

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 194

Expressing the sense of Congress regarding the failure of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Palestinian Authority to properly implement education reforms aimed at reducing the cultural roots of terrorism.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 26, 2007

Mr. KING of New York submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress regarding the failure of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Palestinian Authority to properly implement education reforms aimed at reducing the cultural roots of terrorism.

Whereas the curriculum in many countries in the Middle East continues to promote hatred, intolerance, violence, incitement, so-called “martyrdom”, and anti-Semitic and anti-democratic views;

Whereas the events of September 11, 2001, and the global rash of terrorist attacks since then, have created an urgent need to promote moderate voices in the Muslim world as an effective way to combat extremism and terrorism;

Whereas the Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (the 9/11 Commission report) supports the implementation of diplomacy measures, including education reform, as necessary steps in addressing the global struggle against terrorism and the promotion of democracy in the Middle East;

Whereas extremism endangers the stability of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Middle East region, and threatens global security;

Whereas Wahhabism—as it is taught and presented in the documents of its ideologues, cadres and supporters—is a radical and fundamentalist Islamist ideology which advocates a narrow and rigid interpretation of Quranic texts and divides the world between believers and nonbelievers (including Muslim non-Wahhabists), who are seen as the enemy and those to be dealt with through “jihad”;

Whereas the religious curriculum in the Saudi school system is written, monitored, and taught by followers of the Wahhabi interpretation of Islam, the only religion Saudi Arabia allows to be taught;

Whereas Saudi Wahhabism is seeking to spread its extremist ideology throughout the world and to influence Muslim education globally;

Whereas Saudi embassies in the United States and abroad distribute the Wahhabi-inspired textbooks that are taught in Saudi schools;

Whereas Saudi Arabia has tolerated elements within its education system that promote and encourage extremism;

Whereas textbooks in Saudi Arabian schools foster intolerance, anti-Semitic, anti-American, and anti-Western views;

Whereas Saudi Arabian textbooks express the Wahhabi dual vision of the world, the idea that anyone who does not practice Wahhabi Islam is the “other” and should be viewed as the enemy, and such a doctrine, describing all non Wahhabis as Kuffars (infidels) is predominant in the educational public sphere;

Whereas the intolerant Wahhabi views instilled in students make them prime recruiting targets of terrorists and other extremist groups;

Whereas as long as Wahhabism is being taught in schools, Saudi children will be indoctrinated into terror and inspired to commit jihad in the name of Islam;

Whereas rote exclusive memorization of religious texts continues to be a central feature of much of the educational system of Saudi Arabia, leaving thousands of students unprepared to function in the global society and economy of the 21st century;

Whereas the Government of Saudi Arabia has made public statements pledging educational reforms;

Whereas Saudi Arabia has now admitted that the necessary educational reforms have not yet been implemented;

Whereas if the reform process is not accelerated, the Saudi educational system could produce another generation of jihadi inspired terrorists;

Whereas several Saudi intellectuals have come out in favor of reforms and tried to pressure the monarchy to reform the educational system;

Whereas in March 2004, Saudi Arabia detained and imprisoned several democratic reformers for criticizing the strict religious environment and the slow pace of reform in Saudi Arabia;

Whereas the 9/11 Commission report states, “Education that teaches tolerance, the dignity and value of each individual, and respect for different beliefs is a key element in any global strategy to eliminate Islamist terrorism.”;

Whereas the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom has reported that Saudi Arabian Government-funded textbooks used both in Saudi Arabia and also in North American Islamic schools and mosques have been found to encourage incitement to violence against non-Muslims;

Whereas a report released on January 28, 2005, by Freedom House’s Center for Religious Freedom found that Saudi Arabia is the state most responsible for the propagation of material promoting hatred, intolerance, and violence within United States mosques and Islamic centers, and that these publications are often official publications of a Saudi ministry or distributed by the Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Washington, DC;

Whereas the Department of State has revoked the diplomatic visas of at least sixteen people with Saudi diplomatic credentials in an effort to curb the spread of inciteful, extremist Wahhabi rhetoric and doctrine in United States schools and mosques;

Whereas in 2006 the United States House of Representatives adopted House Concurrent Resolution 275 (109th Congress), which encouraged Saudi Arabia to reform its educational curriculum;

Whereas education reform in the Palestinian Authority must take place before any lasting Israeli-Palestinian peace will ever be achieved, and for a true democracy to flourish in a future Palestinian state;

Whereas the 1993 Declaration of Principles, which laid the foundation for the 1995 Oslo II Agreement, specifically provides that “Israel and the Palestinian Authority shall seek to foster mutual understanding and tolerance and shall accordingly abstain from incitement, including hostile propaganda against each other and shall take necessary measures to prevent such incitement by any organizations, groups or individuals within their jurisdiction.”;

Whereas phase I of the “Performance-Based Roadmap to a permanent two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict” calls on all official Palestinian and Israeli institutions to end all forms of violence and incitement;

Whereas despite the Palestinian Authority’s recognition of Israel in the Oslo Agreement, Israel is virtually nonexistent in texts, graphics, and illustrations distributed by the Palestinian Authority;

Whereas Palestinian textbooks continue to reject Israel’s right to exist and assert that the conflict with Israel is a religious jihad in the name of Islam;

Whereas textbooks distributed by the Palestinian Authority affirm the significance of martyrdom (in the sense of Istishaad, or militant suicide) and how important the honor of becoming a martyr is;

Whereas textbooks distributed by the Palestinian Authority encourage students to kill Israeli military and civilians as part of an Islamic holy war;

Whereas not only do Palestinian textbooks justify Palestinian use of terrorism against Israel, they also justify Hezbollah’s terrorist activities and claim that it is a “rightful resistance movement”;

Whereas textbooks distributed by the Palestinian authority contain anti-American rhetoric that portrays the United States as an enemy of the Palestinians and the greater Arab world, and teaches that the United States is a human rights abuser and a violator of international humanitarian law, hence encouraging violence against the United States;

Whereas the Palestinian Authority has repeatedly produced new educational textbooks for their curriculum, yet many contain the same messages of anti-Semitism and intolerance;

Whereas if education reforms are not implemented by the Palestinian Authority, a new generation of Palestinians will be indoctrinated with the message of hatred and terror; and

Whereas the Palestinian Authority’s refusal to recognize Israel in Palestinian textbooks, and its continual application of inciteful, intolerant dialogue in the textbooks raises questions about its desire for peaceful relations with Israel: Now, therefore, be it

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

3 (1) expresses extreme disappointment with the
4 slow pace of education reform in the Kingdom of
5 Saudi Arabia and the sense that continual delay of
6 reform implementations should not be accepted;

1 (2) urges Saudi Arabia to reform its textbooks
2 and education curriculum in a manner that pro-
3 motes tolerance and peaceful coexistence with others,
4 develops civil society, and encourages functionality in
5 the global economy;

6 (3) urges Saudi Arabia to increase the number
7 of hours spent on fundamental disciplines such as
8 math, science and the humanities in relation to the
9 number of hours spent on religious education in
10 schools;

11 (4) requests the Secretary of State to monitor
12 the progress of the efforts to reform the Saudi edu-
13 cation curriculum, and report on such progress, in
14 classified form if necessary, to Congress;

15 (5) encourages moderate Muslim leaders to
16 speak out against any elements of extremism within
17 the Saudi educational system;

18 (6) urges Saudi Arabia to cease teaching
19 Wahhabism and instead find an alternate, more be-
20 nign form of Islamic teaching, that promotes toler-
21 ance and acceptance;

22 (7) urges Saudi Arabia to immediately reform
23 the curriculum which Saudi embassies are distrib-
24 uting internationally, specifically the textbooks which

1 the embassies are distributing to Saudi schools, in-
2 cluding those within the United States;

3 (8) urges the Palestinian Authority to remove
4 any inciteful dialogue about martyrdom and jihad
5 from textbooks, and to remove any anti-Semitic ref-
6 erences or passages from their textbooks;

7 (9) urges the Palestinian Authority to officially
8 recognize and accept Israel in maps and educational
9 texts, and to include dialogue which promotes peace-
10 ful and tolerant relations with Israel in their text-
11 books;

12 (10) expresses the need for the Palestinian Au-
13 thority to implement the necessary education re-
14 forms, and the sense that such reforms would ulti-
15 mately allow a lasting peace with Israel to finally be
16 achieved; and

17 (11) expresses the sense that educational re-
18 forms in Saudi Arabia and the Palestinian Authority
19 are a necessary step in the global struggle against
20 terrorism.

○