

110TH CONGRESS
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S. RES. 330

Expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the degradation of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea and welcoming cooperation between the peoples of Israel, Jordan, and Palestine.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 25, 2007

Mr. LUGAR submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the degradation of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea and welcoming cooperation between the peoples of Israel, Jordan, and Palestine.

Whereas the Dead Sea and the Jordan River are bodies of water of exceptional historic, religious, cultural, economic, and environmental importance for the Middle East and the world;

Whereas the world's 3 great monotheistic faiths—Christianity, Islam, and Judaism—consider the Jordan River a holy place;

Whereas local governments have diverted more than 90 percent of the Jordan's traditional 1,300,000,000 cubic me-

ters of annual water flow in order to satisfy a growing demand for water in the arid region;

Whereas the Jordan River is the primary tributary of the Dead Sea and the dramatically reduced flow of the Jordan River has been the primary cause of a 20 meter fall in the Dead Sea's water level and a $\frac{1}{3}$ decline in the Dead Sea's surface area in less than 50 years;

Whereas the Dead Sea's water level continues to fall about a meter a year;

Whereas the decline in water level of the Dead Sea has resulted in significant environmental damage, including loss of freshwater springs, river bed erosion, and over 1,000 sinkholes;

Whereas mismanagement has resulted in the dumping of sewage, fish pond runoff, and salt water into the Jordan River and has led to the pollution of the Jordan River with agricultural and industrial effluents;

Whereas the World Monuments Fund has listed the Jordan River as one of the world's 100 most endangered sites;

Whereas widespread consensus exists regarding the need to restore the quantity and quality of the Jordan River water flow and to restore the water level of the Dead Sea;

Whereas the Governments of Jordan and Israel, as well as the Palestinian Authority (the "Beneficiary Parties"), working together in an unusual and welcome spirit of co-operation, have attempted to address the Dead Sea water level crisis by articulating a shared vision of the Red Sea-Dead Sea Water Conveyance Concept;

Whereas Binyamin Ben Eliezar, the Minister of National Infrastructure of Israel, has said, "The Study is an excellent example for cooperation, peace, and conflict reduc-

tion. Hopefully it will become the first of many such co-operative endeavors”;

Whereas Mohammed Mustafa, the Economic Advisor for the Palestinian Authority, has said, “This cooperation will bring wellbeing for the peoples of the region, particularly Palestine, Jordan, and Israel . . . We pray that this type of cooperation will be a positive experience to deepen the notion of dialogue to reach solutions on all other tracks”;

Whereas Zafer al-Alem, the former Water Minister of Jordan, has said, “This project is a unique chance to deepen the meaning of peace in the region and work for the benefit of our peoples”;

Whereas the Red Sea-Dead Sea Water Conveyance Concept envisions a 110-mile pipeline from the Red Sea to the Dead Sea that would descend approximately 1,300 feet creating an opportunity for hydroelectric power generation and the desalination and restoration of the Dead Sea;

Whereas some have raised legitimate questions regarding the feasibility and environmental impact of the Red Sea-Dead Sea Water Conveyance Concept;

Whereas the Beneficiary Parties have asked the World Bank to oversee a feasibility study and an environmental and social assessment whose purpose is to conclusively answer these questions;

Whereas the Red Sea-Dead Sea Water Conveyance Concept would not address the degradation of the Jordan River;

Whereas the Beneficiary Parties could address the degradation of the Jordan River by designing a comprehensive strategy that includes tangible steps related to water con-

servation, desalination, and the management of sewage and agricultural and industrial effluents; and

Whereas Israel and the Palestinian Authority are expected to hold high-level meetings in Washington in November 2007 to seek an enduring solution to the Arab-Israeli crisis; Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) calls the world's attention to the serious and
3 potentially irreversible degradation of the Jordan
4 River and the Dead Sea;

5 (2) applauds the cooperative manner with which
6 the Governments of Israel and Jordan, as well as
7 the Palestinian Authority (the "Beneficiary Parties"), have worked to address the declining water
8 level and quality of the Dead Sea and other water-
9 related challenges in the region;

10 (3) supports the Beneficiary Parties' efforts to
11 assess the environmental, social, health, and eco-
12 nomic impacts, costs, and feasibility of a possible
13 pipeline from the Red Sea to the Dead Sea in com-
14 parison to alternative proposals;

15 (4) encourages the Governments of Israel and
16 Jordan, as well as the Palestinian Authority, to con-
17 tinue to work in a spirit of cooperation as they ad-
18 dress the region's serious water challenges;

4 (6) hopes the spirit of cooperation manifested
5 by the Beneficiary Parties in their search for a solu-
6 tion to the Dead Sea water crisis might serve as a
7 model for addressing the degradation of the Jordan
8 River, as well as a model of peace and cooperation
9 for the upcoming meetings in Washington between
10 Israel and the Palestinian Authority as they seek to
11 resolve long-standing disagreements and to develop a
12 durable solution to the Arab-Israeli crisis.

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