

EXPRESSING SOLIDARITY WITH ISRAEL IN ITS FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM

SPEECH OF

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 2, 2002

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, this legislation could not have come at a worse time in the ongoing Middle East crisis. Just when we have seen some positive signs that the two sides may return to negotiations toward a peaceful settlement, Congress has jumped into the fray on one side of the conflict. I do not believe that this body wishes to de-rail the slight progress that seems to have come from the Administration's more even-handed approach over the past several days. So why is it that we are here today ready to pass legislation that clearly and openly favors one side in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

There are many troubling aspects to this legislation. The legislation says that "the number of Israelis killed during that time [since September 2000] by suicide terrorist attacks alone, on a basis proportional to the United States population, is approximately 9,000, three times the number killed in the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington on September 11, 2001." This kind of numbers game with the innocent dead strikes me as terribly disrespectful and completely unhelpful.

It is, when speaking of the dead, the one-sidedness of this bill that is so unfortunate. How is it that the side that loses seven people to every one on the other side is portrayed as the sole aggressor and condemned as terrorist? This is only made worse by the fact that Palestinian deaths are seen in the Arab world as being American-inspired, as it is our weapons that are being used against them. This bill just reinforces negative perceptions of the United States in that part of the world. What might be the consequences of this? I think we need to stop and think about that for a while. We in this body have a Constitutional responsibility to protect the national security of the United States. This one-sided intervention in a far-off war has the potential to do great harm to our national security.

Perhaps this is why the Administration views this legislation as "not a very helpful approach" to the situation in the Middle East. In my view, it is bad enough that we are intervening at all in this conflict, but this legislation strips any lingering notion that the United States intends to be an honest broker. It states clearly that the leadership of one side—the Palestinians—is bad and supports terrorism just at a time when this Administration negotiates with both sides in an attempt to bring peace to the region. Talk about undermining the difficult efforts of the president and the State Department. What incentive does Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat or his organization have to return to the negotiating table if we as "honest broker" make it clear that in Congress's eyes, the Palestinians are illegitimate terrorists? Must we become so involved in this far-off conflict that we are forced to choose between Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon? The United States Congress should not, Constitutionally, be in the business of choosing who gets to lead which foreign people.

Many people of various religious backgrounds seem determined to portray what is happening in the Middle East as some kind of historic/religious struggle, where one side is pre-ordained to triumph and destroy the other. Even some in this body have embraced this notion. Surely the religious component that some interject into the conflict rouses emotions and adds fuel to the fire. But this is dangerous thinking. Far from a great holy war, the Middle East conflict is largely about what most wars are about: a struggle for land and resources in a part of the world where both are scarce. We must think and act rationally, with this fact clearly in mind.

Just as with our interventionism in other similar struggles around the world, our meddling in the Middle East has unforeseen consequences. Our favoritism of one side has led to the hatred of America and Americans by the other side. We are placing our country in harm's way with this approach. It is time to step back and look at our policy in the Middle East. After 24 years of the "peace process" and some 300 million of our dollars, we are no closer to peace than when President Carter concluded the Camp David talks.

Mr. Speaker, any other policy that had so utterly failed over such a long period of time would likely come under close scrutiny here. Why is it that when it comes to interventionism in the Middle East conflict we continue down this unproductive and very expensive road?

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES

SPEECH OF

HON. CORRINE BROWN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 2, 2002

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, due to unforeseen circumstances, I was unable to cast a vote on H. Res. 404, rollcall vote No. 126, "Expressing Solidarity with Israel against the fight against terrorism." Had I been present, I would have voted "yes" on the measure.

I am hopeful that President Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell will continue their push to bring an end to the violence and renew a viable diplomatic process between the two sides. I am also extremely glad to see that the administration is planning a Mideast Peace Conference among the regional leaders to discuss the various plans for peace that have been put forward. I am hopeful that the Arab Nations accept this offer, and are ready to sit down at the table to seriously discuss a cessation to the violence.

As a strong proponent of continued U.S. support and friendship to Israel, I am a proud cosponsor of H.R. 1795, the Middle East Peace Commitment Act. In all my years in Washington, I have been a strong supporter of Israel, and was fortunate to travel to Israel during my first year in office with members of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. I remember this trip with pleasure, and was more than impressed with the free and democratic society that the citizens of Israel have built in their short, fifty four year history.

However, for the United States to continue its sponsorship of the Middle East peace proc-

ess, we need a commitment from Yasser Arafat to refrain from terrorism. The basis for U.S. support for peace, including the acceptance of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Palestinian Authority (PA) as diplomatic partners for peace, requires Yasser Arafat's PA to renounce in words and actions, all forms of violence to achieve their national aspirations. Chairman Arafat needs to rein in radical elements in the territories, as it is completely impossible for the Israelis to negotiate with groups that support or commit acts of random terror.

On the other hand, I strongly believe that Israel must make concessions as well to obtain a lasting peace. For instance, Israel needs to continue negotiating with the Palestinian Authority, as well as the surrounding Arab states, if necessary. The United States, as a broker and overseer of the peace process, must encourage communication between the Israelis with the Palestinians, as well as promote a cessation of military incursions in the territories. These incursions I believe, are not productive for the peace process, and will in the end only produce more violence and radicalism among the already uncontrollable Palestinian factions.

Again, I am hopeful that both sides are able to reach an agreement in the very near future to put an end to this seemingly endless cycle of violence, and that the United States will continue to support negotiations and compromise between the two sides.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO MARY ELLEN EPPS

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 7, 2002

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Mary Ellen Epps and thank her for her extraordinary contributions in the Colorado General Assembly. Her dedication to both her job and the people of Colorado deserves the recognition of this body of Congress and this nation. She will be remembered as a State Senator and Representative with the utmost dedication to her constituents and as she moves on in her career, I would like to thank her for her hard work in the Colorado General Assembly.

Mary Ellen was elected to the Colorado State Senate in 1998 after being elected to the Colorado State House of Representatives in 1986, and has served on a number of committees during her tenure. She served as chairwoman of HEWI, and the Medically Indigent Committees, and has been a member of the Judiciary, Transportation, Legislative Legal Services, Adult Criminal Justice, Juvenile Offenders, House Services and Health Care Committees, among others. As an elected official, Mary Ellen has long been an advocate of criminal justice and healthcare. She has effectively implemented a number of programs and legislation to help aid the citizens of Colorado in these areas, including mandatory immunizations for children and automobile insurance penalties for the uninsured.

Not only has Mary Ellen served the community effectively as a member of the Colorado General Assembly, she has also done her part as an active humanitarian. She is a charter