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11 Shvat 5779  
January 18, 2019

Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi  
The Speaker of the House of Representatives  
1235 Longworth H.O.B.  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Madam Speaker,

We write to express our alarm, dismay and outrage at your elevation of Freshman Representative Ilhan Omar to the House Foreign Affairs Committee. This decision runs contrary to the values of tolerance and equality to which the Democratic Party and your office have always been committed.

In 2012, as Israel defended itself against an expressly genocidal army which fired thousands of missiles at civilians, Ilhan Omar declared: "Israel has hypnotized the world, may Allah awaken the people and help them see the evil doings of Israel." Rep. Omar voiced the classic anti-Semitic canard of a Jewish conspiracy to control the world, and said it was "evil" to neutralize Hamas terrorists attempting to slaughter children.

On CNN just yesterday, she did not disavow or regret these outrageous sentiments. She claimed that she did not understand why Jewish Americans would find them offensive, and said she was speaking only about how the "Israeli regime" conducted itself.

In actuality, not only Jewish Americans, but every decent person, should find her words offensive.

Madam Speaker, you know well that the word "regime" is specifically associated with authoritarianism, whereas Israel is the sole democracy in the Middle East. You also know that Israel had war imposed upon it by Hamas, which fired missiles at Israeli cities – at its hospitals, schools and kindergartens – until Israel was forced to respond. You also know that Israel immediately called for a cessation of hostilities.

According to the United States State Department, "applying double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation" is anti-Semitic, as is "justifying the killing or harming of Jews" and "making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews." Rep. Omar has done all three.

Thus, according to both the United States State Department and thousands of years of rabbinic knowledge (and cruel experience) of the virulent hatred directed against the Jewish People, Rep. Omar's comments clearly and obviously crossed the line into anti-Semitism.

The Republican Party responded to comments attributed to Representative Steve King by stripping him of all committee assignments – although he disavowed those remarks, insisted they did not represent his views, and voted in favor of House Resolution 41 condemning white nationalism and white supremacy.

The Democratic National Committee similarly, and to its credit, pulled its sponsorship from the Women's March after coleader Tamika Mallory refused to condemn the anti-Semitic statements of Louis Farrakhan.

Now, you have responded to the anti-Semitic statements of Representative Omar by providing her a seat on the Foreign Affairs Committee, from which a House Member with such noxious views of Jewish self-defense can do maximal damage to the special US-Israel relationship and the ongoing fight of the civilized world against terrorism.

To allow this appointment to stand is tantamount to saying that anti-Semitism is acceptable to the United States House of Representatives, and would be a slap in the face of every freedom-loving American who objects to bigotry against minority groups. We urge you to immediately rescind this ill-considered appointment.

Yours Sincerely,



Rabbi Pesach Lerner  
President



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