

the resolution also urges Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat to use his influence to end the violence in the Middle East, and reaffirms the historical bond of cooperation between the United States and Israel, and our nation's commitment to help secure peace in the Middle East. I believe the U.S. is right to press the Palestinian leadership to abide by the terms of the Oslo Accords, which called for renunciation of violence, and the settlement of all disputes through negotiation.

I believe passage of this legislation is an important gesture, because Israel is our only democratic ally in the Middle East. Regardless of how we may view the results of the Israeli elections, it is important for the U.S. to maintain its solidarity with the State of Israel. With the election of a new Israeli Prime Minister, I am hopeful that the Palestinians will choose dialogue over violence, and that Israel can continue its strong relationship with the U.S. to advance peace and stability in the Middle East.

I encourage my colleagues to stand with the State of Israel and support passage of this important resolution.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, as a brand new member of the House International Relations Committee, it is my pleasure to rise today to extend my congratulations to Prime Minister-elect Ariel Sharon on his victory in last week's elections, as well as to the people of Israel for their commitment to democratic principles of government. I join my colleagues in assuring Prime Minister-elect Sharon of our country's unwavering support and commitment to the State of Israel. We remain steadfast in our commitment to Israel's security and look forward to working with him in pursuing regional peace and stability, as well as working to further strengthen U.S.-Israel relations.

It is imperative that we continue the dialogue for peace in the Middle East, and to this end, I call upon Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat to demonstrate a commitment to the peace process by calling for an immediate end to the violence.

I also want to acknowledge the work of the House International Relations Committee Chairman, Mr. HENRY HYDE, and the lead sponsors of this resolution, Mr. LANTOS, Mr. GILMAN, Mr. ACKERMAN, and Mr. CANTOR, for their work on this resolution. I look forward to working with them in the House International Relations Committee on this and other issues of importance to our national interests and foreign policy.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, a fair, free, and open election took place in Israel on February 6, 2001, to determine the next Prime Minister of that nation. I rise today to support House Resolution 34, which congratulates Prime Minister-Elect Ariel Sharon as the elected leader of the people of Israel. I am a cosponsor of this measure.

The measure commends the people of Israel for reaffirming, through participation in the election, their dedication to democratic ideals; urges Palestinian Liberation Organization Yasser Arafat to use his influence and resources to see that violence in the Middle East is brought to an end; and calls upon Israel's neighbors and the international community to respect the will of the Israeli people and engage in constructive relations with the Israeli government.

Naturally, the resolution also reaffirms the close bonds of friendship that have developed

between the peoples of the United States and Israel and restates the commitment of the United States to a secure peace for Israel.

Mr. Speaker, peace is never easy to broker. Prime Minister-Elect Sharon has a formidable task ahead of him, and we need to forge ahead as an international community to help bring further stability to the Middle East. As a result, I am pleased to learn that Prime Minister-Elect Sharon is looking to build some consensus within the considerably wide political spectrum in Israel to bridge differences and gain some momentum for the peace process. It is encouraging that in forming a government, Prime Minister-Elect Sharon has called upon Prime Minister Ehud Barak—he is still leading caretaker government in Israel—and former Prime Minister Shimon Peres to join his coalition government. Hopefully, some arrangement can be made for these distinguished individuals to serve together within an Israeli cabinet.

The larger question of peace in the region is predicated on continued negotiations with the Palestinians. I will always be a strong supporter of the Middle East peace process because we can never stop trying. We struggle for peace, Mr. Speaker, because the current wave of violence is unacceptable. It undermines the very basis for peace, the notion that Palestinians and Israelis can trust each other and live together.

Last year, we edged a little closer to establishing a permanent blueprint for peace between the Israelis and Palestinians at Wye River. The principals involved did their best. While a peace agreement did not come to fruition, the Israelis and Palestinians conducted an unprecedented level of negotiations in the pursuit of a permanent peace. They discussed issues and exchanged viewpoints on pivotal matters of dire meaning to the Israeli people and the Palestinian people.

Mr. Speaker, we don't really know when all parties to this ongoing conflict will find everlasting peace and reconciliation. We do know, however, that Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Liberation Organization and Prime Minister-Elect Sharon of Israel have an acute sense of the high stakes involved. Prime Minister-Elect Sharon is currently looking into various confidence-building measures between Israel and the Palestinians in order to improve the atmosphere and proceed towards peace. This is a common sense idea. We have no other alternative.

The recent violence in the Middle East underscores the need to get the peace process back on track. We must do so expeditiously. I urge my colleagues to adopt House Resolution 34.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, today I reluctantly rise in opposition to H. Res. 34. This resolution is unclear and, hence, leaves the ability for much mischief. As the resolution's introductory sentence makes clear, this legislation is considered for "other purposes," which is to say, unspecified purposes.

Certainly Israel has been a longstanding friend to the United States, sharing many of our interests including peace, open trade, and free movement across international borders. It is equally clear that the people of Israel and the Middle East have long been torn by violence and, as such, share our desire to seek peace. We should, in fact, call for an end to the violence and hope all parties will see why this must be achieved. We are also right to

congratulate Mr. Sharon, as is customary to be done with the victor of any election. We have all fought those battles ourselves and rightly understand the commitment needed to succeed in that arena.

What then is the problem with this resolution? In fact, there are two problems and they are closely related. The substantive problem here is summed up in that last clause which "restates the commitment of the United States to a secure peace for Israel." Certainly we wish peace upon all the people of the world, and in this sense, we are committed to peace. However, we must ask what other sorts of commitments are implied here. The vagary of this resolution leaves open the possibility that those who support it are endorsing unwise and constitutionally-suspect financial and military commitments abroad. Moreover, peace will not best be secured for Israel by the further injection of the United States into regional affairs; rather, it will come when Israel has the unfettered sovereignty necessary to protect its own security.

As written, this resolution can be interpreted as an endorsement of unconstitutional acts of aggression upon Israel's sovereignty. In this I cannot engage. Thus, it is the less-than-clear nature of the resolution upon which we are voting that makes it necessary for me to object.

This brings me to the second problem, the procedural laxity involved here. This resolution was submitted by a number of distinguished members and referred to the Committee on International Relations. The highly-regarded chairman of that committee is the primary sponsor of this legislation and a number of other committee members are among its original cosponsors. Nonetheless, a number of other members of the committee and I were not included in the process. Perhaps, had this bill traveled through the commonly established processes of this institution we would have had the ability to clarify the "commitments" and "other purposes" to which this bill refers. In short, had the committee held a hearing and mark-up, the vagaries could've been removed in the markup process. In such an instance it would be likely that we could achieve the kind of unanimous support for these resolutions, for which I often hear personal appeals. In the future, those who are interested in gaining such unanimous support might consider these procedural concerns if they seek unanimity on this floor. In the instant case, however I must vote "no" for the reasons I have here expressed.

Hopefully these reasons will be considered so that in future instances the opportunity to make clarifications will be offered to those duly-elected members of the committees of this House.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to join in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 45, congratulating the people and the Prime Minister-elect of Israel on the success of the February 6, 2001 election.

I also want to commend the authors of this resolution, the distinguished Chairman of the International Relations Committee (Mr. HYDE), the distinguished ranking Democrat on the International Relations Committee and Co-Chairman of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus (Mr. LANTOS), as well as the gentleman from New York (Mr. ACKERMAN) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CANTOR).