

Palestinians will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949, but realistic to expect that any final status agreement will only be achieved on the basis of mutually agreed changes that reflect these realities.”

Furthermore, it says, “Whereas, the President acknowledged that any agreed, just, fair and realistic framework for a solution to the Palestinian refugee issue as part of any final status agreement will need to be found through the establishment of a permanent alternative and the settling of Palestinian refugees there rather than in Israel.”

And, “Whereas, the principles expressed in President Bush’s letter will enhance the security of Israel and advance the cause of peace in the Middle East.”

Whereas, there will be no security for Israelis or Palestinians until Israel and the Palestinians, and all countries in the region and throughout the world, join together to fight terrorism and dismantle terrorist organizations.”

And, “Whereas, the United States remains committed to the security of Israel, including secure, recognized and defensible borders, and to preserving and strengthening the capability of Israel to deter enemies and defend itself against any threat.”

And I think that on that wording, we can all come to agreement, because this resolution is in keeping with our national and international antiterrorism goals, our hopes for a lasting and profound peace and for a region of freedom-loving nations based on the rule of law, respect for human rights, and fundamental freedoms; and it shows a unity of purpose.

It sends a message to the world that the policies relating to Israel’s security and existence as a Jewish state, relating to peace for Israel and the Palestinians and relating to combating terrorism are not just the President’s policies or the position of the U.S. Congress but of the United States Government as a whole.

The path outlined in this resolution is clear. And what awaits us at the end of the road? Peace and stability. So let us join together and vote overwhelmingly for this measure.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

If I might be permitted, I would like to express our appreciation to the gentleman from Illinois (Chairman HYDE) for his extraordinary work in bringing this resolution before the body.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution, and I would like to elaborate upon the issues that are involved in securing Israel and peace in the Middle East.

I support the statements in the resolution declaring that the United States is strongly committed to the security of Israel and its well-being as a Jewish state and that there will be no security for Israelis or Palestinians until

Israel and the Palestinians, and all countries in the region and throughout the world, join together to fight terrorism and dismantle terrorist organizations. I think it is vitally important that the resolution reemphasizes the U.S. commitment to the security of Israel, including secure, recognized, and defensible borders, and to preserving and strengthening the capability of Israel to deter enemies and defend itself against any threat.

However, I am concerned about the perception that the President’s letter prejudices the final outcome of negotiations on issues like borders and refugees. It’s important to recognize that Prime Minister Sharon’s plan cannot be seen as a substitute for negotiations, that it is a first step, not the last. The plan can provide a window of opportunity, a short-term opening that might enable the two parties to return to the negotiating table. Only there, through mutual agreement, can Israel and the Palestinians resolve some of the most sensitive issues—and only then can there be real peace and security for Israel, which is so vital for Israel, the region and for the United States.

Ms. KILPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, today the House considered House Concurrent Resolution 460 regarding efforts to promote peace and security regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I gave thorough consideration to the resolution language and felt compelled to cast a nay vote.

I voted against the resolution because in my congressional district I have one of the largest Arab and Islamic populations in the nation. My vote reflected my humanitarian instincts, and my refusal to support language that was not inclusive. Although I reject terrorism and inhumane treatment by any person or government, I contend that the resolution failed to address fundamental and grave implications regarding the dangerous and ongoing conflict in the region. The resolution addressed Prime Minister Sharon’s efforts to promote peace and security, and his dialog with President Bush. A major failure of the resolution is that it did not address other themes I consider important, specifically, the pain and suffering occurring in the region.

Although the resolution addressed the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it said nothing about the plight of Palestinian civilians. Additionally, while Arab States are called upon to be part of the fight against terrorism, the resolution language did not acknowledge the difficulties confronting Palestinians. While I recognize the efforts of Israel to make concessions regarding thorny issues associated with land settlements, I believe much more needs to be done. Finally, the resolution failed to strike the humanitarian chord and sense of fairness that is essential if peace and security are to be realized in that region of the world.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, United States leadership in pursuit of peace in the Middle East is essential if we are to help bring about an equitable and fair peace accord between Israel and the Palestinians and end the bloodshed. The situation in the Middle East is a dominant issue on the minds of people in the region and throughout the world, and we cannot lose sight of the fact that stability in this region is tied directly to our own national security.

I applauded the United States leadership in crafting the “Roadmap” to Middle East peace coauthored by the European Union, Russia, and the United Nations. This promising com-

mitment has suffered at the hands of continued bloodshed and disagreement. However, I believe we must push for follow-through on the principles embodied in the Roadmap as a building block for a viable Palestinian State and secure Israel.

Given the lack of progress in tandem by Israel and the Palestinian Authority, the region has suffered from the violence continuing to engulf the region. The need to break the deadlock is greatly apparent, and Prime Minister Sharon’s proposal for Israel to unilaterally withdraw certain military installations and settlements from the Gaza Strip and West Bank is an opportunity for progress toward peace. Involvement by regional governments such as Egypt in pressuring reforms from the Palestinian Authority also hold promise that progress can be made. With continued involvement, we maintain the hope the next steps will be done through successful negotiation and compromise.

The resolution before us supports the concepts included in President Bush’s letter to Prime Minister Sharon dated April 14, 2004, regarding recent actions taken by Israel and the United States commitment to the peace process. It includes a reaffirmation of America’s commitment to Israel’s security and reinforces that Israelis and Palestinians, and all states in the region and beyond, must work together to fight terrorism. It also highlights highly sensitive issues including future refugee resettlement and border lines based on negotiations, which have been part of peace talks started under President Clinton.

While I would prefer the language in this resolution to more closely focus on the international commitment to Middle East peace and the obligations of the parties involved, I believe the intention of the resolution is consistent with the Roadmap for Peace, and I will support it. We must stay engaged in this matter and constantly work toward peace and security for Israel and the Palestinian people.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this legislation. As I have argued so many times in the past when legislation like this is brought to the Floor of Congress, the resolution before us is in actuality an endorsement of our failed policy of foreign interventionism. It attempts to create an illusion of our success when the truth is rather different. It seeks not peace in the Middle East, but rather to justify our continued meddling in the affairs of Israel and the Palestinians. As recent history should make clear, our sustained involvement in that part of the world has cost the American taxpayer billions of dollars yet has delivered no results. On the contrary, despite our continued intervention and promises that the invasion of Iraq would solve the Israeli/Palestinian problem the conflict appears as intractable as ever.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution in several places asserts that the United States is “strongly committed” to the security of Israel. I find no provision in the Constitution that allows the United States Government to confiscate money from its own citizens and send it overseas for the defense of a foreign country. Further, this legislation promises that the United States “remains committed to . . . Israel, including secure, recognized, and defensible borders.” So we are pledging to defend Israel’s borders while we are not even able to control our own borders. Shouldn’t we be concentrating on fulfilling our constitutional obligations in our own country first, before we

go crusading around the world to protect foreign borders?

I do agree with one of the statements in this legislation, though it is hardly necessary for us to affirm that which is self-evident: “. . . Israel has the right to defend itself against terrorism, including the right to take actions against terrorist organizations that threaten the citizens of Israel.” Yes, they do. But do the Israelis really need the U.S. Congress to tell them they are free to defend themselves?

I also must object to the one-sidedness of this legislation. Like so many that have come before it, this resolution takes sides in a conflict that has nothing to do with us. Among other things, it affirms Israel as a “Jewish state.” Is it really our business to endorse a state church in a foreign country? What message does this send from the United States to Israeli citizens who are not Jewish?

Like my colleagues who have come to the floor to endorse this legislation, I would very much like to see peace in the Middle East—and elsewhere in this troubled world. But this is not the way to achieve that peace. As our Founders recognized, the best way for the United States to have peaceful relations with others is for Americans to trade freely with them. The best way to sow resentment and discontent among the other nations of the world is for the United States to become entangled in alliances with one power against another power, to meddle in the affairs of other nations. One-sided legislation such as this in reality just fuels the worst fears of the Muslim world about the intentions of the United States. Is this wise?

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the pending resolution. The resolution gives us the opportunity to express our support for the President's statements about the Israeli government's plans to withdraw from its settlements from Gaza, and about other key matters related to the dispute between Israel and the Palestinians.

Our debate today also gives us an opportunity to look at the larger picture. It is critical that we continue to support President Bush's performance-based, goal-driven roadmap to a final and comprehensive settlement of the Israel-Palestinian conflict. Congress should join President Bush in pressing all parties to take necessary steps toward peace, as provided in the roadmap and in President Bush's statement of April 14, 2004.

According to the roadmap, during Phase I, the Palestinians should, among other things, reiterate their commitment to a two-state solution, immediately undertake a cessation of violence against Israelis and end official incitement, and reform their institutions. Israel should begin with affirming its commitment to a two-state solution, ending official incitement, and resuming security cooperation with the Palestinians; it should also freeze settlement activity, immediately dismantle unauthorized settlement outposts erected since March 2001, and improve the humanitarian situation by lifting curfews and easing restrictions on the movement of persons and goods.

Despite the great political risks involved, it is essential not only for the United States, but also for other governments in the region, to demonstrate their leadership by assisting the Palestinians and Israelis in fulfilling their responsibilities. Such actions will create an environment conducive to real achievements on the ground, allowing for a true peace to take

root. I commend the leadership Egypt and Jordan have shown in this area, and welcome their continued efforts, which are alluded to in the Resolution under consideration.

As the House affirmed when it passed H.R. 1950,

The United States has a vital national security interest in a Middle East in which two states, Israel and Palestine, will live side by side in peace and security, based on the terms of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. A stable and peaceful Palestinian state is necessary to achieve the security that Israel longs for. The Palestinian leadership and Israel should take concrete steps to support the emergence of a viable, credible Palestinian state.

I express full support for President Bush when he said the following on April 14, 2004:

I welcome the disengagement plan prepared by the Government of Israel, under which Israel would withdraw certain military installations and all settlements from Gaza, and withdraw certain military installations and settlements in the West Bank. These steps will mark real progress toward realizing the vision I set forth in June of 2002 of two states living side by side in peace and security, and make a real contribution toward peace.

Even as we support Israel in the ways discussed in the Resolution, we also need to keep in mind Israel's commitments to the President and the American people that were part of the April 15 package.

I will vote for this resolution for the reasons I have stated. It should not need to be said, but our support for Israel, or the Palestinians, does not imply support for actions that violate human rights standards or the expectations established by the roadmap. Our credibility requires that we do not undermine our most important policies in any of our actions or statements.

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 460 and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's proposed disengagement plan to remove settlements and certain military outposts from Gaza and areas of the West Bank.

This initiative gives hope for the future of the peace process and the effort to end the suffering of the Israeli and Palestinian people.

Since putting forth a bold peace initiative at Camp David in 2000, the Israeli side has endured years of terrorist attacks that have taken the lives of nearly 1,000 civilians. Israeli troops are now reengaged in Palestinian areas they once hoped they had left for good.

Among Palestinians there is also despair. Instead of taking the measures to pursue statehood and independence, the Palestinian leadership has recruited their children for suicide attacks, and weakened their economy with corruption and the siphoning of funds for terrorist activities.

The disengagement plan presents a much needed opportunity to reduce tensions, make Israel more secure, and give the Palestinian people an opportunity for self-governance. The proposal will also set the stage for future negotiations by putting pressure on the Palestinian leadership to undertake the internal economic and political reforms necessary to improve quality of life and build the institutions for statehood.

I believe it is equally important that in endorsing the Sharon initiative on April 14, the President also underscored two fundamental realities to be taken into consideration once

final status negotiations ultimately resume. First, that the open-ended Palestinian claim to a right of return for refugees is demographically untenable for Israel's future as a Jewish state. And second that existing demographics need to be taken into account in future negotiations to provide Israel with secure, recognized, and defensible borders and provide the territory for a Palestinian state.

Some say a clear U.S. position on these issues prejudices the outcome of the negotiations, but these realities are the very same principles that guided the peace effort initiated by President Clinton at Camp David. Those negotiations failed not because of the U.S. position, but because Yasser Arafat responded to Israel's offer with terrorism and violence instead of full-faith negotiations.

The Israeli and Palestinian people deserve a better future. I urge my colleagues to support his resolution and the commitment of the United States to remain engaged and stand prepared to broker a final status agreement when a credible and willing Palestinian leadership prepared to embrace peace emerges.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, this resolution affirms Congress's bipartisan support for the principles outlined by President Bush and Prime Minister Sharon regarding Israel's proposed disengagement plan. Congressional support for the disengagement from Gaza and removal of settlements is a positive step toward reducing tensions with the Palestinians and could help revitalize the stalled Mideast peace process.

Our nation's support for Israel is of the utmost importance and could not be clearer. We stand firmly in support of Israel in the fight against terrorism. We must acknowledge the strategic importance of Israel as the only democracy in the region and, above all, Israel's absolute right of self-defense. We will continue to offer our steadfast support as Israel faces the ongoing threat of terrorism.

In 2000, then Israeli Prime Minister Barak and Palestinian Authority Chairman Arafat were close to forging an accord on final status issues, but Arafat walked away. There is no doubt that Arafat is not capable of negotiating a peace agreement. At this time, Israel lacks a viable Palestinian partner to negotiate a peace agreement, yet the people of Israel continue to face the daily threat of suicide bombers. This status quo is unacceptable. The framework laid out by Prime Minister Sharon and President Bush provides a sound basis for Israelis to live their lives with a decreased threat of terror until a viable Palestinian partner emerges.

This resolution goes a long way toward acknowledging the realities on the ground today and the impact they will have on final status negotiations. It recognizes that the Palestinian claim to a right of return beyond the borders of a future Palestinian state is demographically untenable for Israel's future as a Jewish state. As such, negotiations must ensure that Israel can live as an independent state within secure, recognized and defensible borders that reflect this reality. At the same time, we recognize the importance and support the establishment of a separate Palestinian state that can live in peace with its neighbor, Israel.

Recently, Israel has been waging a significant campaign to eliminate the terrorist threat, resulting in a three-month period of calm despite terrorist groups' intent to continue violent