



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

DEC - 7 2015

The Honorable
Patrick J. Leahy
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,
and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I write to you today to request the inclusion of limited, UNESCO-specific waiver language in the fiscal year 2016 appropriations bill that would allow the United States to restore U.S. funding for UNESCO. We request that funding in FY 2016 also be included to enable payment of our yearly contribution of \$76 million as well as authority to transfer up to \$160 million to pay part of the arrears which currently total \$377 million. I am attaching proposals for your consideration.

Secretary Kerry met with Prime Minister Netanyahu last week and he informed the Secretary that he does not oppose a UNESCO-specific waiver at this time. The Prime Minister has subsequently confirmed that view and Israel's Embassy in Washington has conveyed it to relevant Congressional offices. U.S. leadership in UNESCO is critical in combating anti-Israeli bias, as was seen at the most recent Executive Board meeting in October where the United States was able to walk back the most odious elements of a resolution related to Temple Mount and secure more "no" votes than is usual on such resolutions.

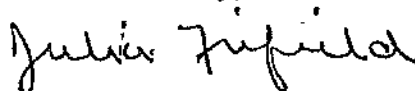
However, the failure to resolve our arrears issue is weakening our role at UNESCO. Our inability to pay our dues has lessened our clout in the organization and hampered our ability to safeguard both U.S. and Israeli interests.

We believe that limiting the waiver to UNESCO, as opposed to a broader waiver we had previously pursued, would help address concerns, and any waiver would cease to have effect if the Palestinians subsequently obtained the same standing as member states in the UN or in other specialized agencies outside an agreement negotiated between Israel and the Palestinians.

We look forward to working together to find a solution that allows the Secretary to waive the applicable restrictions so that the United States can pay our contributions and fully participate in an organization in the UN system in a manner that serves our national interests.

We hope this information is useful to you. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Julia Frifield".

Julia Frifield
Assistant Secretary
Legislative Affairs

Enclosure:

As stated.

Proposed waiver:

The Secretary of State may, prior to December 31, 2016, waive section 414 of Public Law 101-246 and section 410 of Public Law 103-236 with respect to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) if the Secretary certifies and reports in writing to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, and the Committees on Appropriations that to do so is important to the interests of the United States: Provided, That the Palestinians have not, after the date of enactment of this Act, obtained in the United Nations or any specialized agency thereof the same standing as member states or full membership as a state outside an agreement negotiated between Israel and the Palestinians: Provided further, That if after the waiver is exercised the Secretary determines that the Palestinians have obtained such standing in the United Nations or any specialized agency thereof, the waiver shall cease to have effect.

Proposed transfer authority:

Of the funds appropriated under titles I, III, and IV of this Act, except for funds designated for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended, up to \$160,000,000 of unobligated balances may be transferred to and merged with funds appropriated under the heading "Contributions to International Organizations" in title I of this Act no later than the end of the fifth fiscal year after the last fiscal year for which such funds were made available.