



MORTON A. KLEIN
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

The Hon. Nancy Pelosi
The Speaker of the House of Representatives
United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Madam Speaker,

We are writing to you to express our profound, even frightened concern and, indeed, our pained astonishment that you have decided to appoint newly-elected legislator, Representative Ithan Omar, to the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

We cannot believe that Representative Omar has been appointed to the Committee on the strength on any particular expertise or competence she holds in foreign affairs. We do know, however, that Representative Omar has a horrific and frightening record of viciously anti-Israel actions that amount to anti-Semitism as defined by the State Department definition of anti-Semitism as determined in its May 2016 document, '[Defining anti-Semitism](#).' Rep. Omar's hatred of the Jewish State of Israel renders her hopelessly biased against Israel, making it impossible to make a reasonable, rational decision on any issue concerning Israel and the Arab/Islamic world.

Far from marginalizing her, disowning her views and disassociating yourself from her, as you would have undoubtedly done were Representative Omar guilty of comparably vicious statements and activity and hatred against African Americans, Muslims or gay people, you have seen fit to actually reward her by appointing her to the House Foreign Relations Committee.

Your appointment of Representative Omar sends a frightening message that vicious anti-Israel actions and anti-Semitism is acceptable and, thus, serves to mainstream and legitimize anti-Semitism and Israel bashing, something we would have thought would be anathema to the Democratic Party or any respected American political party. The Democratic Party once included the proudest Congressional supporters of Israel, like Senators Henry Jackson and Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Hubert Humphrey. We frankly find it difficult to fathom how you and other Democratic legislators whom we have believed were friends of our important Middle East ally, the Jewish state of Israel, could have appointed her to a Committee which deals with America's relations with Israel.

Representative Omar, once elected in last year's midterm elections, [confirmed](#) to the website *Muslim Girl* that she supports the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement which, as openly admitted by its originators, seeks to delegitimize, economically harm and ultimately eliminate the Jewish State of Israel by criminalizing business relations with Israeli Jews. Here, Representative Omar is guilty of a bait-and-switch since, when asked the previous August during a primary debate at a synagogue to specify "exactly where you stand" on BDS, Omar then [said](#) that BDS was "not helpful in getting that two-state solution" without, however, telling anyone that she nonetheless supports it.

In short, Representative Omar is not only the first Member of Congress to openly support BDS, but she appears to have deliberately misled Jewish constituents on her position regarding BDS prior to last year's midterm elections. This is simply scandalous.

In a November 2012 [tweet](#), Representative Omar also made a statement invoking time-honored anti-Semitic images of enormous and malign Jewish power, saying, "Israel has hypnotized the world, may Allah awaken the people and see the evil doings of Israel." Challenged about this extraordinary anti-Semitic tweet in the past week, Representative Omar disingenuously [professed](#) not to understand how this statement could be construed as "offensive" to Jews.

In 2017, as a Minnesota state legislator, [Omar was one of only two legislators who voted against a bill](#) aimed at denying life insurance payments to any person convicted of aiding or committing terror acts. (The bill ultimately passed and was signed into law). Representative Omar did not offer an explanation for her vote when approached for comment in August by the *Washington Free Beacon*. The same year, Representative Omar voted against a [bill](#) that would bar the state of Minnesota from contracting with companies that engage in BDS — a bill which passed with large bipartisan majorities and was signed into law by Democratic Governor Mark Dayton.

In a May 2018 [tweet](#), Representative Omar labelled Israel an "apartheid Israeli regime," a statement that, on a purely intellectual level, is either knowingly false or astoundingly ignorant. What reason other than bigoted hostility can account for her accusing the only democratic nation in the Middle East, which grants more liberal rights to its Muslim citizens than any Arab nation, of being an "apartheid regime"?

These words and deeds clearly cross the line into anti-Semitism, particularly in Representative Omar's charges about the Jewish collectivity, the state of Israel, which meet the State Department's definition of anti-Semitism with regard to viewing the Jews as "conspiring to harm humanity," and feeding "the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions." Also, in Representative Omar's gutter criticism of Israel as an "apartheid regime," she is clearly guilty of what the State Department definition of anti-Semitism describes as "denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor." Also, in viciously defaming legitimate Israeli defense of its citizens from Hamas rocket barrages, she is also guilty of "applying double standards by requiring of [Israel] a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation." She also referred to Israel as a "regime," a term reserved for totalitarian, fascist or terrorist countries.

The ZOA was deeply concerned about Representative Omar's record during the run-up to last year's midterms as well as after her election, since her vicious and extreme anti-Israel positions were ignored almost entirely by the media. We asked at the time why no one in the Democratic Party had come forward to criticize and challenge her statements. Now, it would appear that her appalling anti-Israel record is not only being entirely ignored by the Democratic Party but, what is far worse, is being richly rewarded. What other conclusion is possible when the Democratic Speaker of the House appoints her to a coveted seat on the House Foreign Relations Committee?

We cannot understand why you have made this appointment. After all, you yourself have stated publicly that Congress must oppose BDS, and your senior Senate colleague, Senator Charles Schumer, has frankly described BDS as constituting "anti-Semitism." Are we to conclude that

these statements were hollow and that we cannot rely any more upon the sincerity of Congressional Democrats who profess to support the state of Israel and to oppose anti-Semitism?

Representative Omar's appointment to the House Foreign Relations Committee is a deeply mistaken, unwarranted, unjustifiable and dangerous development. We respectfully and earnestly urge you to rescind this appointment immediately and to publicly reassure the American Jewish community that the Democratic Party is opposed to BDS and extreme anti-Israel activism. Omar should be condemned and marginalized by fellow Democrats and others, not given important posts. Your actions will add to the mainstreaming of anti-Semitism and Israel-bashing that is dangerously on the rise in the world and in America.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Morton A. Klein".

Morton A. Klein
National President
Zionist Organization of America (ZOA)