

PETER J. ROSKAM
6TH DISTRICT, ILLINOIS

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

CHAIRMAN
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH

SELECT COMMITTEE
ON BENGHAZI



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1306

2246 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-4561

2700 INTERNATIONAL DRIVE
SUITE 304
WEST CHICAGO, IL 60185
(630) 232-0006

roskam.house.gov
facebook.com/RepRoskam
twitter.com/PeterRoskam

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The Honorable John Kerry
United States Secretary of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington D.C., 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry:

I write to express my alarm and disappointment in Ambassador Dan Shapiro's recent comments about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) Security Conference in Tel Aviv, Israel.

Ambassador Shapiro troublingly questioned Israel's "long-term intentions" and openly cast doubt upon the seriousness of its desire to reach peace with the Palestinians. These remarks do not reflect reality, yet they serve to empower those who wish to delegitimize and marginalize the Jewish State. In fact, the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement consistently seizes on this exact type of rhetoric to advance its insidious campaign to destroy Israel.

These comments were delivered on the same day as the burial of Dafna Meir, an Israeli mother of six, who just days ago was stabbed to death in her own home by a Palestinian terrorist. Dafna's murder was just the latest barbaric act in a recent wave of over 100 terrorist attacks that have left dozens of Israelis dead and hundreds more injured.

As Ambassador Shapiro was wrongly castigating Israel on the world stage, Palestinian leaders were unabashedly praising Dafna's killers and further inciting Palestinians to continue the "Intifada of Knives." Perpetuating falsities and placing undue and disproportionate blame on Israel for the stalled peace process is a harmful distraction from ongoing Palestinian terrorist attacks, which, ultimately, make peace harder to achieve.

At their most basic level, the ambassador's comments are inaccurate. Since its founding, Israel has consistently agreed to painful concessions in the name of peace, only to be met with swift rebuke from Palestinian and Arab leadership.

- In 1979, Israel ceded the Sinai Peninsula – a land mass of immense strategic and symbolical importance to the Jewish state – in exchange for peace with Egypt.
- In 2000, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak agreed to a comprehensive peace plan based on the Clinton Parameters, which would have created a Palestinian state in Gaza and the vast majority of the West Bank. Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat refused.

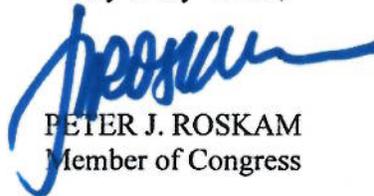
- In 2005, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon unilaterally withdrew from Gaza, disassembling entire Jewish communities and painfully removing residents from their homes. Hamas took control of the territory in a bloody coup shortly thereafter and used the territory to launch thousands of rockets at Israeli civilians.
- In 2008, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert presented Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas with a comprehensive peace plan that would have divided Jerusalem, evacuated many Israeli settlements, and granted the Palestinians territory equivalent to 100% of Egypt and Jordan's pre-1967 territories in Gaza and the West Bank. Abbas said no.
- More recently, Israel implemented a 10-month unilateral settlement freeze (2009) and released dozens of Palestinian prisoners with innocent blood on their hands (2014). These sacrifices were met with Palestinian rockets. Abbas, who just completed the 11th year of his 4-year term as PA President, reciprocated by forming a unity government with Hamas, a U.S. State Department-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization.

We have seen time and again that Israel is willing to make tough sacrifices and even assume security risks in pursuit of peace. We've also seen that a robust U.S.-Israel relationship gives Israeli leaders the confidence to make such concessions. American support for Israel in the Yom Kippur War of 1973 and the birth of the American-Israeli strategic alliance during the Cold War empowered Israel to make peace with Egypt and Jordan. Strong U.S.-Israel relations under Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush led to major Israeli concessions in the 2000 and 2008 peace offers.

As you know, Israel faces strategic and geopolitical threats from nearly every direction. Terrorist groups like Hamas and Hezbollah are well-positioned to benefit from our newly consummated nuclear agreement with their patron, Iran. President Obama himself has admitted that the more than \$100 billion in sanctions relief destined for Iran may end up in the hands of the regime's terror proxies.

Now more than ever, the United States must unequivocally stand with Israel, our strongest ally in the Middle East. Repeated public displays of disunity only serve to weaken our relationship, inhibit peace efforts, and incite further hatred. Ambassador Shapiro's troubling remarks are counterproductive and wrong. I encourage you to reject these misguided comments and reaffirm our unbreakable support for Israel.

Very Truly Yours,



PETER J. ROSKAM
Member of Congress