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*First CODEL to Meet with Netanyahu and Abdullah Following Start of Peace Talks*

Amman, Jordan— Tuesday, Reps. Rush Holt (D-NJ), Steve Israel (D-NY) and Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL) met with King Abdullah of Jordan. Earlier this week they met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The delegation, which Holt led as Chair of the Select Intelligence Oversight Panel (SIOP), spent Labor Day weekend meeting with key officials in Israel and Jordan. They discussed the progress of the peace talks with relevant officials and focused on key regional security issues.

Rep. Holt said, "As Israelis celebrate Rosh Hashanah - a time for reflection and a time for looking ahead to a good and peaceful year - this is new moment in the peace process. Our meetings with Prime Minister Netanyahu and King Abdullah were instructive. Prime Minister Netanyahu sees this as a critical time and believes that he is in a unique position to achieve a

negotiated peace that will preserve the security of Israel. He rightfully says that both he and President Abbas must challenge their constituencies if the negotiations are to succeed. King Abdullah has made clear that success will require commitment from other countries in the region, and he is working arduously with several others to gain cooperation. Having led this Intelligence Panel visit, I will continue to support the efforts to secure a just, permanent, and peaceful settlement that both guarantees Israel's security and establishes a viable Palestinian state."

Rep. Israel said, "After meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu and King Abdullah, I know we may be at a historic moment for peace in the Middle East. But I also know we have been here before, that Israel has taken risks before, and that the Palestinian leadership has fallen short before. It will take courage and leadership and particularly the positive cooperation of other Arab governments. The next few weeks will test that. And I will continue to help lead support for Israel so that it may make whatever decisions it feels it should for its long term security and peace."

Rep. Wasserman Schultz said, "Our discussions with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and King Abdullah of Jordan followed the opening of direct peace talks between the Israelis and the Palestinians and highlighted the challenges ahead and the hope that a lasting peace can be negotiated. The path to peace will be far more clear if it isn't complicated by preconditions for negotiations. There are both short term and long term obstacles, but it was clear from our meetings that there is a great deal of determination and sincerity on both sides. Prime Minister Netanyahu and King Abdullah stressed that in order to achieve peace, the U.S. role in assisting the Israeli and Palestinian leaders is critical. Our delegation conveyed our commitment to doing everything we can to assist them in this historic endeavor."

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