

International Fund for Israel Palestinian Peace

Mission:

- An International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace would provide an expert presence on the ground, which will take a strategic long-term approach to scale up grassroots peace-building and leverage international donor support.

Rationale:

- There is currently no strategic, systematic plan for funding the efforts to build the constituencies necessary for a peace deal.
- A systemic approach to dealing with the mistrust and fear of the other is an essential part of any successful international strategy, alongside the important work in the political, humanitarian and economic realms.
- While the majority of Israelis and Palestinians support a two-state solution, these same majorities believe that they are minorities within their own societies and that the other society does not support two states. A majority on both sides also believes the other population has the intention to kill them or throw them off the land.

Proposed Structure:

- Participants likely include: the United States, European Union, the international community (such as Canada, Japan and some Arab nations), and the private sector.
- The Fund would provide a total of \$200 million in multilateral funding per year to peace and reconciliation programs in the Middle East, significantly scaling the current \$10 million in U.S. funding and modest European Union (5 million Euro) funding.
- The Fund would be an independent international institution, with professional grant making staff, board, and representation and oversight from donor nations.

Bill in Support of Fund:

- The bill has bipartisanship co-sponsorship by Representatives Fortenberry (R-NE) and Crowley (D-NY) in the House.
- The bill urges the President to make every effort to establish a non-political, mutually acceptable International Fund to “promote and support contact, cooperation, dialogue, shared community building, peaceful coexistence, joint economic development, and reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians.”
- The bill calls for the United States to contribute \$50,000,000 to the International Fund and appoint two representatives to the Board of the International Fund

Historical Precedent: Following the Anglo-Irish agreement in 1986, the international community, led by the U.S. and the Commonwealth, came together to form the International Fund for Ireland (IFI), a multi-lateral approach that focused on building capacity, shared spaces and reconciliation between Catholics and Protestants. Between 1986 and 2010 (when the U.S. stopped funding the IFI), the fund distributed over a billion dollars to these efforts and led to the successful integration of the populations into the process.

- In 1986, a particularly dark time in the “troubles” in Northern Ireland, President Ronald Reagan and House Speaker Tip O’Neill came together in bipartisan fashion to propose and support United States participation in the IFI.
- The organizations supported by the IFI effectively reduced conflict and contributed to the economic stability in Ireland and Northern Ireland.
- Like the IFI, an International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace would provide a stable source of funding at appropriate levels to support on-the-ground programs that promote cross-border and sectarian reconciliation and build a constituency that will reinforce an ultimate peace agreement.

Important Note: Whether individual members of congress support a two-state for two-people solution, or another outcome to the conflict, this bill is a necessary step to support shared society programs which is necessary to alleviating violence and tension and building the foundation for any resolution to the conflict. We should NOT get into the politics of the Israel/Palestinian conflict. It is very important this bill receives bipartisan support.