

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, it appears that the Bush administration refuses to learn anything from 9/11 or Hurricane Katrina. Once again this year, President Bush's budget shortchanges America's security, failing to make it the number one priority. Here are some startling examples of how the President refuses to make Americans as safe as they should be:

First, the budget underfunds key programs that provide local communities with the resources to protect our borders, our ports, mass transit, and critical infrastructure. Second, the budget continues the trend of cutting grants for our first responders, cutting overall funding for three key first responder grant programs by 35 percent below 2 years ago. Third, the budget zeros out funding for interoperability grants, grants that would allow Federal, State, and local governments the ability to communicate during a major disaster or terrorist attack.

President Bush claims he is protecting the homeland, but he refuses to back it up with the funding necessary to prepare agencies at all levels for the worst case scenarios. Hasn't he learned anything from Katrina?

Pull FEMA out from under Homeland Security.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KOLBE). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

RECORD votes on postponed questions will be taken later today.

SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 79) expressing the sense of Congress that no United States assistance should be provided directly to the Palestinian Authority if any representative political party holding a majority of parliamentary seats within the Palestinian Authority maintains a position calling for the destruction of Israel.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. CON. RES. 79

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that no United States assistance should be provided directly to the Palestinian Authority if any representative political party holding a majority of parliamentary seats within the Palestinian Authority maintains a position calling for the destruction of Israel.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ACKERMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I rise in support of S. Con. Res. 79.

This resolution was sponsored in the other body by our former colleague Senator THUNE of South Dakota and was cosponsored by Senators BROWNBACK, CHAMBLISS, JOHNSON, LIEBERMAN, TALENT and VOINOVICH. It passed the Senate by unanimous consent on February 1, 2006.

On January 25, 2006, Palestinians turned out in large numbers from all walks of life to forge a new government that can respond to their various needs. The Palestinian people voted for change and improvement in their livelihoods. They were largely frustrated by the growing occupation in the West Bank, the inability of the Fatah-backed Palestinian Liberation Organization to deliver on the expectations of the peace process, and internal strife and rampant corruption. The Palestinian citizens used the power of democracy to send a loud and a clear message to their leadership.

Speaking in a press conference shortly after the elections, President Bush noted the power of democracy, saying, "When you give people the vote, you give people the chance to express themselves at the polls, and if you're unhappy with the status quo, they will let you know. Obviously, the people were not happy with the status quo. The people are demanding honest government. The people want services."

The Bush administration's pursuit of freedom and democracy in the Arab world has strengthened the weight and role of "people power" in the region's political development. Representative democracy may result in the coming to power of groups in the Middle East or, for that matter, in Spain, that are critical of the United States or our policies in the Middle East. Certainly the recent Palestinian parliamentary elections pose a unique challenge. Over 50 percent of the seats in the Palestinian Legislative Council will be filled from a list chosen by an armed group that believes in the destruction of Israel, a United Nations member state, and is recognized as a terrorist organization by the international community.

This result demonstrates the serious contradiction we see in Palestinian territories between the ideal of a democratic government characterized by the rule of law and the reality of a political process in which armed rejectionist groups participate. Should the United States at this point abandon all means

to remain constructively engaged with the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority under President Mahmoud Abbas? Tying the hands of the administration is not in the interest of United States national security. We need to react with some care. Hurting the Palestinian people will reward terrorist regimes like Syria and Iran which seek to exploit the suffering of the Palestinians for their own selfish reasons.

S. Con. Res. 79 is direct and to the point. It sends a strong message about the expectations of the United States and the international community toward Hamas when it comes to Hamas' attitude toward Israel. We declare that the United States will not provide direct assistance to a government that believes in the destruction of Israel.

The election of the Change and Reform Party, Hamas' alter ego, has raised questions about other forms of assistance to a future Palestinian government. The Quartet, in which the United States is a core member, concluded that "it was inevitable that future assistance to any new government would be reviewed by donors against that government's commitment to the principles of nonviolence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the Roadmap."

Many might be surprised to know that the United States does not provide ongoing, direct financial assistance to the Palestinian Authority. The majority of funds are channeled through the United States Agency for International Development to nongovernmental organizations under a strict vetting process. The United States has provided direct assistance only four times, three of which have been under this administration, with the funds being closely regulated and monitored.

United States and other assistance to the Palestinian people is vital to meeting basic needs and avoiding a humanitarian disaster. According to the World Bank, unemployment in the West Bank and Gaza is 23 percent. Forty-three percent of the population is living below the poverty line. United States assistance to nonprofit organizations is also critical to achieving our objective of a two-state solution. Closing the door on moderates in Palestinian civil society will contribute to the growth of warlordism and chaos.

□ 1030

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 viable, contiguous, and prosperous Palestinian state is necessary to achieve the security that Israel longs for.

I believe the administration is responding appropriately to the situation

at hand. Currently, the U.S. is reviewing all forms of assistance to the Palestinian people. However, neither the administration nor the Congress should make final decisions in advance of the formation of the new Palestinian cabinet, which is likely to occur in the coming weeks. If it is necessary to address this issue by legislation, we can do so at the appropriate time and will not prejudice their consideration by agreeing to this resolution at this time.

As disappointed as we are by the results, I congratulate the Palestinian people for conducting what were arguably the freest and fairest democratic elections in the Arab world. I hope their leaders will be wise and represent the true interests of the Palestinians as the process moves forward. As Secretary Rice stated in Davos this month, "The Palestinian people have apparently voted for change, but we believe that their aspirations for peace and a peaceful life remain unchanged."

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the resolution.

First, let me thank Chairman HYDE and Ranking Member LANTOS for bringing this matter to the floor.

Yesterday, I read a news article quoting a Hamas representative who thanked the United States for providing Hamas with "the weapon of democracy." The weapon of democracy. Like other Hamas spokesmen, this man was being completely frank. In my experience, people who think they are on a mission from God generally do not dissemble about their intentions. The decision by the Bush administration to press for elections that did not exclude Hamas, as the Oslo agreements required, is seen by Hamas, quite literally, as a gift from heaven. Indeed, it is a fact of surpassing strangeness that the same President who would not deal with Yasser Arafat because he was tainted by terrorism is in large measure responsible for insisting on the elections that brought Hamas to power.

Allowing Hamas to compete was substantially our grave mistake. Electing Hamas, however, was the Palestinian people's own free choice. No one questions the mechanics of the election itself, only the nature of the elected. Let us recall that Hitler's National Socialists, the Nazi party, also came to power in free elections. References of this type are usually inappropriate. The Holocaust was a unique, horrible event, and nothing should ever be done to diminish it or turn it into another rhetorical cheap shot. But in this case the comparison of how coming to power was the same is very apt.

What is Hamas? Hamas is declared to be, by our government and the European Union, a terrorist organization. It is an ally and an aid recipient of Iran.

It is an organization of religious zealots who put bombs in stores and clubs and restaurants, hotels and discos and buses and proclaim their work to be the will of God. It is an organization that insistently proclaims its intention to exterminate the State of Israel and to replace it with an Islamic state under Sharia law. It is an organization that proudly declares its beliefs that Jews are the descendants of "pigs and monkeys." Hamas is responsible not only for the cold-blooded murder of hundreds of Israeli citizens but also dozens of Americans.

And while they may be crazy, they are not stupid. They are watching us very closely, and they are looking for any sign of weakness, any departure from principle, any signal of grudging acceptance. It is absolutely vital that they see nothing of the sort. When Hamas looks at America, at the administration, at the Congress, they must see nothing but fierce, unrelenting, and implacable rejection.

There can be no political absolution for this pack of killers; and the very idea of giving our taxpayers' money to these bloody-handed fanatics, people who have slaughtered our own citizens, is offensive. Suggesting that we do it indirectly, that we merely subsidize rather than fund their rule, is no less unacceptable.

People in the executive branch trying to figure out how to square this circle should pay close attention to this debate. I would say to them: Before you urge the President to ask the Congress to provide assistance to the Palestinians, you had better start counting votes. This Congress is more likely to restore British sovereignty over the United States than it is to appropriate even \$1 for the West Bank or Gaza.

Hamas is a terrorist organization, and the United States has clear policy for dealing with terrorists: We do not do it. We do not legitimize them, and we do not acknowledge phony distinctions between their political and their terrorist "wings." We do not forgive them for the hundreds they have murdered in exchange for a handful of promises. And we certainly do not pay them. Not in cash, not in coupons, not in vouchers, not in green stamps, not in airline miles. Americans do not give money to terrorists, to terrorist governments, and to people who elect terrorists. We have better things to do with our money.

When President Abbas was first elected, I was among those who were strongly encouraging the administration to boost his prestige and help build him up with assistance and projects. But he never demanded that Hamas and other terrorist groups disarm and disband. Now we see that after a year of trying things the way Abu Mazen wanted and not feeling they got any real benefits, Palestinians have voted to go in a different direction. That is their right. But it is absolutely critical that our policies adjust to reflect their decisions.

Just as I believed that the Palestinian choice of Abu Mazen's vision of nonviolence and peace deserved our support and assistance, I think the election of Hamas, with its dogmatic adherence to terror and its insistence on Israel's extermination, deserves our strongest condemnation and is an unmistakable change in how we do business.

Elected terrorists are still terrorists. We should not give them legitimacy. We should not deal with them diplomatically. And, most obviously, we should not give them hundreds of millions of dollars from our taxpayers. U.S. foreign assistance is a gift, not a right. The Palestinian Authority, as long as it is led by Hamas, is a terrorist organization responsible for the deaths of dozens of Americans and obviously disqualified from this kind of aid.

Not doing business as usual means, by definition, that things have to change across the board. Only a comprehensive rejection of Hamas's leadership can satisfy the requirements of continued U.S. leadership in the war on terror. The message and the methods of Hamas must not only fail but they must be seen to fail throughout the world and especially in the Middle East.

Compromising with Hamas and doing a little bit of business here, a little bit of business there, accepting phony commitments and using back-door intermediaries will prove to Islamic radicalists that there is no price they pay for terrorism as long as you succeed in taking the reins of power. We cannot afford to send that message to the Palestinians or to anybody else.

I strongly encourage the adoption of this resolution and prompt consideration by the House of additional legislation to respond to the challenge to America and our interests that are posed by Hamas.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Very briefly in response, I would like to say that I am taken by the arguments of Mr. ACKERMAN. I think he has a message, a point of view, that is legitimate and worthy of attention.

I do not agree with him. I think that having Hamas, with all its flaws, participate in the democratic process, something alien to their spirit, is a sign of strength on our part, not weakness. And I think the effort, a legitimate effort, to help bring into the democratic process all of the dissident elements is worth it because, unless this situation gets solved, staring at each other with muscles flexed and weapons cocked gets us nowhere. But we shall see.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me this time.

I rise in support of the resolution before us, S. Con. Res. 79, because this resolution is a reinforcement and a restatement of longstanding U.S. policy to prohibit direct assistance to the Palestinian Authority except under such strict and specific circumstances in furtherance of U.S. foreign policy and our security objectives.

It has long been U.S. policy to bring both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to the negotiation tables and to work out a peaceful compromise. For years, we supported Abu Mazen economically and politically, hoping and praying and wishing that it would strengthen the moderate constituency that does exist in the Palestinian territories. Yet time and again we have repeatedly asked the Palestinian leadership to dismantle the Islamist terrorist infrastructure in its midst, to disarm these jihadists, to promote tolerance and to accept Israel. But this was not to be.

The U.S. has spent hundreds of millions of dollars on programs to address the needs of the Palestinian people. Those include work programs, infrastructure projects, in addition to humanitarian aid, aimed at providing food, sanitation services, and medicine to the Palestinian people. We have done all of this, Mr. Speaker, in an effort to foster the conditions that would bring about peace and security for both the Israeli and the Palestinian people.

Last summer, Israel underwent a sacrifice of historic proportions by withdrawing from Gaza. Why did Israel do this? Israel withdrew from Gaza in hopes of making progress toward a peaceful solution to this conflict. Yet, despite all of these efforts, Hamas, an Islamist extremist jihadist entity, was allowed to participate in the recent Palestinian elections and, as all of us know, won control of the Palestinian government. U.S. monetary and political investment has produced little, if anything, in return.

In fact, soon after these Palestinian elections in January, Hamas placed disturbing videos on its Web site, videos which glorified bloodshed and terror. One of the clips included a farewell scene between a mother and her Palestinian terrorist son as she helps him dress for his suicide mission against Israel. Another clip is of two Hamas terrorists expressing their message to the Jews. And the first terrorist says: "My message to the loathed Jews is that there is no God but Allah. We will chase you everywhere. We are a nation that drinks blood, and we know that there is no blood better than the blood of the Jews. We will not leave you alone until we have quenched our thirst with your blood and our children's thirst with your blood. We will not leave until you leave the Muslim countries."

The second Hamas terrorist made the following statement: "In the name of Allah, we will destroy you, blow you up, take revenge against you, and purify the land of you, pigs that have de-

filed our country. This operation is revenge against the sons of monkeys and pigs."

These horrific clips, again, were posted on an official Web site of the entity that now controls the Palestinian Authority.

□ 1045

Hamas' victory in the parliamentary elections poses a direct threat to U.S. strategies for regional stability. We must not and cannot allow taxpayer funds to directly or indirectly assist or support in any way Hamas or any other Palestinian terrorist groups that glorify blood, bloodshed and terror and use violence as a political tool. We must take immediate steps to prevent any further manipulation of U.S. assistance to the Palestinians.

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

Mr. Speaker, just in brief response to my good friend, the chairman, Mr. HYDE, who always stands up and fights so well and eloquently for democracy, my concern about allowing Hamas to participate in the election is not just my opinion. This was part of the Oslo Accords, to which the Israelis and Palestinians both agreed and signed. It is a governing document that no group that participates in violence and commits themselves to the destruction of the other will be allowed to participate in the election. That is the law. That is the doctrine.

I just express my dismay that our President, with his great leadership against terror, would take a pass and lean on the Israelis to allow this election to take place with Hamas.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution is an unequivocal statement of principle, a statement of our continuing support for our ally, the democratic State of Israel, as well as an explicit rejection of the hateful ideology that seeks her destruction. And I hope every Member will support it.

The resolution states quite simply that the United States should not provide direct assistance to the Palestinian Authority "if any representative political party holding a majority of parliamentary seats within the Palestinian Authority maintains a position calling for the destruction of Israel," or, in fact, the destruction of another free country.

The resolution, of course, is necessitated by the electoral victory of Hamas, an internationally recognized terrorist organization that is publicly committed to the destruction of Israel. Anyone who questions this need only read the Charter of Allah, the platform of the Islamic Resistance Movement, otherwise known as Hamas.

Consider just one passage. Ms. ROSELEHTNEN has referred to some other statements incorporated in other docu-

ments, but this is their basic charter: "In order to face the usurpation of Palestine by the Jews, we have no escape from raising the banner of jihad." Destruction of a people. Destruction of children, families, of a nation.

Mr. Speaker, the Palestinian people voted in January in what appears to be a free and fair election, and the democratic expression of the people will and should always be encouraged. It is clear, however, that this victory by Hamas is, in significant part, a reaction by Palestinian voters to the rampant corruption in the Fatah movement that began and continued under Yaser Arafat. However, the Palestinian side must recognize that the election of Hamas to a parliamentary majority will not change or alter the absolute, irrevocable precondition for peace, the dismantlement of the Palestinian terrorist infrastructure. In fact, I believe that the international community must now exert its collective will upon Hamas and insist that it renounce the tactics of terror and proactively dismantle that terrorist infrastructure.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, let me say to our friends in Israel that the United States-Israel relationship today is stronger than ever and we are fully committed to our ally's security, sovereignty, and success.

I urge my colleagues to vote for this resolution.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY), a member of the committee.

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, it seems that every time the Palestinian people take one step forward, they take two steps back. When Abu Mazen was elected, he pledged to root out terrorism and end corruption within the Palestinian Authority. Unfortunately, he has done nothing to help his people. He has continued the corruption that is rampant in the Palestinian Authority, and he has refused to disarm and dismantle the terrorists and their terrorist organizations.

We all know that Yaser Arafat did a tremendous disservice to the Palestinian people. He was a disgrace to humanity. Abu Mazen and the Fatah Party have done, sadly, no better. They had a historic opportunity to make peace. Instead, they chose a path of continued corruption, terror, and violence.

This resolution sends a strong and unambiguous message: if you choose terrorism, the United States will not support you. Road map to peace is also unambiguous. The Palestinian Authority must denounce terrorism, disarm and dismantle the terrorist infrastructure and shut down the terrorist organizations before, before, there can be a two-state solution.

Hamas has never accepted Israel's right to exist, and it has never accepted the peace process. It continues to support terrorism and violence. In fact, Hamas not only supports it, it is it. Since 1989, Hamas has killed more than

500 people, including more than two dozen American citizens.

Just last week, and this is after the election, so if anybody thinks being elected to the Palestinian Authority is going to moderate Hamas, just last week the leader of Hamas reiterated their commitment to destroy the Zionist state. Hamas also promised that the armed struggle will not end.

Hamas' control of the new Palestinian government further undercuts the ability of its government to engage in true reforms and further strengthens the enemies of Israel and those who oppose peace.

Hamas must disavow its stated goal of destroying Israel and change its charter to recognize Israel's right to exist as a free and independent Jewish state. Until the Palestinian government recognizes Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state, renounces its demand for right of return, which will create two Palestinian states, not a Jewish state and a Palestinian state, ceases all forms of incitement and violence, condemns terrorism, dismantles its terrorist infrastructure, and, most important, removes terrorist organizations from the government, Congress must end all U.S. aid.

If negotiating with terrorists is not an option for this country, and it is not, then funneling Americans' hard-earned tax dollars to terrorists certainly is not an option either.

I argued unsuccessfully while I was standing in this very spot that the United States Congress should not give additional aid to the Palestinian Authority until they demonstrated with deeds, not rhetoric, with deeds that they were serious about making peace with Israel and took concrete steps to show us that they were indeed serious. Unfortunately, my colleagues did not agree with me, and we continued to fund Abu Mazen and the Palestinian Authority, although they did nothing to earn our trust and they certainly did nothing to earn taxpayers' hard-earned dollars.

I urge in this resolution that my colleagues stand with me in supporting the resolution that will end all U.S. aid to the Palestinian Authority until Hamas recognizes Israel's right to exist and, indeed, does it with deeds, not words.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of S. Con. Res. 79.

The United States exercising the option of cutting off assistance to the Palestinian Authority because of the participation of Hamas in the Palestinian Government should not be a surprise to the Palestinian people.

This House spoke out strongly with the passage of H. Res. 575, which clearly stated before the elections that we did not approve of terrorist organizations participating in the Palestinian elections.

Today's resolution should bring home that the United States will not provide aid to a government run by terrorists.

The Hamas victory is unacceptable because it provides a group of murderers with a seat at the table. I can not understand how the most

secular Palestinian people would support an organization whose goal is to take their rights away.

The United States must stand by our friend and ally Israel in this relationship as should the rest of the world. The United States should refuse to lend legitimacy to an organization whose primary goals include the elimination of the State of Israel and the use of violent measures to attack the Israeli people.

The United States cannot support any government that continues to approve of and utilize terrorism. Terrorism takes many forms, dressing up a political party in the trappings of an election does not negate the underlying mission of what Hamas seeks to achieve, the abolition of the Jewish State.

We must make it clear to the Palestinian people that the United States does not approve of terrorist actions and will not provide financial assistance to any group or organization that condones, plans, or enacts violent activities.

The United States has designated Hamas as a terrorist organization, and as such should not provide any funding to them.

The victory of Hamas indicates the Palestinians are not interested in achieving peace with Israel and does not move the Palestinian people towards their goal of statehood.

The United States should not supply any government aid to the Palestinian authority until Hamas renounces all terrorist activities, recognizes the right of the State of Israel's right to exist, and fully disarms its terrorist organization.

The United States has worked for years to find a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

But a solution will not come about with the current leadership of Hamas involved in any form of Palestinian Government.

In order to help facilitate the development of a true and lasting peace between the Israeli people and the Palestinian Authority, the United States, European Union and other countries must speak with a united voice that the activities of Hamas in any sort of elected Palestinian Government is anathema.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution.

A few weeks ago, the Palestinian people stunned the world by giving majority control of the Palestinian Legislative Council to Hamas, an entity determined to be a foreign terrorist organizations by both the United States and the Europe Union. Some may point out that the Fatah party's fragmentation combined with the nature of the electoral system chosen by the Palestinian Authority led to this strong Hamas majority.

We will be discussing these and other explanations for Hamas's victory over the coming weeks and months. But they do not change the reality that 74 out of 132 seats in the Palestinian Legislative Council were won by an organization that not only preaches the destruction of Israel, but has sent suicide bomber after suicide bomber to kill innocent civilians, including young children, and that has been implicated in the deaths of Americans. Mr. Speaker, the resolution we are considering today is simple and to the point: There should be no money for the Palestinian Authority as long as its legislature is controlled by a party that is both a terrorist organization and advocates the destruction of Israel.

This is not some plot to effect regime change—this is merely to send a message

that the civilized world does not tolerate and will not support terrorists. This resolution means no American funding for the Palestinian Authority as long as Hamas controls the legislature, since there is absolutely no credible sign that Hamas intends to change its ugly charter or do anything else to demonstrate that it now accepts Israel's right to exist. Mr. Speaker, our action on this resolution today will not be the final word of the Congress on this issue. We will return to it again and again.

Last week, our colleague from Florida, Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN, and I—with over 50 of our colleagues—introduced H.R. 4681, the Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act of 2006, and I am confident that it will soon be brought to the floor. H.R. 4681 puts legislative teeth into the resolution we are considering today. It would, among other things, prohibit by law the funding of a Palestinian Authority controlled by a terrorist organization.

Mr. Speaker, the basic thrust of American foreign policy is to fight terrorism globally, and it is self-evident that the United States will not fund an organization such as Hamas that continues to advocate and carry out terrorist acts in the Middle East. Nor will we fund a government which is controlled by a terrorist organization or in which major institutions, such as the legislature, are controlled by a terrorist organization. This should not come as a surprise to anyone. In December, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly adopted House Resolution 575 by a vote of 397–17 which warned that there would be serious consequences—including financial consequences—for U.S.-Palestinian relations if Hamas were to take over the Palestinian Authority.

Mr. Speaker, not one thin dime of American taxpayer money should be devoted to supporting a terrorist organization. Nor should one thin dime be devoted to making a terrorist organization look good. Our desire to support strictly humanitarian assistance for the Palestinian people, of course, will continue unabated. But we should not fund major projects, whatever their purpose. Such projects would only make a Hamas government look like a success story. They would be taken as evidence that Hamas can defy the international community and continue to receive financial support, while supporting terrorism, rejecting Israel's right to exist, and spitting on pre-existing Israeli-Palestinian agreements.

Mr. Speaker, that is why the Ros-Lehtinen-Lantos legislation will put severe restrictions on all Palestinian assistance that is not strictly for humanitarian purposes. The notion that an organization hell-bent on destroying the sole democratic state in the Middle East should be receiving or exploiting U.S.-taxpayer funds is simply unacceptable. We will be relentless in isolating and fighting terrorists. Hamas officials and their representatives will not be given visas to visit the United States. American officials will not deal with Hamas representatives unless—and this is a major unless—unless they publicly and without reservation recognize the right of the democratic State of Israel to exist, renounce terrorism as a means of achieving their goals and objectives, and accept all previous Israeli-Palestinian agreements. And we will fight direct assistance to a

terrorist-controlled Palestinian Authority through any international institution. Hamas must understand that their ability to deal with the United States and to be accepted in the community of civilized nations rests on a thorough repudiation of their hateful policies.

Governments have made such changes in the past. Organizations and movements have made such changes in the past. And certainly, Hamas has that opportunity. But if Hamas does not clearly take full advantage of this opportunity, our legislation will soon come into effect and we will prohibit American funds. If Hamas does take advantage of this opportunity and definitively and unequivocally meets these requirements, then our government would be willing to deal with it, continue assistance, and work to see that the long-suffering Palestinian people have a better life in the future. Otherwise, I fear the Palestinians and prospects for Middle East peace will face a long, difficult winter that could be measured in years not months.

Mr. Speaker, I support this resolution, and I urge all my colleagues to do likewise.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. Con. Res. 79, which expresses the sense of Congress that no U.S. assistance should be provided directly to the Palestinian Authority if any representative political party holding a majority of parliamentary seats within the Palestinian Authority maintains a position calling for the destruction of Israel.

On January 25, Hamas won a majority of the seats in the Palestinian Authority parliamentary elections. Their charter calls for the "obliteration" of Israel and states that they can achieve their objectives only through violence. They have rejected the "two-state" solution and Road Map peace process. They continue to call for a Palestinian State which includes and ultimately subsumes the sovereign territory of Israel.

Mr. Speaker, this House has already gone on record on the issue of assistance to the Palestinian Government should Hamas become part of the government. On December 14, 2005, the House passed H. Res. 575, which I cosponsored, which in part calls upon the United States to reassess its financial assistance to, and its diplomatic relations with, the Palestinians should Hamas join the government.

I am pleased that the Quartet issued a statement on January 30, 2006, which "concluded that it was inevitable that future assistance to any new government would be reviewed by donors against that government's commitment to the principles of nonviolence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the Roadmap."

I also agree with the Quartet that the Palestinian Authority must move quickly to ensure law and order, prevent terrorist attacks, and dismantle the infrastructure of terror. Finally, the new government must also take concrete steps to establish the rule of law, tolerance, reform and sound fiscal management in the Palestinian territories.

The foundation of the Road Map peace process hinges on Palestinian recognition of the right of Israel to exist and a pledge by the Palestinians to end violence and terrorism. Just as the United States will not negotiate with terrorists, neither will Israel. We cannot allow American taxpayer dollars to fall into the hands of terrorists who have no intention of renouncing violence.

I therefore urge my colleagues to support this important resolution.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, a top Hamas leader was recently quoted as saying the U.S. would "get used to Hamas in a year or two."

I'm afraid he's sadly mistaken. America will never accept a Palestinian Authority controlled by a terrorist organization—1 year, 5 years, 10 years or 50 years from now.

Hamas must face reality. Either they meet the conditions of the international community—recognize Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state, renounce terrorism and disarm—or face a massive reduction of assistance and isolation.

The civilized world should not bend to Hamas; they must bend to us.

This resolution—to be followed soon by binding legislation—sends an unambiguous signal to Hamas and the rest of the world that Congress will not bankroll a terrorist government responsible for the deaths of thousands of innocent civilians and committed to the destruction of Israel.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this simple resolution and of its central underlying premise—that this Nation will not support a Palestinian Government that is not unambiguous in its recognition of Israel's right to exist and unequivocal in its support for a two-state solution to the decades-long conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. I also commend the distinguished chairman and the ranking member of our committee who have dedicated themselves to working for true peace in the Middle East.

The Hamas victory in last month's Palestinian Legislative Council election is a major setback to the prospects for peace. Last year's withdrawal from Gaza and parts of the West Bank by Israel was a positive step after several years of bitter fighting between the two communities.

While much of the world was taken by surprise by the Hamas victory, we really should not have been shocked. Last summer, even as Israeli soldiers physically removed settlers from their homes, the Israeli Government, the United States Government, the European Union and others were emphatic in telling the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian people that they now bore the burden of centralizing authority in Gaza and maintaining security there. This country and our allies sought to strengthen the P.A. with aid and diplomatic support. Unfortunately, the Palestinian Authority was unable to seize the opportunity to show the Palestinian people the true benefits of peace.

Polling before the election and exit polling done on election day shows clearly that Palestinian voters chose Hamas because they were fed up with the corruption of Fatah and its inability to deliver a wide range of basic social and economic benefits. Hamas may be best known to Americans as a violent terrorist organization, but within the P.A. it has also run schools, medical clinics and day care centers.

The same polling that showed Palestinian disgust with Fatah also showed that a large majority of Palestinians favor a two-state solution and peace with Israel. The problem now is how do we, the United States, Israel and the rest of the international community, convince Hamas that the only way forward is to abandon its dream of driving Israel into the sea and replacing it with an Islamist Palestine.

Frankly, Mr. Speaker, I do not know if this is possible, but I have become convinced after

multiple refusals by Hamas spokesmen to repudiate its call for Israel's destruction, that the only way forward is to ratchet up the pressure. This resolution is, I believe, a good first step. It does not mandate specific action by the administration, but reiterates the message that this country will not support a Hamas government that will not recognize Israel.

Those who cling to the dream of Israel's destruction must realize that this resolution is a warning and that continued intransigence will be met with sterner countermeasures.

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. Con. Res. 79 and am pleased that the House leadership has decided to pursue this thoughtful and constructive response to the success of Hamas in the recent Palestinian Legislative Council elections.

With passage of this resolution, the Congress will be on record in opposition of any direct U.S. aid to the Palestinian Authority if the majority party in parliament maintains a position calling for the destruction of Israel.

This reflects longstanding U.S. policy. And it is clearly the right policy. Hamas is a ruthless terrorist organization with the blood of innocents on its hands. When Hamas assumes control of the Palestinian parliament, it must recognize Israel's right to exist and renounce terror. If not, the Palestinian Authority should receive no direct U.S. aid. It's as simple as that.

But I would like to use this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to point out that the outcome of the Palestinian election does not lend itself to simple analysis. And the U.S. response to this development must not be knee-jerk and simplistic.

Let us first remember that the Palestinian people went to the polls and conducted an election that was remarkably democratic, free, fair, and devoid of violence. We may not like the results, but we should take note of what is among the most democratic elections the Arab world has ever seen.

And while Hamas attracted the most votes, there is little evidence that Palestinian voters were in fact endorsing Hamas's call for Israel's destruction. Exit polls show that three-quarters of all Palestinian voters support reconciliation between Israel and the Palestinians based on a two-state solution. Armed with the ballot, Palestinians gave political voice to their anger and anguish over two related problems—the rampant corruption and cronyism within the Fatah establishment, and the lack of any tangible improvement of the quality of life under Israeli occupation.

So what should the United States do in response to this election? One thing we cannot do is simply throw up our hands and refuse to engage in efforts to help Israel and the Palestinians achieve peace. We cannot turn back the clock. Every week that goes by without any progress to achieve a solution to this conflict increases the threat to U.S. national interests. This was true before Hamas came to power and it is just as true today.

Yesterday, I received a letter from the Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs assuring me that the administration "remain(s) committed to working toward the peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict . . ." This is a positive statement, and Congress should play a positive role in partnership with the President to advance our interests in the region.

For this reason, I am concerned about some legislative proposals that have been introduced in the House which would, in my view, sharply curtail our ability to engage constructively in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Future legislation should include a mix of sticks and carrots—not just sticks. Clearly, direct aid to a Hamas-led Palestinian Authority must be stopped right now, but we should keep the door open for future aid if the P.A. undertakes the changes and reforms we are demanding of them. Permanently restricting our assistance provides little incentive and dramatically limits the President's options. Similarly, we must distinguish between the Hamas elements of the Palestinian Government and members of the PLO with whom the U.S. and Israel have negotiated for many years. Terminating diplomatic contact with the entire Palestinian leadership will do nothing but undermine the very moderates who oppose violence and support dialogue with Israel.

In addition, I am concerned about legislative efforts that would restrict the delivery of U.S. humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people through credible and transparent nongovernmental organizations. I am pleased that the recent report in the New York Times about a coordinated American-Israeli effort to "starve" the Palestinian people has been strongly denied by both countries. The average Palestinian on the West Bank and Gaza leads a very difficult life and the further deterioration of economic conditions will not only be devastating for the Palestinians, but will also weaken Israel's security.

Mr. Speaker, today the House is taking an important step by stating unequivocally that U.S. assistance will not flow to a government dominated by a terrorist group bent on Israel's destruction. I hope, in the weeks and months ahead, as the situation in Israel and Palestine evolves, we can come back to this floor and enact thoughtful legislation that helps the Palestinian people, secures the State of Israel, and advances our own important interests in the Middle East.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pledge my support for S. Con. Res. 79, which expresses Congress's disapproval of any foreign aid distributed to the Palestinian Authority if a group holding the majority of seats supports the destruction of one of America's closest allies, Israel.

The recent election by the Palestinian people that put Hamas in control of their governing body should be troubling to all. This organization, with a foundation of hate and a track record of evil, has as its platform, one goal—the annihilation of the Jewish State of Israel.

It is quite troublesome that a people, desperate to prove to the world that they are deserving of recognition, peaceful, would with overwhelming support put in power a group solely motivated by the ruin of the peaceful and freedom-loving Nation of Israel.

Hamas is responsible for the tragic deaths of thousands of innocent Israelis and Americans, including women and children. They have refused to take part in any peace talks, including the Oslo Accords. They have refused to participate in previous, formal governmental operations that have worked with Israel. And they actively recruit children to accomplish their malevolent and homicidal agenda.

For generations, we have been working towards a plan that will finally bring peace to the

most unstable region in the world—the Middle East. In recent years, peace looked as close as it ever has, held together by fragile promises of Arab leaders to end their over half-century assault on the nonviolent and democratic State of Israel. The control of the Palestinian Authority by Hamas could very well tip the scales away from a peaceful resolution.

Congress, who holds the purse strings of the peoples' money, should never provide any aid to any organization set on such destructive results. As a Member of Congress representing a district whose sightline used to include the Twin Towers, I know all too well the devastating effects of vengefulness and abhorrence.

I am proud of Congress's actions today and commend those who have worked to bring this resolution to the floor. I was similarly proud to stand with my colleagues in December when with strong bipartisan support, we passed H. Res. 575, warning against the very inclusion of Hamas and other terrorist groups in the Palestinian elections. I am also a proud original cosponsor of H.R. 4668, a House bill denying aid to a Hamas-controlled Palestinian Authority.

As our only ally in a region filled with unrest and American hatred, I vow to continue to stand firm with the State of Israel. The rise to power by the terrorist establishment Hamas only spells trouble for Israel and the United States, as well as for all our collaborative efforts to reverse the trend of a region that has been a breeding ground for terrorists sought on eliminating freedom and liberty from this world.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support S. Con. Res. 79, a resolution expressing the sense of Congress that no United States assistance should be provided directly to the Palestinian Authority so long as the Hamas-led government maintains a position calling for the destruction of Israel.

In fact, I will go further and say that the United States should freeze all aid to the Palestinian Government until Hamas denounces violence, renounces terrorism, and recognizes the State of Israel's right to exist within secure borders. Hamas's mission is the destruction of the State of Israel, and its methods include wholesale violence against civilians. To fund that regime is to legitimize terrorism against innocent people.

Hamas has been responsible for more than 425 terrorist attacks since the start of the second Intifada in the fall of 2000. These attacks have resulted in the deaths of 377 people, including approximately 27 Americans since 1993.

With Hamas in the majority—an organization designated as a terrorist group by the United States and the European Union—the Palestinian Authority is now led by a regime whose actions and covenant directly reject a diplomatic and peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Hamas must publicly acknowledge Israel's right to exist as a free, Jewish state, denounce terrorism and dismantle its terrorist infrastructure, halt anti-Israel incitement, and commit itself to the peace process. The logical consequence of Hamas's failure to follow these civilized principles must be a freeze on foreign aid from the international community.

Today, the Palestinian Authority receives approximately \$1.1 billion a year in foreign aid. According to a report prepared by the Con-

gressional Research Service, the Palestinian Authority receives about \$320 million a year in direct foreign aid, and about double that amount in indirect aid.

I am concerned that the international community may not be united in its opposition to Hamas. There is already disagreement within the Quartet, with President Putin declaring that Russia will not stop foreign aid to the Palestinian Authority. I have already written President Putin to urge him not to fund Hamas, and I hope he will reconsider his decision. But the problem goes beyond Russia.

Arab nations, many of them purported friends of the United States, have openly declared that they will step in and fund the Hamas-led government. Saudi Arabia and Qatar have already pledged \$33 million. Several countries in Latin America, including Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, and Bolivia, have invited Hamas officials to visit with their governments. The international community must neither fund, nor legitimize Hamas.

Therefore, I am circulating a letter to President Bush urging him to build an international consensus to withhold foreign aid as a way to isolate the Hamas-led government until Hamas denounces violence, renounces terrorism, and recognizes the State of Israel's right to exist within secure borders. Many Members of Congress have joined me in this effort, and I hope with this action by Congress today, more Members will join our efforts.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, the Palestinian elections last month provided the Palestinian Authority an incredible opportunity to take the necessary step in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. However, Hamas continues to incite violence and advocate for the destruction of Israel.

The resolution before us today states that the United States will not support sending tax dollars in the form of aid to a terrorist government. This resolution sends the message that America does not do business with a government that calls for the total destruction of one of our allies.

Hamas, for its part, continues to support the killing of Israeli civilians and denies the legitimacy of the state of Israel. Hamas has a choice, they can renounce violence, govern and work towards peace, or they can choose violence and the consequences that follow.

Last fall, I sent a letter to President Abbas calling on him to institute clear criteria for participation in Palestinian elections. Groups or individuals such as Hamas who support violence, racism, intolerance and hatred should have no right to participate in democratic elections.

Mr. Speaker, I do not see President Abbas working towards peace. This resolution reiterates that America does not deal with terrorists. I urge Members to support this resolution.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I intend to vote in favor of this legislation because I support any statement by Congress indicating hesitation to send U.S. taxpayer money abroad.

Unfortunately this legislation is motivated by politics rather than a genuine desire to limit unconstitutional foreign aid programs. The wording of the resolution itself does not close the door to providing U.S. aid to the Palestinians even if Hamas, the political party that won recent parliamentary elections, takes its seats in parliament without altering its stated policies toward Israel. Indeed, the legislation states that "no United States assistance

should be provided directly to the Palestinian Authority" if Hamas occupies a majority of seats in the Palestinian parliament. This obviously suggests that the money can be spent "indirectly" in any case.

So this is hardly a strong statement opposing any and all aid to the Palestinians, which is the position that I hold.

I find it interesting that the same proponents of the United States government exporting democracy overseas are now demanding that something be done when people overseas do not vote the way the U.S. Government thinks they should. It seems that being for democracy means respecting that people overseas may not always vote the way Washington wants them to vote. If our aim is to ensure that only certain parties or individuals are allowed to lead foreign nations, why not just admit that democracy is the last thing we want? That attitude is evident in the fact that the U.S. Government spent more than \$2 million trying to manipulate the Palestinian vote in favor of parties supported by Washington. You cannot have it both ways. Although it is always a good idea to eliminate foreign aid, we should be careful about calling the manipulation of elections overseas an exercise in "democracy promotion."

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I have been occupied with the Ways and Means Committee all day and have not been able to participate in floor debate. I wish I had been able to participate in the discussion of S. Con. Res. 79 which was on the floor this morning because I have a question about the resolution.

My question is: How does this resolution further the cause of peace in the Middle East or make Israel more secure?

The resolution states that it is the sense of Congress that the U.S. should not directly aid the Palestinian Authority "if any representative political party holding a majority of parliamentary seats within the Palestinian Authority maintains a position calling for the destruction of Israel."

Of course there is a party with that sentiment, Hamas, and—as we all know—that U.S. law prohibits aid to Hamas. As far as I know, neither President Bush nor Secretary Rice nor anyone else in our Government has proposed trying to find a loophole through which the U.S. can bankroll Hamas.

So we have a resolution opposing an action which is already prohibited in existing law. We are bravely opposing doing something illegal that no one at all in the administration or Congress has proposed to do.

Why? Why did we come to the floor and vote on this? Who does it help?

I am submitting two articles for the RECORD along with this statement. The first, "The Right Way to Pressure Hamas," is an editorial from this morning's New York Times.

It discusses the rumors that the U.S. and Israel are trying to create conditions that would lead to new elections to oust Hamas, presumably in favor of Fatah.

The editorial notes that "in the long, sorry history of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, there is not a shred of evidence to support the notion that pushing the Palestinian population into more economic desperation would somehow cause them to moderate their political views. In fact, experience teaches the exact opposite."

The Times goes on to say that a wise course "would be to step back and desist from deliberately provoking the Palestinians, and give Hamas a chance to reconsider its own options."

The second article, "Talking with the Guys from Hamas," appeared last Saturday in the Daily Star, a well-respected, moderate Beirut daily. I urge every member to take time to read it.

Its author, Rami Khouri, notes that a "Hamas-led Palestinian government and the new Israeli government to be elected next month face a historic opportunity."

He predicts that Hamas "will surely continue its 3-year slow shift toward more pragmatism and realism because it is now politically accountable to the entire Palestinian population, and to world public opinion."

However, Khouri warns: "It is not very helpful—as so may pro-Israel American apologists do—to focus mainly on Hamas' theology or its 1987 founding charter, any more than one should deal with Israeli parties that base their claim to all of Palestine—Eretz Israel on the book of Genesis account of God's land patrimony to the Jewish people."

So, what was the point of today's vote? To spell out for Hamas that Congress is going to stand in the way if Secretary Rice suddenly decides to try to send them a big aid package? To tell the President that he'd better not be trying to exploit some loophole to subsidize Hamas?

To clarify for Israel that the position that Harry Truman took isn't being abandoned after 58 years?

Mr. Speaker, time and time again, my Republican colleagues have come to the floor with resolutions opining on various issues.

Regrettably, they often serve to worsen the problems under consideration and to boil complex issues down to radio talk show-sized sound bites. This is a sensitive, dynamic time in Arab-Israeli relations, and I hope members can restrain themselves from show-boating.

As Rami Khouri suggests: "Political theologians and collectors of historical ideologies, please go home for a while."

[From the Daily Star, Feb. 11, 2006]

TALKING WITH THE GUYS FROM HAMAS

(By Rami G. Khouri)

I had the opportunity Thursday to explore first-hand the implications of the victory of Hamas in last month's Palestinian parliamentary elections. I went to talk to Hamas leaders at the Palestinian refugee camp of Burj al-Barajneh in Beirut, where poor, disenfranchised Palestinian refugees live in rather atrocious material conditions.

After two-and-a-half hours of discussions among Hamas, other Palestinian parties and an Anglo-American visiting delegation, I now know better why Hamas swept the Palestinian elections. The human contact also reveals what the news does not convey: this exiled, marginalized, downtrodden and vulnerable refugee community walks today with its head held higher than any other group of people in the entire Middle East, because of its unique combination of self-confidence, perseverance, success and legitimacy. Hamas is the only Arab party that enjoys an authentic mandate from its people, genuinely manifested through victory in two free elections at the municipal and national levels.

What does one learn from such encounters? The two most significant themes that emerge from discussions with Hamas officials—and from their many statements—are a commitment to national principles and a clear dose of political pragmatism. Both dimensions are important, and cannot be separated.

It is not very helpful—as so many pro-Israeli American apologists do—to focus mainly on Hamas' theology or its 1987 founding charter, any more than one should deal with Israeli parties that base their claim to

all of Palestine-Eretz Yisrael on the Book of Genesis account of God's land patrimony to the Jewish people. Political theologians and collectors' of historical ideologies, please go home for a while.

Now that Hamas will share or hold power, they are likely to persist in both their principled and pragmatic ways. They will assert rather than drop their existing principles related to domestic governance, resisting Israel and liberating the Israeli-occupied territories, and potentially coexisting with an Israeli state under certain conditions. It is foolhardy to expect Hamas to reverse its principles at the moment when it has achieved a historic victory precisely because it has adhered to them. At the same time, it will surely continue its three-year-old slow shift toward more pragmatism and realism, because it is now politically accountable to the entire Palestinian population, and to world public opinion. Incumbency means responsibility and accountability, which inevitably nurture practicality and reasonable compromises.

Here is where Hamas' experience is instructive, and why it is so important to speak with them to understand how they are likely to behave. My sense from such discussions, along with 35 years of watching Islamists at work, is that they do make compromises and practical concessions. But they only do so on four conditions: they talk and compromise in a political context of negotiations between two equal parties; they give only when they get something of equal value in return; they respond emphatically to the consensus position of their national constituency; and they do not compromise on what they identify as core national rights of equality, dignity, liberty and sovereignty.

One more vital point to remember: Hamas and Hizbullah are the only two Arab groups that have ever forced Israel's fabled military to withdraw involuntarily from occupied Arab land (South Lebanon and Gaza). American presidents and other purveyors of fantasy are free to call this sort of unilateralism a "courageous initiative for peace," as George W. Bush said of Ariel Sharon. The rest of the rational world calls this what it is: a retreat, and a tacit admission of defeat. Hamas will build on the policies that achieved this, not repudiate them.

Hamas lives in the real world, not in fantasyland. It and its supporters are not so impressed with having tea in the White House. They are much more focused on bringing back a degree of personal dignity, communal self-respect, and national integrity to Palestinian life. They also know that the majority of Palestinians, other Arabs and world nations wish to coexist in negotiated peace with the state of Israel, if Israel in turn reciprocates the sentiment to the Palestinians and other Arabs whose lands it has occupied. How to reconcile these realities is a priority issue for them in the coming months.

I expect that Hamas will combine its legacy of both principles and pragmatism in slowly making important decisions on key issues in coming months. These will include sharing power in Palestine, reforming corrupt and mediocre national institutions, galvanizing an effective national Palestinian leadership representing all Palestinians in the world, negotiating peace with Israel while resisting its occupation, and fostering the development of a society that is not necessarily ruled by Islamic law.

A Hamas-led Palestinian government and the new Israeli government to be elected next month face a historic opportunity, if they are prepared to see each other as representing peoples and nations with equal rights. Hamas has reached this triumphant

moment precisely because it has insisted on such equality, rather than pandering to Israeli-American promises as other Palestinian leaders did without success.

Hamas can be pragmatic only because its resistance and consistent principles have brought it success. Understanding the dynamic relationship between these factors is the key to movement forward to a win-win situation for all, including Palestinians, Israelis and the slightly dazed denizens of fantasylands far away.

[From the New York Times, Feb. 15, 2006]
THE RIGHT WAY TO PRESSURE HAMAS

America and Israel have to walk a very narrow line in defining their relations with a democratically elected Palestinian government built around Hamas, a party that not only endorses terrorism but also commits it. They cannot possibly give political recognition or financial aid to such a government. Neither can any country that claims to oppose terrorism. That defines the right side of the line.

On the wrong side lies the kind of deliberate destabilization that, according to a report by our Times colleague Steven Erlanger, Washington and Jerusalem are now discussing. That would involve a joint American-Israeli campaign to undermine a Hamas government by putting impossible demands on it, starving it of money and putting even greater restrictions on the Palestinians with an eye toward forcing new elections that might propel the defeated and discredited Fatah Party back to power.

Set aside the hypocrisy such a course would represent on the part of the two countries that have shouted the loudest about the need for Arab democracy, and consider the probable impact of such an approach on the Palestinians. They are already driven to distraction by fury, frustration and poverty. Is it really possible to expect that more punishment from the Israelis and the Americans, this time for not voting the way we wanted them to, would lead them to abandon Hamas?

In the long, sorry history of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, there is not a shred of evidence to support the notion that pushing the Palestinian population into more economic desperation would somehow cause them to moderate their political views. In fact, experience teaches the exact opposite.

Fatah lost last month's election because its incompetence and corruption drove Palestinian voters into the arms of the more austere, social-services-oriented Hamas. If the new government fails to deliver because it puts continued terrorism over the well-being of the Palestinian people, it may indeed be booted out of office. But a Hamas that could explain continued Palestinian misery by a deliberate American-Israeli plan to reverse the democratic verdict of the polls would be likely to become only stronger.

Washington publicly asserts that no such plan is being discussed. A far wiser course for the United States to pursue would be to step back and desist from deliberately provoking the Palestinians, and give Hamas a chance to reconsider its own options. Some hints about its intentions may emerge from the way its leaders respond to overtures by the Russian president, Vladimir Putin. Last week, Mr. Putin indicated that he intended to invite them to Moscow for a visit.

Mr. Putin's move was controversial in the West, and perhaps he should have provided more warning. But that would be a minor snub indeed if he prods Hamas toward renouncing terrorism, accepting Israel's right to exist and reviving the peace process.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker and my fellow Representatives, we have be-

fore us a resolution that, in its brevity, expresses the apprehension, concern, and resoluteness of our country in response to the victory of Hamas in the Palestinian elections 3 weeks ago.

I stand here to support the sense of Congress that an organization that does not recognize the right of another sovereign state to exist should not be the recipient of our aid. I have grave reservations about this resolution, however. Rather than pressure Hamas to recognize Israel, we may instead add more fire to the hostilities and prematurely halt the peace process by asserting this punitive resolution.

I hope that the Palestinian Authority will engage in diplomatic relations and come to an understanding that is satisfactory to all involved. The violence and suicide bombings are still present in our minds, and our objective is to never have to witness events such as these again.

But I also know that the Palestinian people need our help desperately. They are vulnerable. They need food, shelter, warmth, sanitation, medicine, schools. But they also need safety, protection, confidence, and a reason to believe that they may someday witness and achieve stability and peace. By joining in the sense of Congress today and refusing aid to a government that does not recognize Israel, we cannot forget the Palestinian people, who still urgently need our humanitarian aid.

Some may say that the majority voted for a historically terrorist political party. But the picture is never as simple as it seems on the surface—Palestinians had a choice between corruption and terrorism. They have seen the wasted resources and the ineffectiveness. They voiced their disgust in their leadership by democratically voting them out of office. The elections were a success in that regard—campaigning was energetic and nonviolent, and the election turnout was beyond expectations. They chose to replace the party in power with an alternative that promised more solidity, more leadership, and more hope for the future.

I do, however, implore that Hamas recognize the state of Israel and renounce violence. We can help them achieve many great things, including their own sovereign state. I hope that they will take us up on our offer.

Israel has found a way to exist as both a religious state and as an international diplomatic partner while protecting its own interests. Many Arab states have also tried this with varying degrees of success. Hamas needs to understand that you can run your country holding religious values close, while participating in a secular process that will give you what you seek. Daily, we see reports that Hamas refuses to acknowledge Israel's right to exist. Although we understand the anger, we've been shocked and dismayed at the violence in the Islamic community as a result of the publication of offensive cartoons. Unfortunately these images are present in our minds as we consider our relationship with the Middle East. I strongly urge Hamas to reassess its tactics and its position in relation to its goals, as well as reassess how best it can serve its people in its new position of government leadership. I know that your religion values human life. Prove it by protecting your people, and assuming the authority you have democratically earned by recognizing Israel's right to exist, just as you assert your right to exist.

The Israeli national anthem is entitled "The Hope," and it expresses an optimistic, yet sober understanding of what is needed to attain peace. Today, as a Member of Congress, I will join my colleagues in telling the Palestinian Authority that it must step onto the international diplomatic arena with honesty, openness, and a willingness to compromise. I still believe that a State of Palestine and a State of Israel will someday be able to coexist in peace, but in order for that to happen, both must acknowledge one another.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this resolution as a first step toward helping our close ally, Israel, from an increasing threat. This resolution responds to the troubling results of the Palestinian Legislative Council, PLC, elections last month, in which Hamas—the radical Islamic Palestinian organization that has sought to expel Jews and destroy the state of Israel to establish an Islamic Palestinian state based on Islamic law—won a majority of the seats.

Hamas has been recognized by the United States and the European Union as a terrorist organization, and has committed hundreds of acts of terrorism against Israeli citizens since its creation in 1987.

The group has employed car bombings, suicide bombings, mortar attacks, Qassam rocket attacks, and assassinations to achieve its stated goal of destroying Israel, and in doing so has killed thousands of innocent Israelis, as well as several Americans, including 5 during a series of bombings in 1996.

In FY 2005, \$275 million was appropriated to the West Bank and Gaza, with \$50 million of that funding going directly to the Palestinian Authority. We can never allow U.S. taxpayer dollars to get in the hands of a Hamas-controlled government to be used against Israel.

The Palestinian people voted and selected Hamas, but that does not mean we must support an organization that is counter to real peace in the Middle East. Elections are serious business, and I am disappointed the Palestinian people selected a group who does not want peace.

Passing this resolution is just a first step to notify a Hamas led government; the US and its allies can not support a government in Gaza and the West Bank that does not recognize Israel's right to exist.

Mr. Speaker, these election results are extremely troubling and this resolution shows solidarity and concern for the security of Israel and its people. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution to send a strong message to Hamas that we will not recognize them as a legitimate government so long as they promote terrorism.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. Con. Res. 79, a resolution urging that no U.S. assistance should be provided directly to the Palestinian Authority if any representative political party holding a majority of parliamentary seats within the Palestinian Authority maintains a position calling for the destruction of Israel.

With Hamas's victory in the Palestinian elections and the continued nuclear aggression of Iran, it is now more important than ever for the U.S. to reaffirm its support for Israel.

With Hamas's new power comes new responsibility. It is time for Hamas to recognize Israel's right to exist. It is time for Hamas to lay down its arms and realize the road to peace lies through direct negotiations with Israel.

We must call on Hamas to put an end to violence and terror. They must cease their rhetoric of hate. The U.S. and the international community must strongly urge Hamas to recognize Israel's right to exist.

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, Hamas maintains and asserts a radical, violent ideology within its charter—the destruction of Israel. I believe that S. Con. Res. 79, which reaffirms that no U.S. funds should go to the Palestinian Authority if the majority party maintains a position calling for the destruction of Israel, is a good first step in creating a more peaceful region. Voting in support of this Resolution is not a hard choice.

But harder choices and questions lay ahead. Should we choose a knee-jerk reaction that cuts off all communication, as well as all assistance to the Palestinian people? The alternative is taking a deep breath and reflecting on more constructive ways to bring about a long-term, sustainable peace within the region, while maintaining our opposition to a political party that supports the idea of the destruction of another nation.

The reasons behind Hamas's victory are complicated. Polling data continues to show that the majority of Palestinians want peace and believe in a two-state solution. Palestinians are tired of a corrupt government and are exhausted by living in poverty. The U.S. Government's actions should not feed these root causes of Palestinian discontent. In fact, we should be supportive of efforts to mitigate these problems, including continued support for NGO-run humanitarian assistance. This path of moderation, I believe, will help bring more security to Israel, Gaza and the West Bank, and some day a Palestinian State.

Silence does not create peace and we shouldn't turn our backs on the Middle East and push all Palestinians down a path of isolation and extremism. The U.S. and Israel must remain engaged and push for a peace process that supports moderate Palestinian voices and peaceful leaders and urge Hamas to conduct itself as a legitimate political authority by renouncing the ideology of the destruction of Israel.

I urge Hamas to change its charter and urge the U.S. State Department to choose peace.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this resolution being brought to the floor so quickly and urge its passage.

The Hamas victory in Palestinian parliamentary elections is of great concern to me and many others and presents a major challenge to the peace process. There is simply no way our government can meet with or provide assistance to a government led by a terrorist organization.

Hamas ran a campaign based on cleaning out the corruption of the Fatah party. The Palestinian people responded to this pledge, but sadly in the process elected a terrorist government. Unless Hamas recognizes the State of Israel's right to exist, ceases incitement and permanently disarms and dismantles their terrorist infrastructure, the United States will not work with this government, nor can we expect Israel to.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KOLBE). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois

(Mr. HYDE) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate concurrent resolution, S. Con. Res. 79.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO SHIRLEY HORN

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 300) paying tribute to Shirley Horn in recognition of her many achievements and contributions to the world of jazz and American culture, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 300

Whereas on October 20, 2005, the United States lost jazz legend Shirley Horn, who contributed greatly to the musical landscape of the Nation through her artistry and musical talent;

Whereas Shirley Horn was born in 1934 in Washington, DC, and started her musical career at the age of four on her grandmother's piano;

Whereas at the tender age of 12, Shirley Horn studied composition and piano at Howard University and was invited to attend the prestigious Juilliard School in New York City when she was 18;

Whereas jazz gives a powerful voice to the American experience and is born of a diverse society, uniting people across the divides of race, region, and national boundaries, and draws from life experience and human emotion;

Whereas over her long and distinguished career, Shirley Horn performed and worked with jazz legends, including Miles Davis and Quincy Jones;

Whereas Shirley Horn recorded over two dozen albums and was lauded with numerous honors, including the Grammy Award for best jazz vocal performance in 1998, election into the Lionel Hampton Jazz Hall of Fame in 1996, an honorary doctorate from the Berklee College of Music in 1998, the 2003 Jazz at Lincoln Center Award, inclusion in ASCAP's Wall of Fame as the 2005 living legend, and the 2005 NEA Jazz Master, the Nation's highest honor in jazz;

Whereas Shirley Horn never forgot her roots and continued to support and perform in her local community of Washington, DC, receiving the Mayor's Arts Award for Excellence in an Artistic Discipline; and

Whereas Shirley Horn's voice and piano had a profound effect on her listeners around the world: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) notes with deep sorrow the death of Shirley Horn and extends heartfelt sympathy to her husband and family; and

(2) recognizes Shirley Horn's many achievements and contributions to the world of jazz and American culture and notes the loss to American culture with her passing.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from

Nevada (Mr. PORTER) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nevada.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Con. Res. 300, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Nevada?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 300, which pays tribute to Ms. Shirley Horn, one of the leading jazz musicians of her generation. Ms. Horn passed away this past October, leaving behind a legacy of unsurpassing musical achievement and a family thankful for her dedication as a wife, a mother, and a grandmother. I thank the resolution's author, Mr. CONYERS, for drawing our attention to Ms. Horn's accomplishments and her status as one of America's artistic treasures.

Ms. Horn's talent was evident in early life. She began playing the piano at age 4 and started formal musical training at age 5. At the age of 12, she studied composition at Howard University in Washington, DC and received a scholarship to the Juilliard School in New York at the age of 18. Unable to afford the high costs of living in New York, Ms. Horn instead remained in Washington, again studying music at Howard University.

Ms. Horn released her first album in 1961. The record, entitled "Embers and Ashes," established her as a gifted jazz musician and attracted the attention of such musical luminaries as Miles Davis and Quincy Jones. Following the release of "Embers and Ashes," Ms. Horn recorded two more albums and spent several years touring major jazz clubs throughout the United States.

However, Ms. Horn struggled with the travel demands of an active tour schedule and chose to spend the bulk of her time at home with her husband and daughter, occasionally playing at local jazz clubs in the Washington and Baltimore areas. Then, in 1980, while attending a musicians' convention in Washington, she was rediscovered while playing at a hotel piano with a group of old friends.

This rediscovery led to several years of touring and recording, with audiences and critics alike responding enthusiastically to her resurgence. Ms. Horn received nine Grammy nominations during this period, culminating in her 1998 Grammy Award for Best Jazz Vocal Performance for "I Remember Miles," her tribute to Miles Davis.

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Ms. Horn's awards also include a 2003 Jazz at Lincoln Center award for Artistic Excellence, and being named the