

(WASHINGTON)— Congressman Allen West (FL-22) will meet with Palestinian National Authority President Mahmoud Abbas tomorrow morning to discuss policies in the Middle East and America's strongest ally, the State of Israel.

The meeting is part of a seven day trip to Israel and the West Bank with members of the freshman class of the House of Representatives to reinforce the common bonds of freedom, liberty, democracy, and America's support for the nation.

During the meeting with President Abbas, Congressman West will discuss his concerns that Palestinian leadership continues to be the major obstacle towards achieving peace with Israel since discussions of a two-state solution were initiated earlier this year.

"Former Prime Minister Arafat, in the words of Abba Eban in 1973, 'never missed an opportunity to miss an opportunity.' I sincerely hope President Mahmoud Abbas will not follow in his predecessor's example," West said. "I will encourage him to rise above rhetoric to act in the best interest of the Palestinian people."

During the meeting, Congressman West will:

- Discuss his belief that Palestinian leadership must disavow itself from Hamas, a terrorist organization responsible for the deaths of thousands of Israelis and whose charter calls for the destruction of Israel and the Jewish people. "Palestinian leaders must take appropriate measures to counter the incitement to violence and fulfill all prior Palestinian commitments, including dismantling the terrorist infrastructure that is embodied with Hamas," West said.
- Encourage Palestinian leadership to seek a legitimate peace with Israel and formally recognize the right of the Jewish State of Israel to exist. Congressman West will reinforce Prime Minister Netanyahu's statement, "There will not be peace until we have a dedicated peace partner."

- Discuss recent reports indicating the United Nations may consider a resolution to welcome the state of Palestine to become a member, including territories of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem. West will reinforce the fact that parts of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem have been controlled and settled by the State of Israel for more than four decades. "In any two-state solution supported by Israel, and traditionally the United States, parts of the West Bank and East Jerusalem must belong to Israel," West said.

- Emphasize his belief that unilateral recognition of a Palestinian state through the United Nations General Assembly is the wrong course of action. Congressman West will encourage Palestinian leadership to cease all efforts at circumventing the negotiation process through a unilateral declaration of statehood.

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