

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

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Dear Friends:

Thank you for sharing your thoughtful suggestions for U.S. policy toward Israel and the Palestinian territories. I appreciate the opportunity to discuss this issue with you further.

I share your belief that U.S. policy should promote the well-being, security, and economic prosperity of both Israelis and Palestinians. Like you, I believe that the futures of both these groups are interlinked, and Israel's best prospect for long-term stability depends on the successful implementation of a two-state solution. As you point out, we should support respect for fundamental human rights on both sides of the conflict, and we must urge both parties to take all necessary precautions to avoid civilian casualties. Just as Israel must take steps to enforce humanitarian law, Hamas and other groups must stop targeting Israeli civilians with rocket attacks.

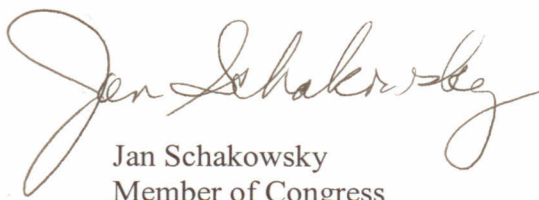
I also believe that both sides must live up to the international commitments they have made. This includes halting the expansion of settlements and removing illegal outposts. President Obama has made it clear that he will push both parties to meet these obligations, and I fully support him in that effort.

There are still many obstacles standing in the way of peace. I do not believe that a two-state peace settlement will be possible until the Palestinian leadership recognizes the right of Israel to exist. As part of any negotiation process, we must work to strengthen Palestinian infrastructure and governance systems, and ensure that an eventual Palestinian state is capable and willing to reign in terrorists and extremists.

We face a difficult road ahead for Middle East peace. We may only have a short window of time during which a negotiated two-state solution will be possible, so time is of the essence. I strongly support President Obama's announced policy of active U.S. leadership, and I will continue to work with his Administration, as well as my colleagues in Congress, to support efforts to establish a lasting peace in the Middle East.

Again, thank you for sharing your views on this important subject. Please let me know whenever I may be of assistance in the future.

Sincerely,



Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress