February 23, 2024

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Chairwoman  
H-307, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
1036 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart  
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
HT-2, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Barbara Lee  
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
1036 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Granger, Chairman Diaz-Balart, Ranking Member DeLauro, and Ranking Member Lee,

As you complete your work to fund the State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs accounts for the remainder of fiscal year (FY) 2024, we request that you include language in your bill that would prohibit the use of federal funds for the Office of Palestinian Affairs (OPA).

H.R. 4665 did a great deal to address the Biden Administration’s attempt to end-around the Trump Administration’s closure of the Consulate General in Jerusalem. The establishment of the OPA – widely viewed as an interim step towards re-opening the Consulate – reflected President Biden’s preference to have U.S. diplomatic personnel specifically assigned to Palestinian issues answer directly to the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs in Washington, D.C., rather than the U.S. Ambassador to Israel in Jerusalem. The Biden Administration’s intention in doing so is clear – their objective is to ensure the prospect of a future Palestinian state. Establishing a “parallel” diplomatic track with the Palestinians would move that objective forward.

Given Hamas’s war against Israel that began on October 7, US efforts that may indicate future acceptance of a Palestinian state are fundamentally incompatible with U.S. security interests. As Hamas continues to enjoy majority support from the Palestinian people in Gaza and an overwhelming majority support in Judea and Samaria, anything our government does to promote a key Hamas political objective must be rejected out of hand – especially as Hamas continues to wage war against our ally.
During amendment debate on H.R. 4665, the House unanimously adopted Ogles #40, as printed in Part D of House Report 118-216. That amendment, if signed into law, would defund the Office of Palestinian Affairs. While the underlying H.R. 4665 placed the OPA within the U.S. Ambassador’s chain of command, the existence or codification of this office threatens to encourage future administrations to use it in a manner consistent with its original purpose: the diminution of our relationship with Israel.

The Israeli government has repeatedly signaled its strong disapproval of any effort to re-open the Consulate General. Jerusalem is the undivided capital of the State of Israel, and any efforts to undermine US policy and alienate our greatest ally – especially in such times as these – should be met with strong condemnation.

We thank you for your consideration of our request and for your leadership on this Committee.

Sincerely,

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Andy Ogles
Member of Congress

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Bill Posey
Member of Congress

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Jeff Duncan
Member of Congress

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Scott Perry
Member of Congress

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Andy Biggs
Member of Congress