and President Mahmoud Abbas to clarify a presidential succession plan, expand political freedom in the West Bank, and take preventative measures to limit the possibility of a Hamas takeover in the West Bank.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 23, 2013

Mr. ROSKAM (for himself and Mr. LIPINSKI) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Urging the Palestinian Authority and President Mahmoud Abbas to clarify a presidential succession plan, expand political freedom in the West Bank, and take preventative measures to limit the possibility of a Hamas takeover in the West Bank.

Whereas a democratic and strong Palestinian Authority is a key strategic component of United States foreign policy in the Middle East;

Whereas the Palestinian Authority represents the only viable partner for peace between Israelis and Palestinians;

Whereas Palestinian Authority security forces are critical to maintaining relative stability in the West Bank;

Whereas Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas' presidential term expired on January 15, 2009, and no new presidential election has taken place since 2005;

Whereas President Abbas does not have a responsible heir to succeed him in the event of his death;

Whereas President Abbas is 78 years old, a prostate cancer survivor, and a frequent traveler who was hospitalized 6 times in 2010;

Whereas Salam Fayyad resigned as Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority on April 13, 2013;

Whereas Palestinian Basic Law, article 37 states that, in the event of the President's death, "the Speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council shall temporarily assume the powers and duties of the Presidency of the National Authority for a period not to exceed sixty (60) days, during which free and direct elections to elect a new President shall take place in accordance with Palestinian Election Law";

Whereas the current speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council is Aziz Dweik, a Hamas member;

Whereas Aziz Dweik was expelled from Israel in 1992 for his involvement with Hamas and was subsequently arrested in 2006 and 2012 for his involvement with Hamas and "terrorist activities";

Whereas Hamas is designated as a terrorist organization by the United States, European Union, Israel, Canada, and Japan;

Whereas a Hamas-controlled Palestinian Authority would prevent any possibility of a two-state solution between the parties;

Whereas President Barack Obama has stated that “No country can be expected to negotiate with a terrorist organization sworn to its destruction. And we will continue to demand that Hamas accept the basic responsibilities of peace, including Israel’s right to exist and rejecting violence and adhering to all existing agreements.”;

Whereas the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2012, prohibits United States financial “assistance to Hamas or any entity effectively controlled by Hamas, any power-sharing government of which Hamas is a member, or that results from an agreement with Hamas and over which Hamas exercises undue influence.”;

Whereas a Hamas takeover of the Palestinian Authority would trigger the suspension of United States foreign aid to the Palestinian Authority;

Whereas the United States on average provides over \$400,000,000 in annual aid to the Palestinian Authority, which is used to train security forces in the West Bank, develop infrastructure, provide humanitarian assistance, and keep the Palestinian economy afloat;

Whereas these funds serve to promote democracy and human rights, economic development, education, health care, water and infrastructure, and prevent economic and political crises in the West Bank;

Whereas these funds assist in laying the groundwork for a future, self-sustaining, and viable Palestinian state next to a State of Israel with secure and defensible borders; and

Whereas the United States has a direct strategic interest in maintaining a legitimate political partner in control of the Palestinian Authority: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

1 (1) urges President Abbas to preempt a succes-
2 sion crisis in the Palestinian Authority by address-
3 ing the current succession plan, and by identifying
4 figures committed to the peace process with Israel;

5 (2) urges the Palestinian Authority and Presi-
6 dent Abbas to enact reforms to open the political
7 process through fair and responsible elections, en-
8 suring the freedom of speech, the press, and political
9 assembly and allowing a new generation of leader-
10 ship to freely express their views; and

11 (3) urges the Palestinian Authority to ensure
12 that officials participating in any present or future
13 Palestinian Government are committed to the quar-
14 tet principles, the recognition of Israel, renunciation
15 of violence, and adherence to previous diplomatic
16 agreements.

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