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April 9, 2021

Hon. Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C.

Dear Secretary Blinken,

We write to you on behalf of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, the nation's largest Orthodox Jewish umbrella organization, to express our deep concern about the Biden Administration's recent decision to send \$235 million in aid to the Palestinian Authority ("PA") and other entities that support the Palestinians. To be clear, our organization does not absolutely oppose U.S. aid to the PA that serves humanitarian needs, bolsters security cooperation between Palestinians and Israelis, and advances the prospects for peace. But we do oppose U.S. aid that undermines those very goals and supports Palestinian intransigence and anti-Israel animus.

The financial aid announced this week will in part go to funding the United Nations Relief and Works Agency ("UNRWA"), an organization that has proven to utilize curriculums and textbooks that are anti-Semitic and anti-Israel. The many problems with UNRWA have been well-documented by government agencies and research groups. The State Department itself has reported to Congress the issues they identified with UNRWA textbooks, including for example, the fact that the textbooks include maps that exclude Israel. Moreover, a GAO report (GAO-18-227C) recently demonstrated that the State Department's reports to Congress were incomplete and that they failed to report certain details of their evaluations.

Another reason we object to this funding is that it violates key aspects of the Taylor Force Act ("TFA"). As you know, the bipartisan TFA legislation halted aid to the Palestinian Authority until it stops its longtime system of financial rewards and incentives for terrorism codified in Palestinian law. This legislation was signed into law on March 23, 2018. In the years that followed, the State Department was unable to certify that the PA took the necessary steps to change their behavior, and therefore did not provide U.S. aid.

Indeed, the Biden Administration's most recent report to Congress pursuant to the TFA concluded that the PA "has not terminated payments for acts of terrorism to any individual [and] has also not taken proactive steps to counter incitement to violence against Israel." Thus, the just announced resumption of U.S. funding to the PA is effectively in violation of the Taylor Force Act.

We urge you reconsider sending American tax dollars to the PA and UNRWA until the State Department can demonstrate to Congress that both entities have made fundamental changes in their behavior and indeed have laid the groundwork for peace and security.

Respectfully,
Rabbi Moshe Hauer Mr. Jerry Wolasky Mr. Nathan Diament

cc: Deputy Asst. Sec. Hady Amr