**Why Is a Study of Palestinian School Books Being Kept Secret from the US Congress?**

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Why does the US State Department continue to block the publication of the congressional investigation of Palestinian textbooks taught in schools run by the United Nations?

That question is now being asked two years after the chairman of the Senate’s Near East subcommittee — Senator James Risch (R, ID) — asked Congress’ Government Accountability Office (GAO) to investigate the school books used by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

UNRWA is an American issue because — among other things — America is the agency’s largest funder, donating 30% of the $1.2 billion UNRWA budget. Some 54% of the UNRWA budget is allocated to UNRWA education efforts.

The GAO completed its comprehensive report on UNRWA education at the end of April. Sources at the GAO confirm that the GAO study documents that Palestinian Authority (PA) textbooks used by UNRWA promote terrorism, Jew-hatred, and murder. These books also work against peace and reconciliation, and insert war indoctrination throughout the PA education system.

But on May 3, the director of public affairs at the GAO — Chuck Young — issued a statement that the US State Department would not allow the report to be released to Congress (which had ordered the report in the first place.)

Why? Mr. Young referred that question to the State Department.

I wrote to America’s ambassador to Israel, David Friedman, and received no answer. I wrote to the new secretary of state, Michael Pompeo, and received no answer. I flew to New York and met with the staff of Ambassador Nikki Haley at the United Nations — and still received no answer.

A perfunctory answer came from a State Department official, who referred the question to the GAO. The GAO repeated that this was a US State Department decision, not theirs.

Why would the State Department not want to disclose what half a million Palestinian students study in UNRWA schools that America funds? And why is Donald Trump allowing it?

After all, these textbooks reach hundreds of thousands of children, and are publicly disseminated. The books all appear on the Internet. Why should the content of UNRWA books not be disclosed?

The answer is simple: publication of such a report would make it difficult for the Trump administration to maintain its policy that the Palestinian Authority is a genuine peace partner. Perhaps that’s also the reason why education is not being mentioned in the reports that have surfaced concerning the new American peace initiative.

Rabbi Abraham Cooper of the Simon Wiesenthal Center issued a statement about the refusal of the State Department to disclose the GAO investigation. “We urge this decision be reversed,” he said. “UNRWA needs refordm. Even UN Secretary General Guterres said so. The idea that a study about what the Palestinians teach their children in textbooks should be withheld from the public is unconscionable and unacceptable. When textbooks reflect a rejection of the reality of Israel … we will see another generation offered up by their leaders as cannon fodder, and unable to accept a peace offer.”