

Again, this is not rocket science here. We are just basically talking about what we already have for your hospital bills, and we are just saying we want to build on a very successful Medicare program to provide coverage for all seniors. There is no magic here. I believe that with the cost factor and the large pool, that the cost probably would not be that much, considering what we are spending on everything else, as our colleague from Massachusetts pointed out.

So if I could just conclude and thank my colleagues for participating tonight, the main concern I have right now, to be perfectly honest, is that we do not have any action by the Republicans on this issue. They talked about it 2 or 3 weeks ago and promised they were going to bring it up before Memorial Day. They have not.

I disagree with the gentleman in the sense that I would just as soon they bring some bill to the floor and have a debate, because I am fearful we are not going to get to it at all. Clearly when that debate occurs, what the Republican leadership talked about is not acceptable. It is not going to do anything. It is not going to provide any meaningful coverage for anybody. Hopefully we will have the ability as Democrats to bring up a proposal similar to what we outlined today and have a debate on something so important to the American people. I would say we are going to come back here. I know the gentleman from Maine is going to come back here, and we are going to keep talking about this over and over again until the Republicans bring it up and allow an opportunity to address the issue.

SUPPORTING ISRAEL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ISSA). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. FRANK. Mr. Speaker, I apologize to the hard-working members of our staff for keeping them here at this hour. I do not often indulge in long speeches at this time of night, but I do feel an obligation to talk about the situation in the Middle East, particularly the security of Israel and the position of Israel vis-a-vis the United States, for 2 reasons.

First, it is a subject both very important and very emotional. A large number of people in my district, as in every other, care deeply about this. I believe the people who feel the most strongly and the largest number are people who, like myself, have both an emotional attachment to Israel and also a strong intellectual degree of support for it. There are others who are troubled by what is happening in the Middle East and are somewhat critical or harshly critical of the Israeli government.

I think it is an obligation of those of us in elected office when an issue is of this importance to explain ourselves,

and I find here, given the complexity of the issue, I think it is an essentially simple one. I believe that simplicity consists of the fact that for more than 50 years, until maybe recently, and we still do not know this, there has been an unwillingness on the part of the Arab community in the Middle East to allow Israel to exist.

The troubles began when the UN voted in a resolution, UN resolutions have become the currency in the Middle East of late, but the most important UN resolution, the one which said that there should be 2 states, Israel and Palestine, was not only disregarded by the Arab world at that time, but became the occasion for violent attack, and it always ought to be remembered if the Arab world had abided by UN resolutions 50-some years ago, we would have the 2-state solution which so many, including myself, think is the best ultimate answer, without a lot of killing and without a lot of misery and pain. But while there is essential simplicity to the issue, there are, when things have been going on for 55 years, a great deal of complexity, and that needs to be addressed.

But I also want to talk about it because precisely because I do believe very strongly that the continued existence of Israel as a free, democratic society, with secure boundaries, is important morally for the world, as well as in our interests as a country. I worry that some people, particularly within Israel, may have misinterpreted recent events in the United States.

I think there continues to be very strong support for Israel's right to exist and for its right to have secure boundaries. I think there is a great deal of admiration, as there should be, for what Israel has accomplished economically and socially and politically in the broadest sense, that is, maintaining a democracy.

The excuse we often hear from violators of human rights, people who disregard democratic procedures, is that democracy is kind of a luxury for a nation that is at peace, but we are often told when a nation is at war, it really cannot afford to be democratic, it cannot afford such luxuries as electing a government and then throwing it out of office by open means, a freely critical parliament, open press, free speech.

In fact, Israel, from the moment of its existence, was under siege, indeed, people were attacking it before it existed as a sovereign nation. It has been in a war-like state, unfortunately, I think not through its own choice, for its entire existence, and, despite that, has brought forward one of the most flourishing democracies in the world and, sadly, the only democracy of any consistency in that part of the world. So I am grateful to the people of Israel for showing that democracy is not a source of weakness, not something to be put aside when things are tough, but a source of great strength.

That respect for Israel, that admiration for it, that understanding that it

has played a very important role as an ally of America, all contribute to a great deal of American support for Israel, as does the fact as it is, as we know, the successor state to that horror, the Holocaust, in which an organized state tried to wipe out a people, and came closer than anyone would have thought before could have been done.

Yes, there is a moral obligation to the remnants of the Holocaust and they were given a safe haven. As we know, had there been such a place during the time of the Holocaust, many who died, many who escaped only to be sent back because no one would take them, would still be alive.

So there is legitimately a great deal of support for Israel. What I fear, however, is that some within Israel will assume that that support is there, here in America, no matter what, despite policy decisions Israel might take.

Now, Israel is a democracy, as I said, and people will say, you know, a democracy has a right to make its own choices. Of course it does. The people of Israel have a right to elect governments, advocate positions, as any democracy does. I will note that there is a certain inconsistency from some who now say that because when Ehud Barak was prime minister and trying very hard with the support of former President Clinton to reach a reasonable peace, some of those who now tell me that it is inappropriate to differ with the government of Israel were much less reluctant to do that under Prime Minister Barak or under the martyred Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. But Israel has a right to make decisions.

On the other hand, it is also the case that the United States is a democracy and it has a right to make decisions.

Now, American support at a very high level is essential, I believe, for Israel to be able to survive as a free and secure society. It is a small population. They have done wonders. But they are so heavily outnumbered, they are devoid of the kind of resources that many of their historic enemies have had, and there has been, for reasons that do the rest of the world no credit, a great deal of unfair criticism, I think, of Israel, so Israel has really found itself consistently bereft of friends in many cases when it counted, with the consistent exception of the United States.

It is entirely valid for the United States, in my judgment, to provide a degree of military assistance to Israel. This is a nation which is forced to survive to spend a very high percentage of its own income on the military. I think America plays a very useful role in helping them deal with that.

It is a nation which has had a policy of taking in people from the former Soviet Union, from Ethiopia, from Arab countries who were driven out, Yemen, Morocco and elsewhere. It is very important that they be able to play that role, and I think the money we provide is helpful.

We should note, of course, Israel is the number one recipient of American foreign aid, and Egypt is the second largest recipient of foreign aid, and that is probably because 25 years ago the leaders of Egypt and Israel, Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat, took great risks for peace and engaged in a great transfer of land, really a somewhat extraordinary example in history, where the victorious nation, Israel, gave back to the defeated nation a very large piece of land, the Sinai desert, so that you could begin to have peace.

While there have been problems and difficulties, peace has in fact survived there, and I think the work of Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat was vindicated. People should note that Menachem Begin, who was one of the intellectual and political founders of the current conservative movement in Israel, not only made peace with Egypt, not only gave back land, but presided over the dismantlement of a settlement, a Jewish settlement, in the Sinai, so that it could be given back. I think that is a very important precedent that I will get back to.

But we should understand that the United States gives high levels of aid to Israel and Egypt in part because of a perception that these are allies, in part because of the great admiration we have for Israeli society, but also since 1977–78 because these two nations undertook that peace agreement, and I think it was an entirely constructive policy begun in the Carter administration and carried through Presidents Reagan and Bush and Clinton, and now President Bush again, to say that if countries in an area that is very important to America take risks for peace and try very hard to overcome these difficulties, the United States will try to help out. That was an entirely fitting situation and people should understand.

□ 2145

That is the biggest single reason why there was this ongoing degree of aid. So I think that is entirely appropriate. I look forward to continuing to support a level of aid appropriate to Israel until and unless there is a peace; and if and when peace is achieved, yes, it will be possible to reduce the level of aid.

For a variety of reasons, then, it is clearly important for Israel to be able to maintain this degree of support in America. I worry that there are people in the United States, some of whom are genuine, strong, emotional supporters of Israel; some of whom are unable to resist the temptation to use Israel for domestic American political purposes, who may be giving Israel the wrong kind of support. It is no service to a friend to encourage that friend to misunderstand the situation and, in particular, to feel that it has a degree of invulnerability when there may be some vulnerability.

In particular, Mr. Speaker, I think the recent resolution by the Likud

Party to say that under no circumstances would they support, if they were in control, those who passed that resolution of the Government of Israel that under no circumstances would they support a Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. I think that was a grave error.

Now, I think it was a grave error from the policy standpoint. As I have said, one of the great sources of strengths of Israel is that it is a democracy. I mentioned how democratic Israel is, even in the face of all these attacks. I recently got a great example of Israel's commitment to human rights in an area that probably would not have gotten much attention 20 years ago; it probably would have not been able to be something to be discussed 20 years ago.

But when I was in Israel in January of this year, having participated for 5 days in various political discussions with Israeli officials and others, including the Palestinians, about the state of peace, I then spent a few days meeting with people in Israel's gay and lesbian community. I was very pleased to be at a meeting in Tel Aviv of a city council member in Israel who is a lesbian and able to be open about it. I went to the Jerusalem Open House, a community center, for gay and lesbian people of Arab or Jewish background in Israel. I met with the head of the Aguda, the overall umbrella Israeli activist organization.

I was pleased to learn that not only do gay and lesbian people serve openly in the Israeli Army; by the way, for those who think that having open gay and lesbian military people undermines the morale and the effectiveness of the Army, I think they will have a hard time explaining that to people in the Israeli Defense Force whose morale and effectiveness I do not think has recently been questioned and where openly gay and lesbian officers not only serve, but whose domestic partners have benefits.

I contrast that, Mr. Speaker, sadly, with the degree of oppression of the gay and lesbian people that takes place in the Arab world. I have recently had occasion to write several letters along with my colleague who is the ranking Democrat on the Committee on International Relations and my colleague, who is the Republican Chair of the subcommittee of the Committee on International Relations, the gentleman from Florida, and some others, the gentleman from Connecticut. We have had to complain to the government of Egypt because of a pattern of systematic oppression of gay people simply because they were gay. They gave other excuses, but that is clearly not what is at issue. Nobody was imposing himself on anyone else, no one was molesting young people. These were gay men who were being prosecuted.

Well, the contrast between an Israel in which, frankly, Palestinians who are gay who live in the occupied territories come to Israel proper because they can

get protection, because they get a degree of security within Israel that they cannot get at home. I am very proud of that. I am very proud of the democracy of Israel. I am proud, I say, because I have been a supporter of that state, and I believe it is a very important example it gives to the world about how to be democratic. And let me repeat, the Israeli Defense Forces, there are few militaries in the world that have been under consistently a greater strain, and they have openly gay and lesbian military officials, and they serve with great distinction and no negativism whatsoever.

Now, it is important, I believe, for Israel's position that it continue to be democratic. When we have a major political party say that they do not want to see a Palestinian state, the implication there is that Israel continues to be a nation which has a democratic population, a democratic legal population, which includes, of course, a considerable Arab population; and while there are shortcomings in the way in which Israel has dealt with its Arab population, the fact is that Arabs have been in the parliament, Arabs have full political rights, and the democracy that exists even regarding Arabs in Israel sadly exceeds that in terms of democracy for most of the Arabs in the Middle East who are not allowed the freedom to criticize the government. I hope that the Israelis will understand the importance of preserving that. I believe that they do.

But in addition to a democratically ruled society within Israel, Israel has found itself presiding over territories inhabited by Palestinians outside Israel who do not have those kinds of rights.

Now, at this point I do think it is important to look at history. One of the problems that has affected, unfairly, it seems to me, negatively, the opinion people have had of Israel is that history is not always known to people. If one just turns on the television today or picks up a newspaper and sees a situation where this nation, Israel, is ruling over Arabs in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, if one believes in democracy and self-rule, that does not look good. And if, in fact, Israel had gratuitously simply marched into those territories at some point and established some deal with them, Israel would have been wrong. It is, therefore, important at this point to look at the history.

I mentioned that the history here begins with a universal Arab rejection by Iraq, by Jordan, by Egypt, by Syria. A universal rejection of these nations of Israel's right to exist, and an invasion of this small group of Jews, many of whom are recently come from the Holocaust, others, of course, who had been there for some time; and the new Nation of Israel managed without a lot of help at that point to defend itself and establish its position. So at that point in 1948, when Israel was able to declare its independence right about this time of year, we had the State of Israel.

Now, I have a question for those who say, well, what we really need is a two-state solution. Why did the Arab world not implement one 54 years ago? The U.N. called for a two-state solution, Palestine and Israel. The Arabs attacked and tried to prevent that from happening. The nation that became Israel was able to defend itself. At that point, there was an Israel. Also at this point, the lands that we now refer to as being occupied by Israel, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, were under the control of Arabs. Jordan controlled the West Bank, including eastern Jerusalem, the Old City. Egypt controlled the Gaza Strip.

From 1948 to 1967, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank in east Jerusalem, were controlled by Arab nations. Why, and I really think this is a valid question not often enough asked, why did they not create a Palestine then? If the Arab world genuinely believes in a two-state solution, why did they not implement one when they had the chance? There was certainly a period when Israel did not have the strength, even if it had the interest, in trying to prevent that from happening. I do not understand why the Egyptians and Jordanians did not get together and create that two-state solution. They talk about how much of the West Bank they had; they had it all, by definition, before 1967.

The reason, I am afraid, is, and this is very relevant and continues to be, the reason the Arab world did not implement the two-state solution is that they were not for a two-state solution. They were for a one-state solution. Palestine, no Israel. They did not use their ability to implement an Arab nation of Palestine in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank from 1948 to 1967 because to do so would have meant accepting the reality of Israel, and they were not ready to do that. Instead, what they did was to use the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and the Golan Heights of Syria and other lands as a basis for continuing to attack Israel. There was a continuing effort to undo Israel's existence militarily.

So in 1967, I believe entirely in self-defense, Israel moved into those adjacent areas, which had been used as places from which Israel was attacked. That is when Israel moved into the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, after the Arab nations, for 19 years, declined to create a state there and, instead, preferred to use them as bases to attack Israel. Israel wound up with the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights.

Since that time, the Israelis and, obviously, a lot of history goes back to the 1973 war, which was more of a standoff, although it was again an effort by the Arabs to destroy Israel, the 1973 war was the Arabs taking another chance, as they did in 1948, of trying to dismantle Israel and they made some gains at first but were ultimately unable to do that with some help from the Nixon administration; the Israelis

were able to defend themselves and maintain that status quo. Then ensued a period of people feeling each other out.

The next thing that happened was that Menachem Begin met with Anwar Sadat; Menachem Begin, the leader of the right in Israel and the man who undid the previously uninterrupted rule of the left in Israel politically, and what he did was to proceed to give the Sinai Peninsula back to Egypt, not for any material gain, but remember what the deal was. Israel gave back the Sinai Peninsula and dismantled a settlement of Jews in that peninsula solely for Egypt's recognition of Israel's right to exist. Until then, that did not exist.

That was a big deal when Anwar Sadat, the leader of Egypt said yes, okay, there can be an Israel. That took from 1948 to 1978. Sadat, of course, was reviled by many of the Arabs and ultimately murdered within his own country. Why? Because he dared accept back a big chunk of Egyptian territory and said, in return, it is okay, they can be in Israel. That is a sign of how, as recently as 21 years ago when he was murdered, how deeply rooted the unwillingness to even allow Israel to exist was.

Things evolved further. Obviously, many Israelis believed, I think accurately, that while they had the right to defend themselves, if they could come to some peaceful agreement, that would be preferable to living the way they were living. If they could find a way for there to be some self-rule in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank that would relieve them of the need to be there, would relieve them of the contradiction in their democratic ideology of ruling over people in a way that was necessarily undemocratic, if they could refrain from the military attacks on both sides, that would be healthy.

So they began a process, ultimately, of trying to negotiate a global peace. It culminated, most recently, in the Barak administration offering to give back almost all of the Golan Heights to Syria, a hostile nation not just to Israel, but to the U.S., a nation whose record of harboring terrorists is one of the worst, run by one of the most brutal dictators, and now his son is in power and there appears to be no significant improvement from any human rights rule, but still Israel was willing to try. That culminated with the offers made by Prime Minister Barak, with the support of President Clinton, to Yasser Arafat in the year 2000.

There was a lot of debate about why there was an agreement, but we do know this. Prime Minister Barak offered a significant return of territory that had been captured in what I think were legitimate defensive wars, including almost all of the Golan Heights. By the way, he had previously, of course, drawn away from Lebanon where Israel had gone in before, and he offered a great deal more with regard to the West Bank than people had thought previously would happen.

□ 2200

At the time, I remember the argument was not that this was an unfair deal, but I ask people to go back and look at this. We were told this was a mistake because Arafat was not ready to make peace. Arafat, we were told, could not at that point really still sell to the rest of the Arab world a deal which, once again, meant the entire acceptance of Israel's right to exist.

It is significant here to remember what a fuss was made a couple of months ago when Saudi Arabia said, do you know what, if Israel totally withdraws from every inch that it captured in 1967, we will recognize its existence. Now, that was considered to be a major breakthrough in 2002, and given the eternal hostility that they had pledged to Israel, it was.

But understand this point: If, in fact, it was a breakthrough for Saudi Arabia in 2002 to say that there should be an Israel, what that means is that in 2000, when Bill Clinton and Ehud Barak were trying to get Yasser Arafat to make a deal, the Saudis were on the other side. The Saudis obviously, by their own acknowledgment, were not ready to support that in 2000. It could not have been a big deal in 2002 for them to say, okay, we are ready to recognize you, if they had been ready to do that in 2000.

In fact, by the closing days of the Clinton administration, an offer was made to Arafat which obviously from one standpoint was not perfect, it was made by the military victor in a more generous way than victors usually are, but it did not become the basis for negotiation. It still was essentially rejected.

Then, of course, the Clinton administration was out of office and the Barak administration soon after that, and I think the Bush administration made then the very grave error of instead of picking up where it had left off trying to find out if things were close enough, the Bush administration decided to just let things alone, incredibly thinking somehow this would make it better.

I do not think there is a worse prediction in recent diplomatic history than the Bush administration view that walking away from any effort to bring the Israelis and Palestinians into a negotiation early in 2001 would somehow make things better. Clearly, the consequence has been that things were much worse.

At any rate, that is where we now are. And it is in this context that I think it is a mistake for former Prime Minister Netanyahu and his allies in the Likud party to announce that they are no longer interested in trying to reach an agreement that would lead to a Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza. And as I said, from the standpoint of Israel's own interest, that seems to me a mistake, but I have no authority to make that decision for the Israelis.

On the other hand, a continued strong degree of support in the United

States is important to Israel if it is going to be able to continue to live as a free and prosperous society, which it has become through its own extraordinarily successful efforts.

And here is where the problem is. I think people within Israel, particularly within the Likud, and obviously former Prime Minister Netanyahu, misunderstand the nature of American support for Israel. It is strong, it is morally based, it is based on a recognition of a common strategic interest, it is based on an admiration of what Israel has done, it is based on a recognition of the debt on the Holocaust, but it is not infinite. It is not a support that will be there in the same degree, no matter what Israel's policy is.

The one area where I think there is a danger that the degree of American support that Israel deserves and needs could erode has to do with the policy of settlements, and whether or not there should be ultimately a willingness on Israel's part to withdraw from the Gaza strip and most of the West Bank.

I would remind people that in recent times, there was one occasion when those of us who were strong supporters of Israel in Congress were unable to accomplish a policy of American assistance to Israel. It was when former Prime Minister Shamir made a pronouncement that sounded like he was saying that he had no intention of giving up any of the West Bank or Gaza strip to a Palestinian state; that he intended to maintain all of the settlements and that the land would remain under Israeli control indefinitely.

It was at that point that President George Bush, the President's father, was able to revoke what people had thought was a commitment to provide loan guarantees to Israel. Remember, this is a time when the Soviet Union had collapsed and there was massive immigration possible from the former Soviet Union, from Jews who had enough of the anti-Semitism in their areas. There was a continuation of the policy of taking Ethiopian Jews from Ethiopia. There was really great need for absorption of the immigrants. The U.S. had promised to guarantee some loans.

When George Bush became angry at the settlement policy and for other reasons, not just the settlement policy, but when it became the perception that Israel was no longer interested in a negotiated settlement in which it would withdraw from much of the West Bank and from the Gaza strip, George Bush said no to the loan guarantees.

While people talk about the great power of the friends of Israel in Congress, this was a time when that did not avail. George Bush won that fight: There were no loan guarantees. He won that fight because on that issue, American public opinion was not sympathetic to Israel.

It is important for people in Israel to understand that there is, as there should be, a great deal of sympathy and support and admiration for Israel,

but it is not unconditional. Indeed, it is based on aspects of Israeli government and society which include its democracy and its openness. If it can be made to appear that Israel forever might be maintaining, or indefinitely, a situation in which it is an occupying power in the West Bank and Gaza strip without any effort to implement an ultimately democratic solution, that will cause trouble for Israel within the United States.

Now, I want to be very clear: I do not believe that the critical elements in American public opinion will hold Israel responsible if it fails to reach an agreement on setting up a Palestinian state. It may not be possible to do that. As I have said, from 1948 until fairly recently, there did not seem to me to be a willingness on the part of the Arab world to accept the legitimate needs of Israel to the point where such a state could be accomplished.

Maybe that has changed. The Saudi offer is a step forward, but it is far from an acceptable offer for Israel. People who talk about a right of return, which would allow millions of Arabs hostile to the very notion of Israel to move back into Israel, cannot seriously think Israel would accept that, or be critical of Israel for turning that down.

While the Gaza strip does not appear to me to pose strategic problems, there are legitimate concerns about the West Bank, particularly in the areas close to Jerusalem. There is the great sensitivity of Jerusalem. I think if Israel tries sincerely to reach an agreement and it fails over some of the specifics in the areas closest to Jerusalem, that is a sustainable position politically in America.

But I do not think it is sustainable, and I must say that I think people here should note that while Prime Minister Sharon is a member of Likud, this resolution was adopted to embarrass him and his government, and it is not the policy of Prime Minister Sharon and his government, but a major political party led by a very popular political figure, Benjamin Netanyahu, said this.

And that is, I think, a mistake; a mistake, as I said, not from the standpoint of what is good or bad policy for Israel. I have my views on that, but I acknowledge that the democratic country of Israel has a right to make its own decisions. But I believe it is a mistake from the standpoint of maintaining within the United States the degree of support Israel ought to have.

Now, I think part of the misunderstanding came because of the terms in which we debated a resolution a couple of weeks ago. I voted for the resolution that spoke out for Israel's right to defend itself. I must say that I do not believe Israel has behaved any differently with regard to the suicide bombings that have plagued it than the United States would.

Indeed, we have been very aggressive in Afghanistan, thousands of miles away, and sadly, some innocent people

have been killed. Some appear to have been killed just recently who were quite innocent. That is a terrible incident of war. When people are in a war-like situation, innocent people die. We can try to minimize that, but it cannot be totally avoided.

Thus, we had that situation in Afghanistan and we had it to some extent in Israel. The basic right of self-defense is there. It needs to be exercised very carefully. But when a nation has its young people at war defending it, they are not going to err wholly on the side of avoiding any collateral damage to innocent civilians.

I believe there was a great deal of support for Israel's defending itself in that way, as Americans felt we had a right to defend ourselves. I think it helped that it showed that some of the arguments about how many people had been killed in Jenin were in fact greatly exaggerated.

So overwhelmingly the House of Representatives voted to support Israel's right to defend itself. But I think that the leadership of the House made a mistake. That resolution came before the House unamendable. I voted for the resolution, but I voted against the procedural motion which brought it forward. It is not, it seems to me, appropriate that this great democratic institution, the United States House of Representatives, ought to be expressing its support for the democratic nation of Israel in an undemocratic fashion. I do not think it was a good idea to come to the defense of democracy in Israel by degrading it in the United States.

And I think it has contributed to a misunderstanding. There was overwhelming support for that resolution. I was glad to join in. A number of people voted present, 20 or so. Some others who voted for it voted for it with misgivings.

I think much of the difficulty came not from people who disagreed with what the resolution said, but who disagreed with what it was not allowed to say; that is, I think many of us believed, as I did, that Israel, given the history of that part of the world, had the right to defend itself and was by and large doing the best it could to exercise that right in a reasonable way, but we also felt that it ought to be reiterated, particularly in that context, that our hope would be for an ultimate solution of a 2-state solution.

Now, again, I do not think anybody should say that the Israelis have to come to that deal. It may not be possible. Making a deal with Yasser Arafat has to be one of the least attractive propositions put before any important group of people, and he is under a great deal of attack from people, Hamas and others, Jihad, Islamic Jihad, who are still as viciously opposed to Israel's existence, who want to drive the Jews into the sea. These are societies that have perpetuated vicious anti-Semitic slurs.

So it is important to make this distinction: It is not essential for Israel to

reach a deal that will lead to a 2-state solution to maintain support in America, but I think it is essential that Israel be seen to be willing to try. I do not think support for Israel was ever stronger in the United States than when Ehud Barak took some real risks for peace.

So my view is that we made a mistake, and I voted against this, so I should not say we, they made a mistake, Mr. Speaker, those in control of the House, by bringing forward that resolution in an up-or-down fashion. Yes, it got support because so many of us agreed with Israel's right of self-defense, but I think some people in Israel may have misinterpreted it, misinterpreted the silence on a 2-state solution, and that may have contributed to what I think was a mistaken decision by Likud to say, "We are not going to have any support for a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza."

Israel is not under any obligation to accept an unreasonable and unfair deal, but if it wishes to maintain maximum support in America, precisely because its democratic internal rule was an important part of this and for other reasons, then I think it is important that it be seen to be willing to try.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. FRANK. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I would like to second not only everything the gentleman has said so far, but perhaps go one step further. I voted, as the gentleman did, for the bill last week. I was concerned that it came unamendable, and it came around our committee of jurisdiction. It never had an opportunity, even in the Committee on International Relations, where we deal on a day-to-day basis with the good, the bad, and the ugly of the situation in the Middle East.

I also would add that whenever we do these resolutions, we have to remember that we are giving confidence to one side, but we cannot allow ourselves to take away hope from the other side. As the gentleman so aptly said, when we did not talk about the desire and the conviction of this country to keep working toward a lasting and sustainable peace, we took away some of the hope of the very people whose adverse behavior we wanted to dissuade.

Mr. FRANK. And not just the hope, but no society is monolithic. They may pretend they are in North Korea, but we know they are not even there. Israel is obviously not monolithic, it is democratic. It is fractious to, I think, a wonderful degree.

Palestinian society is not monolithic. It is in our interest to discourage the rejectionists in Palestinian society. It is in our interest to find responsible Palestinians who understand that the tactics I think they have followed so far have had the major negative impact on Palestinians, and who will not continue to insist on an

unachievable goal, but will think about an achievable one.

But when we pass a resolution that does not mention that as well, I think we make a mistake. I think it was inaccurately perceived in both places.

Again, I want to be clear. Yes, the people in Israel should understand that America supports its right of self-defense, and the resolution accurately reflected that. I also believe that that support could be endangered. And, you know, the easiest thing to do with a friend is to say, yes, everything is wonderful. A true friend will tell the other friend when things may be reaching a danger point.

Anyone who encourages the Israeli people to believe that if that Likud resolution became official policy there would be no erosion of support for Israel is doing Israel a great disservice.

□ 2215

And I regret the fact that that resolution was sent forward. Frankly, I think political calculations were involved. People said, well, let us put people on the spot. Make them vote yes or no. Well, if we are playing with a local domestic issue, that is one thing; but we should not send a partial answer, and that was a partial answer. And I think it is not unrelated that shortly after we passed the resolution; and I saw an earlier draft of the resolution, and from the earlier draft I saw, some of the Israel's strongest supporters acknowledged that part of the ultimate solution ideally would be a Palestinian state if that could be agreed to. If I knew it, everyone knew it. It was not a secret. When that disappeared from the resolution, I think that may have encouraged people who took what I think was a position which would ultimately be damaging to Israel's abilities to maintain the kind of support it should have to the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I would yield to the gentleman again.

Mr. ISSA. I would like to second what the gentleman said and go one step further. We did some good with that resolution, but we could have done more. There was no question that had we encouraged the Palestinians to get their house in order, what is now kind of a whisper the idea that there needs to be a shifting of Chairman Arafat's position to more symbolic and the strengthening of the support of real leaders who do not have to be on both sides of issues, especially on security. That whisper could be a roar if we had included that kind of support there. And I hope that with the gentleman and I speaking tonight we are going that direction of encouraging the Saudi Crown Prince to continue his agenda, but also speaking to the Palestinians and letting them know that this body, I am sure to a person, still believes that solution that includes two separate people able to determine their own future.

Mr. FRANK. I agree and I have to say, again, I think people need to un-

derstand as they contemplate what Israel has been doing that for a very long time there was not a willingness to have a two-state solution in the Arab world. The rejection of a two-state solution came from the Arab world. I had hoped we had reached a period where there was now a willingness in the Arab nation to have a two-state solution. We know there was for a while, very actively in the Israeli government. Prime Minister Sharon to his credit has said he is still ultimately for that. It in effect invoked that favorite Nixon-going-to-China metaphor. And Prime Minister Sharon has said, given my background I could get the Israeli people to accept some things that maybe other people do not. We should be clear that includes, it has to include, telling people who live in settlements in Gaza and in much of the West Bank that they cannot continue to live under Israeli rule.

We talk about the dismantlement of the settlements. Settlements do not have to be dismantled, but people who live there have to be told that they are now going to be Palestinian citizens. And it was Menachem Begin who did that. Menachem Begin who dismantled the settlement. I was at the settlement that was dismantled in Yamit in the Sinai and met with people there. So that can be painful. It has to be done. It does not mean every inch. It does not mean that you do not count security. But it is important for us to do both.

I do fear the temptation of Israel is a wonderful success story. It is properly the repository of a great deal of admiration, and it invokes a great deal of emotion. Israel is entitled to be taken seriously as a country, not a political tool. It is entitled to be given a great deal of support, which I think it has earned; and it is entitled to realism in the political advice it gets. It should not be manipulated.

Let me speak now anticipatorily. We are about to get a supplemental appropriations bill that will have a number of things in it that I think will be bad public policy. I can predict now we will be told that because it includes some money for Israel and some money to aid Palestinians, although not through the Palestinian Authority, that if you support Israel you must vote for the appropriation. I resent the notion that Israel exists to shine up the sneaker. I resent the notion that you can put public policy that I find very wrong into a bill and then put in money for Israel and expect people to vote for that.

I just want to make this one statement that I have been here 22 years. Over the years I have often been told that I had to vote for an appropriations bill that included money I did not want for this program or that money because it also included money for Israel; and on several occasions when I voted no because I would not be extorted that way, the appropriation was defeated. What happened? A new appropriation came up and guess what was in the new appropriation? The money for Israel.

The notion that because there is money for Israel in the appropriation you have to vote for it or you will hurt the cause of Israel is simply flatly historically nonsensical because the money for Israel will be there. That is an example. Bringing that resolution up unamended, trying to use Israel as kind of a cat's paw to get an appropriations bill through, those are wrong.

I want to support Israel as I have all my life. I want to continue to see Israel get the kind of support it deserves from America. Part of that support is in honest assessment. And that honest assessment says Israel has a right to self-defense. It has a right to say no deal for a second state unless we have a reliable partner who means it, unless we will get secure boundaries, unless we will get other things we need. But to not let Israel understand that the policy recently adopted by Likud will in the long term cause them, maybe not in such a long term, the same kind of problems they encountered under Prime Minister Shamir and President Bush, I think that is doing them a disservice.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. ISSA. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I think that tonight two friends of Israel, two people who in fact do support and will continue to support all the legitimate needs of Israel coming to the floor, and I know the gentleman does not come to the floor very often. This is a very unusual appearance. I think what the gentleman is doing is he is sending the message that has to be sent, not just to the men and women of Israel who may hear or read about this, but also to the American Jewish community who does not always understand that it is not Israel right or wrong. It is Israel's survival protected, while at the same time our money has to have some suggestions to it.

Mr. FRANK. Let me say as a member myself of the American Jewish community, I understand there are people who may think that I am Jewish. I represent a significant number of Jewish people. I believe that people in the American Jewish community do understand that.

Yes, those of us who are Jewish are emotionally attached to Israel. I was 5 years old when World War II ended, so I was not conscious myself of the Holocaust as it was happening; but obviously I was raised by parents who lived through it and uncles and aunts and others. And the horror of the Holocaust and then the shock of living through this and knowing what was happening to people just because they shared that with you, that is deeply searing. So we have this emotional commitment.

Over and above that, I believe that the American Jewish community is proud of Israel, proud of its democracy, proud of its economic achievement. We are proud of the Israel that is, not of the Israel that becomes the tool of other people's domestic politics.

So I really believe in speaking out this way I am speaking a position that I think is largely supported by Israel's truest defenders, both Jewish and non-Jewish.

We are for an Israel that represents the best in the Jewish traditions as we see it. We support Israel as Americans which carries out those values that America expresses support for in the world and that has been cooperative. I come here tonight very much because I am afraid that maybe from some good motives, maybe from some partisan motives, some people are giving Israel bad advice. And the worst thing you can do is sit by quietly and let a good friend get bad advice.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. ISSA. Once again, I want to thank the gentleman for giving that good advice.

The gentleman and I often vote differently, but we discuss that there are at least two ways to look at every single bill that comes to the floor. And I think that this is a good example that rather than the way we did it with the vote from Israel where it came to the floor as though there was only one opinion, the gentleman has said let us look at some additional ideas.

Mr. FRANK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for making that point. Obviously, we all cannot take an hour. But it seems clear how much better it would have been for the United States, for Israel, for the cause of an ultimate peace in the Middle East if the discussion that we are having now could have been had a couple weeks ago.

I would plead with the leadership of the House do not put us again in the position where we have this inadequate up or down vote on these complicated subjects. We are not all that busy. This is our main job. We could have taken a few more hours. I think if we had the kind of discussion on the floor of the House that we are able to have today, there would be a better understanding everywhere of what America's position is.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. BECERRA (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today on account of personal reasons.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today on account of business in the district.

Mr. DEUTSCH (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today and the balance of the week on account of a death in the family.

Ms. HARMAN (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today on account of personal business.

Mr. KANJORSKI (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today on account of business in the district.

Ms. KILPATRICK (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today on account of business in the district.

Mr. MASCARA (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today and May 21 on account of personal reasons.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today on account of official business.

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today on account of personal reasons.

Mrs. EMERSON (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today on account of a death in the family.

Mr. FLAKE (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today on account of personal reasons.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. CLAYTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. GUTKNECHT) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. DIAZ-BALART, for 5 minutes, May 21.

Mr. GUTKNECHT, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, for 5 minutes, May 21.

Mr. FOLEY, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at their own request) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. KINGSTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. COLLINS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia, for 5 minutes, today.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. FRANK. Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 25 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, May 21, 2002, at 9 a.m., for morning hour debates.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

6901. A letter from the Administrator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule—Grapes Grown in a Designated Area of Southeastern California; Revision to Container and Pack Requirements [Docket No. FV02-925-2 IFR] received April 29, 2002, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.