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Funding For The State of Israel Will Continue To Be One Of His Top Priorities

Washington, DC - With increasing instability in the Middle East threatening the security of the United States and the State of Israel, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ9) has elected to retain his seat on the powerful House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations for the next two years. As a member of the Subcommittee which allocates all United States foreign assistance, Rothman was able to use his position to help secure \$2.7 billion in economic and military assistance for the State of Israel as part of the Fiscal Year 2003 budget.

“Securing the necessary funding for our number one ally in the Middle East, our strategic partner, and fellow democracy, the State of Israel, is one of my top priorities,” said Rothman. “It continues to be important to serve on this vital Foreign Operations Subcommittee to ensure that the State of Israel has the assistance she needs to provide a secure state and a prosperous economy for her people.”

Last week, the House Appropriations Committee reorganized itself for the start of the 108th Congress. New members to the Foreign Operations Subcommittee include Rep. Marcy Kaptur, Rep. Mark Steven Kirk, Rep. David Vitter, and Rep. Ander Crenshaw. In addition to Rothman, members of the Foreign Operations Subcommittee during the 107th Congress continuing to serve on the Subcommittee in the 108th Congress include Chairman Jim Kolbe, Ranking Member Nita Lowey, Rep. Jesse Jackson, Rep. Carolyn Kilpatrick, Rep. David Obey, Rep. Joe Knollenberg, Rep. Jerry Lewis, Rep. Roger Wicker, and Rep. Henry Bonilla.

The final portion of the Fiscal Year 2003 budget, which overwhelmingly passed both the House of Representatives and Senate on February 13, includes \$2.1 billion in military assistance and \$600 million in economic assistance for the State of Israel.

“Now that the appropriations process is completed for Fiscal Year 2003, we can look forward to beginning the Fiscal Year 2004 process. Among other initiatives, I will be fighting for the recent request by the Israeli government for an additional \$4 billion in military assistance and \$8 billion in economic loan guarantees from the United States,” Rothman stated. “This new aid package will enable Israel to continue to defend her people and reinvigorate her economy. As you know, in her 55 years as a nation, Israel has never defaulted on any loans or guarantees, or been late on a loan payment.”

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