



US Campaign to
End the Israeli Occupation

"We aim to change those US policies that both sustain Israel's 41-year occupation of the Palestinian West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, and deny equal rights for all."

PO Box 21539 | Washington, DC 20009 | 202-332-0994 | www.endtheoccupation.org

July 1, 2008

Representative David Obey
2314 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-4907

Dear Representative Obey,

The US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation, a national coalition of more than 250 organizations working to change U.S. policy toward Israel/Palestine to support human rights, international law, and equality for all, strongly disapproves of your action to include \$170 million of Foreign Military Financing (FMF) for Israel in the final version of H.R.2642, the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008.

As you know, the first seven versions of this bill—debated extensively in the House and Senate with dozens of amendments offered—contained no appropriation for Israel. Only in the eighth version of the bill, enacted by the House on July 19, did the appropriation for Israel appear suddenly. As the manager of this version of the bill, we strongly believe that you acted irresponsibly by slipping in this earmark with no formal amendment offered or opportunity for debate.

We profoundly disagree with your implication that Congress owed it to Israel to include this money in the Supplemental Appropriations Act so that "Israel would not be accidentally short-changed" if Congress enacts a Continuing Resolution (Congressional Record, H5667, June 19, 2008).

As you are aware already, President Bush's FY2009 budget request included \$2.55 billion in FMF for Israel, the first proposed increase under a ten-year Memorandum of Understanding signed between the United States and Israel in 2007 to provide \$30 billion in FMF over the next decade, a 25% increase over current levels of military aid to Israel.

Such a huge proposed increase in military aid to Israel has enormous implications for the human rights of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, for the fate of U.S.-sponsored talks to promote Israeli-Palestinian peace, and for fueling an arms race in an already unstable region.

Instead of considering the implications of this proposed increase in military aid to Israel, your action circumvented the normal appropriations process for FMF, thereby preventing a debate from even occurring. Moreover, by including this increase of military aid to Israel in the Supplemental Appropriations Act, you have willfully disregarded a petition signed by more than 350 U.S.-based organizations calling on the Appropriations Committee to hold Israel accountable for its previous violations of the Arms Export Control and Foreign Assistance Acts. The complete list of endorsing organizations can be found here: http://endtheoccupation.org/downloads/senate_signon_4_8_08.pdf

With the economy stagnating, gas prices soaring, and foreclosures mushrooming, you did a tremendous disservice to the people of this country by slipping in at the last possible moment an earmark for \$170 million in military aid to Israel, a country which continues to use U.S. weapons to prosecute an illegal military occupation and siege of the Palestinian West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip in violation of U.S. laws.

The people of the United States deserve, quite frankly, better moral leadership and fiscal stewardship from the Chair of the House Appropriations Committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Josh Ruebner".

Josh Ruebner
National Advocacy Director
US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation