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COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
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INFRASTRUCTURE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AVIATION
SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES AND
ENVIRONMENT

September 26, 2011

Middle East Study Group
450 North Civic Drive #304
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

Dear Middle East Study Group;

Thank you for contacting me with your concerns regarding the Israeli - Palestinian conflict. I have reviewed your comments and welcome this opportunity to share my views.

As a returned Peace Corps volunteer and member of the Armed Services Committee, I recognize the importance of a lasting Middle East peace agreement. The United States has a moral and strategic interest in a strong, secure and viable Israel. The special relationship between the United States and Israel is based on shared values and a commitment to democratic principles, and I support continuing that relationship. America must also work closely with Palestinian moderates to help ensure Israel has a partner in peace as we work together to create a two-state solution that is acceptable to both sides. A viable and stable Palestinian Authority is essential to achieving a negotiated, peaceful solution with Israel. The United States should seek to reduce Hamas' influence by giving aid aimed at state-building, strengthening institutions, meeting basic needs, and supporting the economy.

I recently cosigned a letter to President Obama calling for a reaffirmation of leadership in the Israeli - Palestinian peace process. The Israeli - Palestinian conflict requires a solution based on the two-state strategy which can best be achieved through the resumption of bilateral negotiations between the Palestinian Authority and Israel. The United States should be the principle convener and mediator while continuing to be friend and supporter of Israel.

Once again, I thank you for sharing your concerns with me about the Israeli - Palestinian conflict. If I can be of further assistance, feel free to contact my office in Walnut Creek at (925) 932-8899 or in Washington at (202) 225-1880.

Please be sure to visit my website at www.garamendi.house.gov

Sincerely,



JOHN GARAMENDI
Member of Congress