

Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky
June 3, 2011

I support the President's continued efforts to help Israel and the Palestinians reach a negotiated, two-state solution.

The President's recent speech reflects long-standing U.S. policy. He reaffirmed that direct negotiations are the only way to a solution, and he called on the Palestinians to return to negotiations and halt efforts to declare a state unilaterally. He emphasized the ongoing U.S. commitment to Israel's security, calling it "unshakeable." And he stated that the United States will continue to work to oppose efforts to single Israel out for criticism in international forums.

The President also stated that negotiations must be based on the "1967 lines with mutually agreed swaps." He did not, as some critics have suggested, argue that Israel should be forced to revert to the 1967 borders. Nor did he state that the United States would, in any way, dictate terms of a peace agreement. The idea that a peace agreement will ultimately be based on the 1967 borders with land-swaps has long been accepted by the parties and does not represent a departure from previous U.S. policy.

As the President stated in his speech, I strongly believe that a negotiated, two-state solution offer the best prospect for peace, security, and prosperity for all residents of the region, Israeli and Palestinian alike. I applaud the President's commitment to encouraging the Palestinians to return to the negotiating table, and to helping our Israeli allies reach a long-term peace agreement that provides the security Israel's citizens want and deserve.

The Palestinians must now halt efforts to evade negotiations by appealing to the United Nations. They must return to talks with Israel. And they must make clear that, despite ongoing reconciliation efforts between the Palestinian Authority and Hamas, no group that refuses to accept the Quartet Principles – renouncing violence, recognizing Israel, and abiding by previous Israeli-Palestinian agreements – can be part of a Palestinian government.

I will continue to work with President Obama's administration, and with my colleagues in

Congress, in support of a two-state solution that will bring peace to the region and security for Israel. The terms of such a deal cannot and will not be imposed from the outside, but the United States can and should continue to support Israeli efforts to negotiate a lasting and secure peace.

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