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OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

October 31, 2023
(House Rules)

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

Israel Security Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2024

The Administration strongly opposes House passage of the Israel Security Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2024, a bill making emergency supplemental appropriations to respond to the attacks in Israel for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes.

As demonstrated by the President's recent supplemental funding request, the Administration strongly supports providing resources for key national security priorities, including aid for our ally Israel as it defends itself against Hamas terrorists. But rather than putting forward a package that strengthens American national security in a bipartisan way, the bill fails to meet the urgency of the moment by deepening our divides and severely eroding historic bipartisan support for Israel's security. It inserts partisanship into support for Israel, making our ally a pawn in our politics, at a moment we must stand together. It denies humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations around the world, including Palestinian civilians, which is a moral and strategic imperative. And by requiring offsets for this critical security assistance, it sets a new and dangerous precedent by conditioning assistance for Israel, further politicizing our support and treating one ally differently from others. This bill is bad for Israel, for the Middle East region, and for our own national security.

Denying humanitarian assistance to two million Palestinian civilians, the majority of them women and children, would be a grave mistake. A deepening humanitarian crisis in Gaza will also undercut Israel's security and regional stability. We have a moral imperative to help those in need. Helping Palestinian civilians in need is also in Israel's national security interest. The United States must provide urgent and sustained humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza to alleviate suffering and bolster stability. Conflict and extremism will be much more likely to spread, which will only benefit Hamas and other malign actors in the region who will exploit the opportunity. This bill threatens the security and stability of our partners in the region. A deepening crisis will undermine the possibility of Israel's further integration in the Middle East.

Moreover, the bill would create a dangerous precedent by demanding partisan poison pill offsets in return for meeting core national security needs of the United States. This bill would break with the normal, bipartisan approach to providing emergency national security assistance by conditioning funding on offsets, politicizing aid to Israel, and treating Israel differently from our other allies and partners. And that new and damaging precedent would have devastating implications for our safety and alliances in the years ahead. The egregiousness of this particular offset is it adds to the deficit and would help some wealthy individuals and large corporations cheat on their taxes. Congress has consistently worked in a bipartisan manner to provide security assistance to Israel, and this bill threatens to unnecessarily undermine that longstanding approach.

Bifurcating Israel security assistance from the other priorities in the national security supplemental will have global consequences. Humanitarian aid is critically needed to alleviate the suffering of civilians in Gaza, but it is also crucial support for innocent Ukrainians facing the brutality of Putin's war. It is vital assistance for people around the world who are suffering because Putin is blocking the shipments of grain from Ukraine – which was once the world's "breadbasket." Failing to provide supplemental humanitarian assistance will leave displaced and conflict-affected civilians around the world – from Darfur, to Nagorno-Karabakh, from Zaporizhzhia to Gaza City, without access to food, water and sanitation, healthcare, hygiene programming, and emergency shelter support and protection.

This bill also fails to provide the resources we need to bolster integrated deterrence and maintain peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific. Our allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific face an increasingly assertive People's Republic of China, yet this bill provides no assistance to address that threat. And despite strong bipartisan support for investing in border security as the President called for—including technology to detect fentanyl and hiring more CBP officers—the bill fails to respond to the President's request for those needed funds.

There is strong bipartisan agreement that it is in our direct national security interest to help Ukraine defend its freedom and its sovereignty, and protect its people against the appalling crimes being committed by Russian forces against thousands of innocent civilians – and against Russia's attacks against the Ukrainian people with Iranian weapons. We have seen Russian forces commit horrifying war crimes and atrocities. They have hideously used rape as a weapon of war, and they have kidnapped and forcibly separated thousands of Ukrainian children from their families. Yet despite that bipartisan support, and in contrast to the President's national security package, this bill provides no aid whatsoever to Ukraine. This is an urgent requirement—as Ukraine heads into a winter of unrelenting attacks on its civilian infrastructure, they need air defense to protect their cities and munitions to keep pressure on Vladimir Putin. Failing to support Ukraine at this pivotal moment in the war would send a terrible message to Russia about our resolve, let alone to the rest of the world. We know from history that if we walk away and let someone like Vladimir Putin erase Ukraine's independence, he will not stop there and would be aggressors around the world would be emboldened.

The Administration will continue to engage with both chambers of the Congress in a bipartisan manner to secure an agreement on the critical national security package transmitted to Congress a few weeks ago.

If the President were presented with this bill, he would veto it.