

nationally and certainly in his home State. We have seen ample evidence of that expansion of government service to serve his constituents. I respect the gentleman's contributions to this body and its history.

Yet at the same time, I think that it is important that we set aside partisan rancor. This is not a Democratic problem or a Republican problem. This is an American problem. It is important that bureaucratic agendas be put aside, that party agendas, partisanship and rancor simply moving for control over debate and taking away that time for necessary dialogue be brought into the context of what the American people see us here to do.

I believe that it is important in the remainder of the time that we have before the gentleman speaks that we look at the problems that are being faced today. As you so effectively pointed out in those examples, our citizens on the street have seen over and over again examples of waste, examples of fraud, examples of abuse.

□ 1630

Much of the waste, the majority of that waste, is not ill-intended. We have thousands and thousands of very dedicated civil servants. I have met very few in my entire career of public service, whether in the military or in government, who were not dedicated and committed and worked very hard. Rather, the issue that I was addressing, which the gentleman missed, was the issue of process, processes that have grown up, processes that are not connected, processes that do not communicate effectively. These are not partisan issues. These are simple issues of accelerating the ability to make decisions more effectively and to reduce costs.

I thank the gentlewoman from Colorado for yielding to me.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate his pointing that out again. That obviously was something that I was trying very hard to point out, was the fact that we are trying to improve the systems, improve the processes. And I want to thank the gentleman from Kentucky for pointing out the fact that most of the employees of the Federal Government, indeed the States and local governments, are very dedicated people who want very much to do their jobs well, and that sometimes what we need to do is lead them in the direction of doing things better than we have been doing them. I know very often we lapse into a way of doing something that may not be the best way of doing it and it just continues that way because nobody has suggested doing it differently.

I think one of the great things that we could do in this Congress and in future Congresses is to go to our employees and ask them to make suggestions on ways that we could save money in the Federal Government and make it operate more efficiently, and I thank the gentleman from Kentucky for re-

mind me that that is something that we obviously ought to be talking about.

We not only want the citizens of this country to help us figure out ways to make the government operate more efficiently and effectively, but there is nobody better qualified to do that than the great employees that we have, because they are there on the front line every day and they understand what needs to be done and how we could do things differently. So I think that if we do have employees who could make suggestions on how we could do this better that we should do it.

I want to point out again that we have places that people can write and call to let us know how they think that we can do things better, especially in the area of waste, fraud, and abuse, and I hope that they will take note of these places and be in touch with us.

PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, before I proceed with the subject of my own Special Order, I want to continue the discussion I tried to have and it became kind of one-sided when I was not recognized to continue it.

The gentleman from Kentucky particularly interested me because he objected to my introducing a note of partisanship. But I did not. It was the gentlewoman who had the floor who talked about the Republican way of doing things. When they were talking about it and boasting about the extent to which they were going to end these wasteful practices, they talked about it as a Republican proposal. When I asked why the Republican Party had allowed this apparently to happen for 4 years, suddenly nonpartisanship popped up.

The fact is that the gentlewoman's premise was repeatedly, explicitly, there is a different Republican way. The fact is that the Republican Party has controlled the entire Federal Government since 2001. The gentlewoman said, what about 40 prior years that they had to deal with? I think she is being a little hard on Ronald Reagan. Ronald Reagan, of course, was President for 8 of those years. He never vetoed a spending bill; so apparently he thought the spending levels were appropriate. And it was not just Ronald Reagan, but for 6 of his 8 years, the United States Senate was Republican. Then we had 4 years of George Bush, the father of the current President. So we come back to this: The Republican Party has had very strong control of the entire Federal Government for 4 years and apparently it is still ridden with waste, riddled with abuse, and bloated, because we have these Republicans who just spoke, boasting about how they will change it.

The gentleman from North Carolina did give us a very interesting history of

an incident he was involved in in North Carolina. I now know more about that particular aspect of North Carolina than I had ever expected to, but I do not understand how that in any way explains why after 4 years of Republican control of the White House and the Congress, members of the Republican Party come here to denounce this bloated Federal Government, over which their party has presided over for 4 years and promise to make it better in the future.

I now want to turn to one of the important subjects now facing us, and it is good news. I know people do not often come down here to talk about good news, Mr. Speaker, but I am very optimistic about the Middle East. We have an excellent chance, I believe, if we all work constructively, to end one of the conflicts that has caused considerable anguish and misery and the loss of human life, and that is if we are all constructive, there is a chance. I guess "optimistic" was too optimistic, but I feel better about this prospect than I have in a long time, namely of there being within reach of an agreement between Israel and the Arab world, particularly the Palestinians, that can lead to peace. I want to talk a little bit about that.

Particularly I want to talk about what those of us not directly involved can do, or, more clearly, as I will point out, what we can refrain from doing. Peace will have to be made by the Israelis and the Palestinians themselves.

Two developments recently have made that possible. One, the death of Yasser Arafat. Those of us who have long believed that Yasser Arafat was an obstacle to peace and, in fact, the enemy of the best interests of the people he represented, I think that has been vindicated. People have debated back and forth Arafat's role. I think the fact that we are in one of the best moments we have been in in the history of that troubled area is because, not since, but because of his death. That speaks to the historical record. And I join with people in the Israeli Government in their willingness to recognize the courage and commitment of the President now of the Palestinian Authority, of Mahmoud Abbas, and I share the view that a major difference is that he has succeeded Yasser Arafat.

The other major change has been the evolution of the views of the Prime Minister of Israel, Ariel Sharon. I should say at the outset, if I were an Israeli citizen, I would not vote for Ariel Sharon. I do not think that is too harsh. If Ariel Sharon lived in Massachusetts, I do not think he would vote for me. What we have, however, is a man whose views, from my standpoint, are further to the right than I would like, but who has done an extraordinarily courageous thing in recognizing a central truth, central to the survival in its best form of his own country, central to the prosperity and quality of life of his own country, even

though recognizing that truth contradicted some of his own past political history and in particular many in his own party.

We who are in politics like to talk about how courageous we are when we stand up to our enemies. People boast about the fact that I defied them, I stood up to them. I remember the great book by A.J. Liebling, the Earl of Louisiana. He noted how fiercely Earl Long repudiated the support of the Communist Party and of the NAACP at times when neither one of them was, of course, interested in supporting him, when they were both unpopular, though with widely different justifications, it seems to me.

Standing up to one's enemies is not only easy for most of us in politics, and, frankly, it is certainly true in America, standing up in politics is generally the best way to raise money. People are always praising their own courage by standing up to people who have been opposed to them in fundraising letters. The hard thing in politics is to stand up to one's friends. The hard thing in politics is to tell people whose values they share, whose traditions they come from, the people who are aligned with them on most issues, the hard thing is to say to them on this I think they are wrong, in this I think in our own best interest we have to rethink it.

And Ariel Sharon has done it, and he has done it, along with others. The number two man in the government, the former mayor of Jerusalem, Ehud Olmert, deserves a lot of credit for this, for articulating this.

And here is the central truth that they have articulated, which is that for Israel to be a Jewish democratic state, it cannot continue to preside over millions of Palestinians who live in Gaza and in the entire West Bank. If Israel continues to be the ruler over lands in which so many millions of Palestinians live, because there is also a significant number of Palestinians within Israel, then Israel has two choices: Either indefinitely it does not allow them to participate politically, in which case its own democracy will be jeopardized; or it allows them to vote and it will not continue to be a Jewish state because it will not be the Jewish majority they need. They do not need a majority only. They need a large enough majority so that divisions within the Jewish population are not going to be fodder for a very large minority.

And let me just address now those who have begun to say, wait a minute, we should not have a Jewish state. Let us have a binational state. People who argue against a religious state, when we are talking about Israel being a Jewish state, do not have a great deal of credibility when they see no problem with the existence of a number of very strict Islamic states.

How can we accept the existence of the theocracy of Saudi Arabia and then object to a Jewish state in Israel? Ideally, I suppose, there are people who

could argue that no state should be a religious state, but I do not know anyone in the world who consistently holds that position. Certainly in the Middle East, a large number of the states are religious states. They are Islamic states. Iraq, the predominant party of the last Iraq election, which we consider to be a great triumph of democracy, they are committed to an Islamic state. There is debate about how strictly they will hold to it.

So objecting to Israel being a Jewish state, especially given the history of the Holocaust, given the lack of a place to which Jews could go when their lives were at risk, to quibble about Israel being a Jewish state, when we do not at all object to the proliferation of Arab states, clearly is not a morally coherent position. It can be disregarded.

So it is valid for Israel to be a Jewish democratic state, and to do that it must not rule over millions of Palestinians, or at least it should try hard to avoid it. Because I should say while I hope very much that we get a solution in which Israel withdraws from all of Gaza and most of the West Bank, I think it is reasonable for Israel to continue to have some of the places, an expanded Jerusalem, with some exchanges of territory that work that out. I think that is the goal.

I should add that as I look at this historically, I do not blame Israel for the fact that it has been in occupation of those areas. Indeed, if the Arabs had in 1948 accepted the U.N. resolution, there would today be an Israel much smaller even than the pre-1967 Israel. And if before 1967 the Arab states had not engaged in their warfare against Israel, the 1967 war would not have produced the expansion of Israel.

Indeed, if the Arab states really, genuinely, sincerely, had wanted from the outset a nation known as Palestine occupying the lands of Gaza and the West Bank, they could have created one. Gaza was controlled by Egypt and the West Bank by Jordan until 1967. They could have created such a state. Israel might have been angry. Certainly early on in the years, Israel would not have been able to do anything about it and probably would have been restrained by others from trying if they had been so inclined. So I do believe that the occupation was provoked.

Having said that, I have been some critical of some aspects of it. I do not think that the Israelis have always in the course of the occupation been as respectful of their own traditions and values as they should be.

Let me deal here with the notion that says, well, wait a minute, if one is criticizing Israel, somehow that must mean they do not support the country. We should be very clear. Criticism of specific policies of any Israeli Government, at any given time, in no way implies that someone is anti-Israel, much less anti-Semitic. Indeed, if people want to hear at any given time, vig-

orous, even virulent criticisms of the Israeli Government in power, go to the Knesset, go to Israel. There is certainly nothing remotely anti-Israel about being critical, any more than my saying that I deplore the Iraq War and I feel every day that I was right to vote against it. I do not think that makes me anti-American. And I do not think it makes me anti-Israel to say that some aspects of the occupation were wrong. It is, in fact, an argument against the continued occupation that it is almost impossible for one nation physically to occupy another group of people and be fully respectful of human rights. One does not send young people into these kinds of difficult situations or middle-aged people, for that matter, and put them in situations where their lives are at risk and their safety is endangered and have them act as if they were all members in good standing of the Civil Liberties Union or the equivalent Israeli organizations.

□ 1645

But the point is central. It is important for Israel to try very hard to withdraw. And it does not seem that you have, in Abbas and Sharon, leaders who are prepared to do that. Each dealing with dissidents, the dissidents that Abbas has to deal with, seem to me far worse in many ways than those Sharon has to deal with. I do not mean to equate Hamas and the conservative element in the Israeli Knesset, but both leaders have got to be willing to meet with each other and negotiate with each other while dealing with some of their own more extreme followers.

The question then is, what should the rest of us do about it? And one of the things that we can do is to refrain from causing harm. This means that the Arab leadership, the Egyptians and the Saudis in particular, because the Jordanians have been more constructive, and hopefully the Syrians, but that is probably a hope too far, that they will do everything that they can to restrain those elements within the Palestinian community who believe that murder is still a good idea, and who in fact want to engage in violence precisely because they do not want to see a solution which would have an Israel and a Palestine side by side.

And let us be clear. There will be people, particularly in the Palestine area, who will try to undermine this, who will try to, by murdering others, stop this. They must not be allowed to succeed. This will call upon the Israelis for some restraint.

Understanding that there are murderers who will kill, because they want to kill individuals as a part of killing the peace process, means that you cannot let them succeed, and that allowing their violence which will undoubtedly, unfortunately, succeed to some extent, allowing that to derail the peace process gives them a greater victory than even the one they get if they are able to kill some innocent people. That has to be resisted.

But the Arab world has got to be fully supportive of Abbas and help prevent what goes on in the area of terror. And this will be particularly a challenge with regard to Syria.

Another thing people can do, and this leads me, the mention of Syria leads me to this, people can stop the unfair demonization of Israel. I have said I think the Israeli occupation ought to end. I agree that in the course of the occupation, Israeli personnel have done things they should not do. That happens, I think they have not always been as tough as they should be in preventing it.

But the Israeli occupation of Gaza and the West Bank does not seem to me to be the worst occupation by far in the Middle East. The occupation that is enduring, far less justified, and apparently open ended, is the occupation of Lebanon by Syria.

Remember what happened? Lebanon was, outside of Israel, the only nation in the Middle East that qualified as a democracy. And it was a multi-religious democracy. It was a democracy in which Christian and various Islamic sects coexisted. And then the PLO was expelled from Jordan. And the PLO was not welcome in any Arab country. So they went to Lebanon, because only Lebanon, a thriving, commercial democratic society, was too weak to keep them out.

And so first the PLO come into Lebanon, and that caused great turmoil in Lebanon, and then Syria used that as an excuse to take it over. We recently saw the murder of a Lebanese patriot who was a critic of Syrian domination, and we do not know who did it. But I have no reason to disagree with the apparent view of our administration that Syrians are the likeliest culprits in this murder, and certainly Syria has throttled the one democracy that existed in the Arab world, and Syria continues to be a destabilizing force.

So one of the things that we have to do if we are to get this peace is to put pressure on, and this is something that the other Arab states have to take the lead in doing, to restrain Syria from encouraging the murderers.

Similarly, our European allies have been working with Iran, and yet they are trying to restrain Iran from nuclear activity. But Iran must also be restrained, if they can do this at all, from financing the terror or Hezbollah and the murders of Israelis. And this means that the Europeans ought to stop the unfair and excessive demonization of Israel.

I am critical of some things that Israel has done. I thought the recent decision by Natan Sharansky, a man who was a great hero himself in his own light, a decision to say that Arabs who could not get to their land in Jerusalem should lose that land, when the reason they could not get to the land was that they were physically prevented by Israel for doing that; that was a terrible thing.

I was glad that the Attorney General overruled that. It is a credit to the

Israeli legal system that there have been a number of occasions when unfair denials of the human rights of Arabs in the greater Jerusalem area were denied by policies, and frequently they have been reversed. So I think that is legitimate to be critical of that.

But people go beyond that. I am a man of the left in American politics, I think to some extent in the world. And by every value that motivates me to be in politics, the Nation of Israel is by far the superior nation in the Middle East. There is no value by which those of us on the left measure societies and governments where Israel does not far exceed any of its neighbors.

If you are an Arab, and you wish in the Middle East to be bitterly critical of the government which presides over you, you are probably better off living in Israel than in Egypt, Syria, Jordan or Saudi Arabia.

I should note one other thing which a whole lot of people do not want me to talk about. But one of the things the Nation of Israel does is to offer refuge to gay Palestinians who face severe oppression and who fear death if they stay in the Palestine Authority once they have acknowledged being gay. And the Nation of Israel, true to its traditions, true to its own experience of the lack of a haven for an oppressed people, provides a refuge for some of those gay Palestinians.

I am critical of some aspects of religious domination in Israel. But by no standard does Israel fall anywhere but number one in all of those categories.

So when people on the left condemn Israel and leave out of the account the fact that it is democratic, not just democratic, there is one aspect of Israeli society which I think all defenders of civil liberty and freedom ought to be particularly grateful. Israel, through no fault of its own through 1948 on, throughout its entire existence, has been under assault. It has been assailed by enemies.

Despite living in that difficult situation, it has remained a vibrant democracy. Those who believe that democracy is somehow a luxury for the prosperous and the secure have to cope with the example of Israel; Israel, a country which has been a vigorous and vibrant democracy in the face of these assaults.

By the way, just to revert to an earlier topic, Israel is also a country in which gay men and lesbians are allowed openly to serve in the military. Now, I know some who defend our terribly unfair and inefficient policy of kicking gay men and lesbians out of the military and not letting brave and able young men and women serve our country. They say, well, if you allow these people in there, it would somehow undermine morale. And we say, "Well, other militaries don't do that." They say, "Well, yeah, but what are you talking about, these other militaries?" They kind of dismiss these other militaries as not being really combat forces.

No one denies, I think, that the Israeli defense forces are as effective a military fighting force as exists in the world. They have had to be. And the fact that this fighting force has gay and lesbian people serving openly without any negative effect on morale is not only an important argument, but it ought to get some recognition from those on the left who have been so critical.

It ought to be possible to be critical of some aspects of Israeli policy without condemning Israel as a nation, denying its right to exist. And it certainly ought to be possible, if you are going to be critical of some things that Israel does, to take note of the far worse things, in virtually every category in which Israel is criticized, that are done by its neighbors.

So there are things that the Europeans can do and that the other Arabs can do to strengthen the hand of those in Israel, who now include the Prime Minister, who are prepared to tell some unpleasant truths to some of their people, who are prepared to give up territory won in a war that they considered a defensive war, countries do not always do that, restore these lands to people who have been their enemies, and allow a Palestinian state. I think that is in Israel's interest and it is in the rest of the world's interest to allow that to happen.

But there are also things that friends of Israel should refrain from doing, and that brings me to this Chamber right here, Mr. Speaker.

Explicitly, I think we should resolve that those on the right wing in Israel who object to Prime Minister Sharon's decision to withdraw from Gaza and to begin a withdrawal from the West Bank and to begin a process that we hope will lead to a Palestinian state, we have got to be careful that they do not win in the United States House of Representatives what they have lost in the Knesset, because they are going to try and they will, unfortunately, have allies here.

We have a history here of people in this body and in American politics taking the overwhelming support that exists for the Nation of Israel's existence and for Israel's general cause and manipulating this in ways that I think are intended to have a negative effect on the chances for peace, but certainly can have that.

Let me give you one example. In 1995, I believe Prime Minister Rabin was still alive, Bill Clinton was the President and the Labor Party was in power in Israel and Oslo had been signed and there was a genuine effort to bring peace in the Middle East. It ultimately failed. I think the murder of Yitzhak Rabin by right-wing extremists in Israel was one of the reasons. But Arafat's ultimate unwillingness ever to make peace was a greater reason.

But while there was a serious effort to bring about peace, this House of Representatives passed a resolution brought forward by the majority, the

Republicans, to demand that the United States Embassy be moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Now, I believe that Jerusalem ought ultimately to be recognized as the capital of Israel for a variety of reasons, and I believe as part of the peace process it will be.

But to raise that issue at that time was intended to undermine the peace process. Do you know how I know that, Mr. Speaker? That was in 1995 when Bill Clinton was in power in the White House and the Labor Party was in power in Israel, and they were trying to make peace. At that point, the Likud Party, the conservative party, opposed those peace efforts.

So when the Democrats and Labor were in power, this House was asked to pass a resolution to move the embassy. I voted "present," because I think the embassy should ultimately be moved, but I objected to the timing. I could not say no; I did not think it was the right time to say yes.

But overwhelmingly it passed, because people here believe in Israel's cause and believe the embassy ought to be in Jerusalem. But it was not the right time to do it. And people knew that, because in 2001, when things had changed and you had a Republican President and Likud in power, you know what you did not see, Mr. Speaker? You did not see the moving trucks going down the highway from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem with the American Embassy's furniture in it.

In other words, when the Labor and the Democrats were in power, moving the embassy to Jerusalem was used to destabilize the situation. But when the Republicans and Likud were in power, have you heard of any of that since? Have we passed such a resolution since? No. Not because people do not think the capital of Israel ultimately should be Jerusalem, but because they recognize that it is an inappropriate time and place to do that.

I hope we will not see more of that. We have not recently, partly I think because the Israeli Government asked them not to. I will tell you, when the Israeli representatives of Prime Minister Sharon came here in 2001 during the Bush administration, I asked them if there had been conversations about acting on that resolution and moving the embassy. They were not pleased with the question and said no very shortly.

But that is not the only thing we have done of this sort. We have passed resolutions here, we passed the one last June, I believe it was, House Concurrent Resolution 460, we passed it June 23. I voted for it. I was a little troubled. I agreed with everything it said, but I also agreed with some things it did not say. I agreed with most of it.

It, I think, suggested that perhaps Israel should not have to withdraw from most of the West Bank, and I think that would be fatal to the peace process and therefore damaging to Israel's own legitimate best interests. But it did not give sufficient recogni-

tion to what ultimately should be the Palestinian's result in this process.

It stated the legitimate concerns of Israel, and it left silent some of the concerns of the Palestinians. Of course, it came before us unamendable and you had to vote yes or no. This is the kind of dilemma we had.

I hope we will now determine, Mr. Speaker, that the Members of this House will not be put in the position of voting on an unamendable resolution with only 40 minutes' debate which will be the truth, nothing but the truth, but not the whole truth, and which will perhaps be designed to undercut the peace process.

□ 1700

I mean that quite seriously. We know there are people who do not think there should be two States. There are people who think Israel should not withdraw from Gaza and the West Bank.

Let me deal with one of those arguments, by the way. There are some within Israel and within the United States, some orthodox Jews, some very deeply believing Christians, who believe that the authority for Israel to continue to rule in the West Bank particularly and, in many cases, Gaza, comes from the Bible. Mr. Speaker, the Bible is a document worthy of veneration, but it cannot be taken as a map for dividing up territory today.

Those of us who have been critical of Islamist fundamentalism, who have been critical of those who would use the Koran to control the lives of others cannot then say, but it is okay to take the Bible, the Old Testament, and let it be the map that governs modern society. That has to be repudiated, just as efforts to impose any other particular religious tradition on people who do not subscribe to it must be repudiated.

Now, it is important for America to show its support for Israel, the Israeli people. It is a democracy. They are being asked by vote to give up territories they conquered in wars they thought were wars of self-defense. They have already done some of that. They have given up the Sinai. They have now announced they are giving up Gaza. They came very close, under Prime Minister Barak, to giving up most of the Golan Heights; but they were not able to make a deal with the Syrian regime. That is the fault of the Syrian regime, a hard-line regime that has recently, I think, shown its irreconcilable side. But you are not going to get those votes in Israel if the Israeli people do not feel secure, and they will not feel secure without first the strong support of the United States, but they also will not feel secure in the face of unremitting and unfair hostility from the rest of the world.

Israel was created by the United Nations, but today it is prohibited from full participation in the U.N. the way other countries can, by participation in regional blocks. And some of that anti-

Israel sentiment in the rest of the world, particularly in Europe, is unfortunately growing. You have an elected Prime Minister who is offering to give up significant territory. And I think it is important that he do that. I think it is important that he give up Gaza and almost all of the West Bank. I think it is also important, by the way, with regard to the wall that Israel is constructing, that Israel follow its own high court.

Mr. Speaker, last year, we had two examples of the judiciary and democracies acting at the finest tradition of the judiciary. I know it is fashionable, particularly on the Republican side of the aisle, to beat up the judiciary, seven of the nine Supreme Court Justices of course being Republican and, in fact, Republican appointees. In fact, if we want to make a list of laws stricken by Supreme Court Justices, the very creative jurisprudence by Justice Scalia on the 11th amendment, which he has used to strike down a whole range of antidiscrimination laws enacted by the Federal Government, he would be in first place, I believe, along with Clarence Thomas in striking down laws.

But the overwhelming majority of the United States Supreme Court, 8 to 1, and the high court in Israel in the same week said to their government, you know, we understand you have problems. You have security, but you cannot let that be a basis for ignoring basic human rights. In America they said, no, Mr. President, you cannot just lock up any American citizen you want for as long as you want to on your own say-so. It was a very important 8 to 1 decision, only Thomas believing that the Federal Government can do whatever it wants whenever it wants to, but the other eight said no.

The high court in Israel said, yes, you can build a fence for security, but you cannot build it in a way that violates other people's rights. And I think that is very important. A fence for security, yes. A fence that unfairly cuts off Arabs from their land and inflames passions, that is not in Israel's interest. It is in Israel's interest to put an end to this war, to let the Israeli people live in peace.

Israel has done marvelous things with its economy. It has done that while having to pay a higher percentage of its gross domestic product to the military than any society in recent times. Think what marvels it could perform, think what it could do for the quality of its own life and for the lives of others if it were able to reduce, not abolish, but reduce that military burden.

So, Mr. Speaker, I hope we will say that what President Abbas and Prime Minister Sharon are trying to do is reach an agreement whereby two states can live side by side and in which Israel can have a Jewish democratic majority, with an expanded Jerusalem, with some of the areas in the West Bank that have been settled, but with most

of the West Bank and all of Gaza being part of a viable Palestinian state.

I was very pleased in Switzerland at the World Economic Forum when Shimon Peres said, well, one of the things we have to do right away, now the vice premier of Israel, is to ease the ability of people to send goods from Gaza to the West Bank, and he said, we are going to spend some money to do that; and I am glad they are doing it.

I should have added, Mr. Speaker, there is one other thing we can refrain from doing. We in this Congress can refrain from trying to stop money from being sent to the Palestinian Authority. The Israeli Government wants to do that. Recently, in December, we had an effort here by some to say no, no, we are going to criticize the United States Government for sending money to the Palestinians. If we are not prepared to send money to them, it will not work. As long as Abbas is trying as he is, yes, we should be sending money to the Palestinians.

I was pleased, and I do not mean to be entirely negative about the Congress, I was pleased that when the so-called REAL ID Act, the REAL ID Act was the bill sponsored by the chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary which dealt with asylum and driver's licenses came forward, there was initially a provision that said that people who belonged to the Palestinian Liberation Organization could not come to America. Well, we are in the process of sending them money. We are in the process of negotiating with them. That was a very bad idea. It was dropped, and I am glad it was dropped. That is the kind of thing that never should have been even, I think, considered.

We need to understand that for the Israelis and Palestinians to make peace, America must be seen as a willing facilitator. That also means we are going to have to spend some money. We are going to help spend money to relocate the settlers. We are going to help spend money, I believe, to compensate Palestinians who will not be returning to Israel. And let me make what I think is a very important point that has to be explicit.

The basis on which Prime Minister Sharon and his allies within his party and the greater majority of the Israeli people, the basis on which they are willing voluntarily to give up this territory that they won is essentially the need for Israel to be a Jewish democratic state in which there will be a sufficient Jewish majority, a sufficient majority that believes in the State of Israel, so that they can have the normal give-and-take of a democracy, which Israel alone in that area has, and not have it jeopardized.

That means getting out of Gaza, it means getting out of most of the West Bank, and it means no right of return, physically exercised by the Palestinians. Because how does it advance the cause of having a Jewish democratic state with a majority in Israel who believe in a Jewish State of Israel, if you

give up the territories where the Palestinians live, but bring the Palestinians into Israel. That does not work. So, clearly, there should be some compensation. But it should not come from America alone, and here I think we have a right to say to the Western Europeans, you have been very critical; there ought to be participation by the Western Europeans. I was glad to hear Vice Prime Minister Peres say the World Bank is participating in this.

So that is where we are, Mr. Speaker. We should recognize that two men, Mahmoud Abbas and Ariel Sharon, have committed themselves to peace. And I do not mean to equate them; there are great differences in their backgrounds and histories, but they are both in this position now. They are both moving in opposition to some with whom they have previously been allied to some who have formed their political bases in different ways, a more violent one in the case of the Palestinians, a more democratic one in the case of the Israelis.

They are prepared to break with them and to do what democratically elected officials do not always do, which is to say to their people we have to give a little; we have to give up some. We are not that good at that around here. When other people are prepared to tell their people to make sacrifices, I think we ought to understand how important that is and be fully supportive.

That means no resolutions here which are designed or will have the effect of unsettling things and making things harder. Mr. Speaker, I think that the Israeli Government and the Palestinians will be able to make peace, if they can, with no help from resolutions from this House. Yes, we should be willing to provide funding, funding to continue to support the Israelis' necessary self-defense capacity, funding to help relocate settlers, funding for the Palestinian Authority. But I think they do very well without a lot of politically motivated resolutions coming out of this place. And I hope that we will refrain from doing that.

I hope that the Arab world will fully support Abbas as he cracks down on those people who want to use murder to kill the peace process. I hope that the Europeans and others will get a little more balanced in this and not regard the democratic nation of Israel as the arch villain while, apparently, not being too concerned when the Syrians continue to oppress Lebanon.

I hope that the American Government, and I must say I think the Bush administration was absent more than it should have been, but with the death of Arafat we have this opportunity. And the opportunity should be to work with those people in Israel, Prime Minister Sharon, Shimon Peres, Ehud Olmert, and others, because they represent the majority in Israel, to say, look, we will be at your side. We understand you are being asked to make

painful sacrifices; we think they are in your long-term interests, although they will be short-term difficult.

That means getting out of Gaza and almost all of the West Bank, not mistreating Palestinians, defending yourself, but defending yourself with the full understanding of the importance, not just morally, but politically, of not doing anything that exacerbates, not appearing to be doing things for the purpose of seizing land rather than for protecting yourselves. If we are prepared to be fully supportive of the Israelis during that and recognize the importance of fair treatment for the Palestinians within the context of complete security for Israel, then we have a real chance.

So, Mr. Speaker, let me just say in closing, there is a lot of urging for us to do; but, in particular, I want to make this clear now: what happens in some of these resolutions that come forward, like the one on moving Jerusalem, we do not have enough time to debate them; we only have 40 minutes. I want to announce now, and I hope others will join me, we are not going to be quiescent if politically motivated resolutions come forward which will have the effect of causing troubles in the peace process.

I am a strong believer in the importance morally and in other ways of a vibrant, free, and democratic Israel. I want to do everything I can to promote that, and I think the best way to do that is to create the conditions in which Abbas and Sharon are able to come to a genuine agreement, which will mean a viable, independent Palestinian state in Gaza and most of the West Bank, and a secure, democratic Jewish Israel with Jerusalem as its capital. That is now within our reach. Not our reach, their reach. What we have to do is to be supportive and to restrain any political impulses to undercut that situation.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot think of a more solemn obligation or important task for us going forward.

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 Ms. WOOLSEY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. BECERRA, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SCHIFF, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. CUMMINGS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BLUMENAUER, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MOLLOHAN, for 5 minutes, today.