

As Taiwan has prospered and worked to achieve full democracy, the United States has stood shoulder to shoulder with Taiwan against the potential onslaught of the so-called "People's" Republic of China. Unlike in mainland China, the people of Taiwan enjoy many of the freedoms that we in the United States also enjoy.

As mainland China develops economically, it would be easy for the United States to focus on Beijing and forget about our longstanding ally. This is not and never should be the case. The United States must continue to be a partner with Taiwan. We must do what we can to help Taiwan maintain its political and economic independence. Although the United States does not maintain full diplomatic relations with the ROC, our commitment, outlined in the Taiwan Relations Act, has never wavered.

The communist government in Beijing has made it clear time and again that it will not back away from its Taiwan policy. Whether it is naval exercises in the Taiwan Straits or objecting to Taiwan's membership in the World Health Organization, Beijing continues to menace the ROC.

When you look at a map of Asia, the PRC clearly dwarfs Taiwan. It is many, many times bigger geographically and many, many times more populated. Any time it chooses, the PRC could overrun Taiwan and end the democratic experiment in that country. It is only the backing of the United States and the U.S. commitment outlined in the Taiwan Relations Act, that has kept the communists at bay.

As the PRC continues to develop economically and politically, it is important that the United States have allies in the region with whom we can work vis-à-vis mainland China. Taiwan is such an ally. They share our values of democracy and market economics. We must ensure that Taiwan remains free to act independently of China. The Taiwan Relations Act ensures that they are able to do so.

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 462, reaffirming our unwavering support to the Taiwan Relations Act, and the people of the Republic of China or Taiwan.

For more than two decades, the Taiwan Relations Act has been the basis for the U.S.-Taiwan relationship, and a cornerstone of stability in Taiwan, and in the Western Pacific. And while the set of circumstances that made the Taiwan Relations Act necessary remains a regrettable chapter in U.S. history, its presence has helped ensure the safety of the people of Taiwan for the last 25 years.

In stark contrast to his predecessor Jimmy Carter, President Reagan worked to improve the mutual friendship and security between Taiwan and the United States. A strong voice for freedom and democracy, President Reagan sought to provide greater security to the people of Taiwan by making a number of assurances to Taiwan. Among other things, President Reagan promised not to set a date for ending defensive arms sales to Taiwan; not to consult with the unelected leaders of Communist China before making any arms sales to Taiwan; not to pressure Taiwan to negotiate with Communist China on the issue of reunification; and not to abandon the Taiwan Relations Act.

Over the last 25 years, Taiwan has made a full transition to democracy. The Taiwan Relations Act, President Reagan's efforts, and

most of all the work of the people of Taiwan have helped to make these changes a reality.

Mr. Speaker, the passage of this resolution will send a strong message to the leaders of Communist China that America is a partner and a friend to Taiwan, and that America has no plans to abandon our commitment to the people of Taiwan or their fundamental right to self-determination.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, we have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RENZI). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 462.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. LANTOS. 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 motion will be postponed.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN SUPPORT OF FULL MEMBERSHIP OF ISRAEL IN THE WEQG

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 615) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives in support of full membership of Israel in the Western European and Others Group (WEQG) at the United Nations, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 615

Whereas since the mid-1960s, the member states of the United Nations have been divided into five groups, including the Western European and Others Group and the African, Asian, Latin American, and Eastern European groups;

Whereas the United Nations increasingly relies on this "Group System" to facilitate its work and two leading United Nations organs, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, have passed numerous resolutions granting this system a central role in United Nations elections;

Whereas Israel has been refused admission to the Asian Group of the United Nations and is therefore denied the rights and privileges of full membership in the United Nations;

Whereas exclusion of Israel violates crucial principles of the United Nations Charter, including the right of states to be treated in accordance with the principle of sovereign equality and the right to vote and participate fully in the United Nations General Assembly;

Whereas the Bureau of every United Nations conference comprises one representative from each group in the United Nations and Israel is therefore denied access to this vital apparatus enjoyed by other United Nations member states;

Whereas on May 30, 2000, Israel accepted an invitation to become a temporary member of

the Western European and Others Group at the United Nations;

Whereas Israel's membership in the Western European and Others Group is limited and, as a temporary member, Israel is not allowed to compete for open seats or to run for positions in major bodies of the United Nations, such as the Security Council, or United Nations-affiliated agencies, such as the United Nations Commission on Human Rights;

Whereas Israel is only allowed to participate in limited activities of the Western European and Others Group at the United Nations headquarters and is excluded from discussions and consultations of the Group at the United Nations offices in Geneva, Nairobi, Rome, and Vienna;

Whereas the Western European and Others Group includes Canada, Australia, and the United States;

Whereas Israel is linked to Western European and Others Group member states by strong economic, political, and cultural ties;

Whereas the Western European and Others Group is the only bloc which is not purely geographical but rather comprises countries which share a Western democratic tradition; and

Whereas Israel is a free and democratic country and its voting pattern in the United Nations is consistent with that of the Western European and Others Group member states: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

(1) the President should direct the Secretary of State and the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations to seek an immediate end to the persistent and deplorable inequality experienced by Israel in the United Nations;

(2) United States interests would be well served if Israel were afforded the benefits of full membership in the Western European and Others Group at the United Nations so that it could fully participate in the United Nations system;

(3) consistent with section 405(a) of division C of H.R. 1950, as passed the House of Representatives on July 16, 2003, "the Secretary of State and other appropriate officials of the United States Government should pursue an aggressive diplomatic effort and should take all necessary steps to ensure the extension and upgrade of Israel's membership in the Western European and Others Group at the United Nations"; and

(4) the Secretary of State should continue to submit to Congress on a regular basis a report which describes actions taken by the United States Government to encourage the Western European and Others Group member states to accept Israel as a full member of their group and describes the responses thereto from the member states.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. 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 the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my chairman, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE), and the ranking member of the committee on International Relations, my good friend, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), and, most importantly, our leadership for bringing House Resolution 615 to the floor tonight. We could not have chosen a better time to consider this measure in light of the manipulation of the International Court of Justice by those who seek to deny Israel its sovereign right of self-defense, who seek to deny Israel the right to protect itself and her people against the unending attacks launched against it by Palestinian terrorists.

Later this week, we will see further corruption of the United Nations General Assembly by anti-Israel, antisemitic forces as they are expected to bring forth resolutions seeking to force Israel to comply with the non-binding opinion issued by the International Court of Justice on Israel's security barrier.

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This is illustrative of the bias that one of our strongest allies, Israel, faces within the United Nations system; and it further demonstrates how Israel's lack of membership in one of the country groupings of the U.N. places it at a significant disadvantage.

House Resolution 615 seeks to address this problem. It expresses the sense of the House of Representatives that Israel should enjoy full membership in the Western European and Others Group, WEOG, at the United Nations. Simply stated, this resolution seeks to correct the ongoing discrimination and inequality that Israel has been a victim of in the United Nations system.

As a first step toward correcting this wrong, on May 30, 2000, Israel accepted an invitation to become a temporary member of WEOG, which opened the door to Israeli participation in the U.N. Security Council, provided Israel is able to retain its status on the WEOG.

Nonetheless, Israel's membership to the WEOG is severely limited, and every 4 years Israel has to reapply, since its status is only temporary.

Israel is not allowed to present candidacies for open seats in most U.N. bodies, and it is not able to compete for leadership positions in major U.N. organs.

Even its participation in WEOG activities is restricted to U.N. headquarters in New York; and as such, Israel is unable to fully participate in discussions and consultations on a number of critical issues. It is unacceptable that Israel should remain an anomaly in the community of nations only because certain states refuse to allow it to occupy its legitimate place in the Asian group of nations.

As long as the United Nations institutional realiance on the regional sys-

tem continues, its members are obliged by the principles of its charter to find a solution to the discrimination against Israel. The WEOG states can do so without sacrificing their vital interest. Rather, by admitting Israel, they will gain the addition of another member to the group of democratic states active in and contributing to the international organization system.

The WEOG is the only regional group which is not solely based on geographic considerations. It is composed of a group of states with Western democratic values as a common denominator. Israel's social/political orientation is comparable to that of the WEOG states. Its voting pattern in the United Nations is congruent with that of the WEOG states. It shares a common cultural ideological outlook with these countries, and it is linked to them by strong economic ties.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have worked on this resolution with the distinguished ranking member of the Committee on International Relations, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS). This resolution enjoys broad bipartisan support with over 40 cosponsors. It was passed unanimously at both the subcommittee and the full committee markups. Our interests would be well served if Israel were afforded the benefits of full membership to the WEOG. It is time to bring an end to the discrimination that Israel faces in the United Nations system.

As a free nation, Israel deserves our support and that of all democratic countries. I strongly urge my colleagues to support this important resolution.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 615, introduced by the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), my good friend and distinguished colleague. For years, the democratic nation of Israel has been relegated to third-class status at the United Nations. Our resolution seeks to end this outrageous treatment of Israel, and it will ensure that Israel has the same rights and privileges at the United Nations in New York as every other nation in the world.

The procedures of the United Nations are an arcane subject, Mr. Speaker; but it is vital to understand, one fact about that. For a member state to be able to exercise its full rights and privileges at the United Nations, for it to participate fully in all U.N. agencies and activities, it must be a full member of one of the five regional groupings of the U.N. And of the 191 member states in the U.N., only one is not a full member of one of the five regional groups. That one exception is the State of Israel.

Israel's natural geographical home should be in the Asia Group; but that group, which is dominated by hostile Arab states that refuse to recognize

the State of Israel, rejects the membership of the region's only democracy, the State of Israel.

This unique and appalling constraint cripples Israel's ability to exercise normal privileges of U.N. membership. The normal privileges are enjoyed by every other member, from most democratic to the most despotic. It precludes Israel from voting in any United Nations body, except the General Assembly. It precludes Israel from running for a seat on the Security Council or any major U.N. affiliated agency, or from otherwise participating fully in the day-to-day work of the United Nations.

To partially address this ability and after years of United States efforts, the regional block known as Western Europe and Others Group, WEOG, granted Israel limited temporary membership 4 years ago; but this junior-grade membership allows Israel to participate in only some of the U.N.'s less important activities.

Democratic Israel clearly deserves to be a full member of the WEOG group. WEOG, unlike any other regional block, is not a geographic designation. It is a political grouping, including countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia, along with all the states of Western Europe.

Does anyone doubt that Israel fully shares the other WEOG states' core commitments to democracy and Western values? In fact, its voting record on almost all issues at the United Nations reflects this common ground with other WEOG states.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for the WEOG group, whose membership roster is a who's who of our closest allies on this planet, to end the policy of discrimination against the State of Israel and to grant Israel full membership. There is simply no excuse for not doing so.

The hypocritical treatment of Israel at the U.N. perhaps tops the list of the many reasons that this crucial world body so often evokes well-deserved cynicism and scorn.

Consider this. At this moment, the thugish Sudanese regime that is responsible for some of the worst violence and ethnic cleansing in the world today sits at the head of the U.N. Human Rights Commission, a body that democratic Israel cannot even aspire to join. Ask the thousands of people in Darfur in the western Sudan who have been driven from their homes into refugee camps by Khartoum-sponsored Arab militias whether this is fair.

Mr. Speaker, a vote for this resolution is a vote for Israel's full participation in the U.N. system, a vote for our own national interest, and a vote for enhanced U.N. credibility. I strongly support this resolution, and I urge my colleagues to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL), my good friend and distinguished colleague.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, the United Nations discredits itself once again,

unfortunately, by having one set of rules for Israel and one set of rules for everyone else; and here is but another example of that kind of hypocrisy that unfortunately has permeated the United Nations. We will soon be talking about a ruling by an international court; and when I spoke about that ruling several days ago on the House floor, I said that one set of rules for Israel at the U.N. and one set of rules for everyone else does not help anybody, but just helps to discredit the United Nations.

Now, there are 191 members of the United Nations, as my friend from California has pointed out, and only one of them is given third-class status. Israel has been a member of the United Nations since the founding of the Jewish state in 1948, and yet it has never been allowed to serve on the Security Council of the United Nations, where you have one undemocratic despotic nation after another serving on the Security Council, sitting on the Human Rights Commission, but not democratic Israel.

So what this resolution does is it simply expresses the sense of the House of Representatives in support of full membership of Israel in the Western European and Others Group at the United Nations. As was pointed out, this will enable Israel to serve in all bodies of the United Nations, to have a vote in all bodies of the United Nations, and to serve on the Security Council if it is elected. If the United Nations is to be an effective group, then all nations must be treated equally; and democratic nations such as the state of Israel cannot be allowed to continue as third-status nations in the U.N.

So I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 615.

This resolution expresses this House's support for full membership for Israel in Western European and Other Groups at the United Nations.

Full membership for Israel is long overdue.

Without full membership in a regional group, Israel cannot sit on the Security Council or other key U.N. bodies, and the Arab states have barred its membership in the group it geographically belongs in, the Asian Group.

On May 30, 2000, Israel accepted an invitation to become a temporary member of Western European and Others, WEOG, regional group.

This historic step helped end at least some of the United Nations' discriminatory actions against Israel; however, without full membership, Israel is excluded from much of the U.N.'s general business that occurs outside of the General Assembly and Israel is not eligible to sit on the Security Council.

As a sovereign, democratic state—the only democratic state in the Middle East—Israel's full participation in the United Nations is an essential right.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the House's full support of this bill.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the resolution and I thank the chairwoman of the Subcommittee on the Middle

East and Central Asia for her leadership in bringing H. Res. 615 to the floor. As an original cosponsor of this resolution I am very pleased that the House will, I hope, pass the resolution by an overwhelming, if not unanimous vote.

Israel's isolation at the United Nations puts the lie to claims that Israel is not held to a double standard and demonstrates clearly that many of those urbane diplomats who like to talk about peace and reconciliation cannot even stomach the thought of Israel taking its rightful place at the U.N. While space is reserved and rights are held for such pariah states as junta-led Myanmar, dictator-ruled North Korea, the tyranny of the mullahs in Iran and the Palestinians' own thugocracy, democratic Israel is uniquely isolated at what is supposed to be the forum for all nations to deal with each other on equal terms.

Ironically, every day, because of the hostility and prejudice that precludes Israeli participation in the Asia regional group, the credibility and mission of the United Nations is undermined by exactly those states that call most vigorously for the Arab-Israeli conflict to be resolved in accordance with the will of the United Nations. The stench of this hypocrisy easily reaches Washington all the way from U.N. headquarters in New York City.

The resolution before the House calls for renewed efforts by this Nation to secure for Israel full membership in the Western European and Others Group at the U.N. the membership bloc our own country belongs to. Such a step is entirely appropriate given the close ties between Israel and the other nations in the bloc, as well as shared values and belief in democracy that characterizes this group's membership at the UN.

Thanks in large measure to the United States, Israel has, for a short time, been able to enjoy at least partial membership in the WEOG regional group. It is time for this half-measure to be replaced with a lasting and definite full membership. Israel is a country of far greater economic, political and scientific achievement than many of those nations that have obstructed full Israeli participation in the UN. It is more than past time that this grotesque form of discrimination be ended.

I urge Members to show their strong support for Israel and the true ideals of the UN by voting in favor of the resolution.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RENZI). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 615, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. LANTOS. 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 motion will be postponed.

COMMENDING THE GOVERNMENT OF PORTUGAL AND THE PORTUGUESE PEOPLE IN THE EFFORT TO COMBAT TERRORISM

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 688) commending the Government of Portugal and the Portuguese people for their long-standing friendship, stalwart leadership, and unwavering support of the United States in the effort to combat international terrorism, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 688

Whereas the United States and Portugal have a long history of consistent friendship and support;

Whereas the Government of Portugal and the Portuguese people have shown tremendous support for the United States in this time of armed conflict;

Whereas Portugal has been a devout, resolute, and steadfast ally of the United States;

Whereas the support of the Government of Portugal and the Portuguese people is of paramount importance to the United States;

Whereas the Government of Portugal and the Portuguese people have committed a full array of their country's resources to fight the terrorist threat all over the world;

Whereas at the request of the United States and within the framework of United Nations Security Council resolutions, Portugal has sent brave soldiers, medical teams, police, flight crews, and other military personnel to Iraq and has continued to authorize the use of Lajes Air Base, in Azores, Portugal, for strategic staging in the War on Terrorism, including the current engagement in Iraq; and

Whereas the democratic principles and ideals that Portugal and the United States share have formed the basis of an enduring friendship which has stood the test of time: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) is grateful for the support of the people and Government of Portugal;

(2) commends the Government of Portugal and the Portuguese people for their steadfast friendship, resolute leadership, and unwavering support;

(3) commends the bravery and courage of all members of the Portuguese armed forces who have participated in the effort to bring an end to international terrorism; and

(4) expects the unique friendship between the United States and Portugal to continue.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. 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 gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.