

## Rothman Meets with Jordan's King Abdullah to Discuss Israel-Jordan Relations, War on Terrorism, & Ov

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Jordan's Role in the Middle East  
By Congressman Steve Rothman

"If Israel is ever going to achieve lasting peace with the Palestinians, it is clear that it will need the support of moderate Arab countries to encourage the Palestinians to give up violence as a means to securing their own state. Perhaps no other Arab country will be more important than Jordan to this process. Due to the great strides that Jordan has made in achieving political, economic, and social reforms, its integration of members of its Palestinian population into Jordanian society, and its fight against terrorism, while maintaining peace with Israel, Jordan has proven that it can contribute much to long-term peace in the Middle East.

"Last week, several of my House colleagues and I were fortunate to have a lunch meeting in the U.S. Capitol with Jordan's King Abdullah. It was an opportunity to hear directly from Jordan's leader on what he feels is his country's role in the region and have him present the state of Jordan's political, economic, and social reforms already achieved and those underway. We also received a frank update on Jordan's current relations with Israel, the Palestinians, the conflict in Iraq, the global fight against terrorism, and threats from various unfriendly regimes in the region.

"This was my second face-to-face meeting with King Abdullah in the last two years. I was, again, very impressed with the King's efforts in supporting peace between Israel and her neighbors and in cooperating with the United States in fighting terrorism. His Majesty clearly recognizes that Israel is the United States' number one ally in the Middle East and that it is in Jordan's interest to support Israel's efforts to live in peace in the Middle East in order for his country to continue to have a strong relationship with the U.S., as well as to make its own progress. King Abdullah also discussed his nation's cooperation on sensitive matters with countries in the region, as well as Jordan's ongoing collaboration with the United States in training up to 32,000 Iraqi security and police officers on Jordanian soil.

"Beyond showing itself to be a country adept at coexisting with the West and effective at its own homeland security and domestic reforms, Jordan has also proven itself to be a great friend to both Israel and the United States on issues of trade and regional security. Jordan is a trading partner with Israel in the bilateral Qualified Industrial Zone (QIZ), a free-trade zone in southern Jordan in which the two countries collectively produce textiles, among a variety of other products. Jordan also recently prevented the deaths of up to 80,000 people -- including American citizens living and working in Amman -- when its police force captured suspected al Qaeda terrorists who attempted to carry out a chemical attack against a number of government agencies and the American embassy.

"As a member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, I believe that if we are truly going to succeed at achieving security for Israel, as well as encouraging democracy in the region, which will stabilize the Middle East, bring freedom to the people of the area, encourage friendship with the United States, and demonstrate the benefits of peace and democratic reforms, then we must provide the resources to help strengthen those countries that are sincerely and successfully working towards these goals. That is why I proudly supported U.S. aid to Jordan in Fiscal Year 2004 of \$459 million for security purposes, economic development and military training, the fourth largest American foreign assistance grant to any nation. And, that is why I proudly supported a \$2.7 billion military and economic aid package for Israel-the largest foreign aid package the U.S. gave to any nation

"It is hoped and much anticipated that Jordan's peace with Israel, ties to the West, and successful economic, social and

political reforms will encourage other nations to turn away from their own leaders' iron-fisted rule by Islamic fundamentalist principles and towards peace, democracy and modernization. Such a shift in the region's political course will be of tangible, long-term benefit to the entire world, but especially to the United States and to our most important regional ally, strategic military partner, and friend of 56 years - the State of Israel."

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