

rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 278, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. 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.

CONDEMNING THE ONGOING PALESTINIAN ROCKET ATTACKS ON ISRAELI CIVILIANS

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 951) condemning the ongoing Palestinian rocket attacks on Israeli civilians, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 951

Whereas more than 4,000 rockets and mortar shells have been fired at Israel from the Gaza Strip by Hamas and other terrorist organizations since Israeli forces withdrew from there in 2005;

Whereas, since January 1, 2008, terrorists have fired nearly a thousand rockets and mortar shells into Israel;

Whereas the near-daily rocket fire has been targeted primarily and intentionally at civilian communities in Israel, such as Sderot and Ashkelon, making life in such areas agonizing;

Whereas the terrorist rockets have hit homes, schools, buildings, roads, power lines, and other such infrastructure in Israel;

Whereas these unprovoked rocket and mortar attacks have murdered over a dozen Israelis, inflicted hundreds of casualties, produced thousands of cases of shock and post-traumatic stress, especially among children, and caused severe disruption of daily life;

Whereas these deliberate cross-border rocket and mortar attacks on civilian populations constitute a blatant violation of human rights and international law;

Whereas those responsible for launching rocket attacks against Israel routinely embed their production facilities and launch sites amongst the Palestinian civilian population, utilizing them as human shields;

Whereas intentionally targeting civilian populations and the use of human shields violates international humanitarian and human rights law;

Whereas numerous reports have cited the copious amounts of sophisticated weapons, small arms, and weapons manufacturing materials that have been smuggled into Gaza through Egypt;

Whereas public reports have cited the role of Iran and Syria in providing material support and training to those carrying out rocket and other terrorist attacks from Gaza;

Whereas public reports have referenced the increased flow of ammunition, explosives, and higher-grade weapons into the Gaza Strip as a result of Hamas' breach of the 12-kilometer security fence separating Gaza from Egyptian Sinai on January 23, 2008;

Whereas it was reported that after the breach of the Egyptian-Gaza border, many Palestinian terrorists who had trained in Syria and Iran returned to Gaza;

Whereas the fielding and use of longer-range rockets by Hamas and other terrorist organizations to reach larger Israeli cities represents a dangerous expansion of the organizations' offensive capabilities and an escalation of the terrorist attacks on Israel;

Whereas the Government of Israel's military operations in Gaza only target Hamas and other terrorist organizations;

Whereas the inadvertent inflicting of civilian casualties as a result of defensive military operations aimed at military targets, while deeply regrettable, is not at all morally equivalent to the deliberate targeting of civilian populations as practiced by Hamas and other Gaza-based terrorist groups; and

Whereas the situation in the Gaza Strip remains a threat to international security and regional stability: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) strongly condemns—

(A) Hamas, which controls Gaza, and other Palestinian terrorist organizations for the ongoing rocket attacks on Israeli civilians and continued human rights violations;

(B) state sponsors of terror, such as Iran and Syria, for enabling Palestinian terrorist organizations to carry out attacks against innocent Israeli civilians; and

(C) the use of innocent Palestinian civilians as human shields by those who carry out rocket and other attacks;

(2) expresses condolences to the families of the innocent victims on both sides of the conflict;

(3) supports the sovereign right of the Government of Israel to defend its territory against attacks;

(4) expresses sympathy and support for innocent Palestinian civilians who reject all forms of terrorism and desire to live in peace with their Israeli neighbors but who continue to be utilized as human shields by terrorist organizations;

(5) considers rocket attacks against Israel and the fostering of terrorism in the Palestinian territories as direct and serious impediments to the achievement of Israeli-Palestinian peace;

(6) calls on the President to—

(A) direct the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations to introduce a resolution within the United Nations Security Council condemning Palestinian rocket and other attacks against innocent Israeli civilians; and

(B) direct the Secretary of State to raise this issue in all applicable bilateral and international fora;

(7) calls on responsible countries and United States allies in the Middle East to officially and publicly condemn Palestinian rocket attacks and other terrorist actions against Israel; and

(8) reaffirms the strong and unyielding friendship between the Governments and the people of Israel and the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BERMAN. 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 gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution and I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, when this resolution came before the Foreign Affairs Committee last week, the situation in Gaza was deteriorating, and that deterioration continued apace. We have since amended this measure to reflect the latest facts, but the fundamental realities remain the same: Israel has a right to exist free from terror. Terrorist Hamas, which controls Gaza, does not accept this right. The United States will now and always stand firmly by Israel's side, committed to its survival; and we oppose all forms of terrorism and incitement meant to undermine the quest for peace.

Nearly every day, shrapnel-filled rockets launched from Gaza rain down on Israeli communities, shocking the residents with their explosive power and expanded range. Israel has answered the deadly downpour by placing pressure on the Hamas leadership and their henchmen who launch these missiles. But because these thugs cravenly place the men, women, and children in Gaza in harm's way by using civilian communities as a base, counterstrikes have lamentably caused civilian injuries and deaths, along with the deaths of the terrorists.

□ 1115

The casualties are far too numerous, since even one innocent life lost is one too many.

And so, as we show our support with this resolution for the people of Israel, we also express our sympathy with the overwhelming majority of Gazans who only want a decent life but whose terrorist leaders have contemptuously sentenced them to mayhem.

In August 2005, the Israeli Government removed all Jewish settlements from the Gaza Strip and evicted Israeli families from their homes in hopes of injecting life into a moribund peace process. Israel's hope, and the hope of all who wish for peace in the region, was that Gaza would prove to be the fertile ground from which Palestinian statehood would emerge.

But since that time, Hamas has seized control of Gaza. It responded to good-faith efforts at peace not with reciprocal concessions or conciliatory gestures but with a relentless terrorist offensive.

In more than 2 years of rocket attacks, Israel has suffered countless casualties, including more than a dozen deaths, and serious damage to property and infrastructure. But perhaps worst of all has been the untold psychological trauma and interruption of all aspects of daily life. Reportedly, 90 percent of the children in the community of Sderot have suffered from post-traumatic stress syndrome. The beachside city of Ashkelon, until recently out of range for the simple rockets that Hamas could muster, has now been

slammed by more than a dozen sophisticated missiles, next to the city hall, in the marina, leaving craters and shattered lives all around. This is a city of 120,000 people. The range of the rockets is increasing, and if the terrorists are not stopped, we all know that casualties likewise will increase.

For now the attacks are continuing unabated, and they are destroying what hopes remain of an Israeli-Palestinian peace. That is why this resolution unambiguously recognizes and reaffirms Israel's sovereign right to defend its citizens and territory.

We need also to recognize that Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups are not operating in a vacuum. They rely on the material and logistical support of nations like Iran and Syria. The international community must condemn Iranian and Syrian behavior and take all possible steps to halt it.

Much of the material for these rockets is smuggled into the Gaza Strip through Egyptian territory. We must prevail upon our friend Egypt, which has made invaluable contributions to peace in the years past, to do much more to end this smuggling.

This resolution therefore calls on all nations, including Egypt, to take affirmative, transparent and verifiable steps to stop the flow of rockets and related materials to the Palestinian territories.

Mr. Speaker, we can only condemn the policy of Hamas and its supporters to continue the brutal, cynical, and unprovoked attacks on Israel, and we must recognize this policy for the terrorist crime it is.

I commend the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT) for introducing this resolution, and his cosponsors as well, and I urge my colleagues to vote "aye."

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 951, which does not merely condemn the ongoing Palestinian rocket attacks on Israeli civilians, but also clearly articulates that the United States stands shoulder to shoulder with the people of Israel in their time of need.

Since the inception of the Palestinians' latest war against Israel, which started in September of 2000, Palestinian suicide bombers have struck at crowded buses, hotels, cafes, and other civilian targets, shedding innocent blood in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and other communities.

Additionally, during the war in Lebanon during the summer of 2006, Hezbollah rockets rained down on Israeli civilian populations, claiming dozens of innocent lives. And then, Mr. Speaker, there is Sderot and other Israeli communities bordering Gaza where every day ordinary people must cope with the fear that a rocket could fall at any moment, killing or maiming them and their loved ones.

Last month, as the international press covered a Palestinian demonstration against Israel, Hamas and other Palestinian jihadist groups launched rockets that struck Sderot and elsewhere. The scene was terrifying. A father of four died of shrapnel wounds after a rocket struck his car, and a 10-year-old boy lay severely injured after being struck in a supermarket as his 8-year-old sister tried to comfort him. These are just a few instances of Israeli suffering in the border communities broadcast internationally, but the trauma endured by innocent Israeli civilians in such attacks has been ongoing and extensive.

The psychological impact from continued rocket attacks has affected all segments of the population. However, the brutal impact has been most vivid on the Sderot children. Reports indicate that almost one-third of the people between the ages of 4 and 18 have suffered post-traumatic stress disorder, and I have spoken to some children that were under this situation. Many more exhibit feelings of severe anxiety and feelings of helplessness that warn of more serious problems to come. And, Mr. Speaker, the rockets continue to fall.

With the help of Iran and Syria, Hamas and its accomplices are developing, acquiring, and firing rockets with longer range, more accurate lethality. It is an unfortunate situation, Mr. Speaker, and we have to do something. Yet, even though Palestinian extremists continue to target innocent men, women, and children in clear violation of international law, the response of other nations and other international bodies, such as the United Nations, has often been openly hostile to the Israelis, the very people under attack.

In multiple U.N. forums, not a word is uttered about the Hamas rockets falling from the sky, and Israel is denounced for inflicting suffering on Gaza when it defends itself against those who attack its citizens, including through an economic blockade, a blockade which does not apply to food, medicine, and other vital necessities.

While the European Union earlier this week denounced Israel's actions against those who launch rockets against the Israeli people, it said next to nothing about the countless Israeli victims of Palestinian violence. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, it is vital that Congress takes a stand against this double standard.

This resolution states that the Palestinian extremists behind the rocket attacks against Israeli civilians are in clear violation of international humanitarian standards as they not only brutally target civilian populations, but use peace-loving Palestinian civilians as human shields against Israel's self-defense measures.

Furthermore, this resolution calls on the President to direct the U.S. permanent representative to the U.N. to introduce a resolution at the U.N. Security

Council condemning Palestinian rockets and other attacks against innocent Israeli civilians and direct the Secretary of State to raise this issue in all applicable bilateral and international fora.

Finally, this resolution sends a message to the very people under daily attack by these rockets, our Israeli friends and allies, that the Congress of the United States stands firmly behind them in their struggle against Palestinian extremists. Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues to support this critical resolution.

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

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY).

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and thank him very much for his leadership on this important issue.

Mr. Speaker, in the summer of 2005, Israel voluntarily withdrew from the Gaza Strip. Making incredibly painful concessions, the Israeli Government forced its own citizens to abandon their homes, businesses, and synagogues in Gaza in the hope that the Palestinians would use this opportunity to build a functioning state, to demonstrate that they were capable of self-governance.

Instead, Hamas burned down those homes and businesses and used Gaza as a missile launching pad to attack Israelis who live on undisputed Israeli territory. Hamas does not want a Palestinian state. Its mission is to destroy Israel. That is painfully clear.

First, it was Sderot, just a few kilometers from the Gaza, a constant barrage of short-range, imprecise missiles falling indiscriminately and occasionally hitting a school or a home or a child in Sderot.

Now Hamas has longer range missiles acquired from Iran, and they have now hit Ashkelon, a thriving city of 120,000 men, women, and Israeli children. What next? Tel Aviv? Jerusalem? How many Israelis have to die before Israel is justified in defending its citizens?

Instead of applauding Israel for standing up to Hamas, the world denounces this democracy at every turn. When the Israelis finally cut off, after much provocation and extraordinary constraint, cut off the water and electricity to Gaza in an effort to weaken Hamas' grip, the world called it a human rights violation. And when Israel goes after Hamas, a terrorist organization that purposely puts its own civilians in harm's way and has vowed to destroy Israel, they are called war criminals. Abu Mazen likened Israel's action to the Holocaust. Abu Mazen is a Holocaust denier, and he has the audacity to liken survival of the State of Israel to the Holocaust? What nation in the world provides electricity and water to its enemy so they can lob missiles back at them?

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the Israeli Government for standing up to Hamas and for doing what every state would

do in their position: defend their citizens. And I find it astonishing that the United States Congress must periodically affirm Israel's right to exist and Israel's right to defend itself against terrorist attacks. I urge support for this resolution.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT).

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 951, a resolution condemning the ongoing Palestinian rocket attacks on the people of Israel.

When Israel withdrew from Gaza back in 2005, there was hope that this was an opportunity for peace. Sadly, this has not been the case. Instead, Hamas and other terrorist groups, with the support of Iran and Syria, have fired more than 4,000 rockets and mortar shells into Israel from Gaza, killing, maiming, and traumatizing innocent Israeli civilians. This unprovoked disregard for human life must be condemned in the strongest possible terms.

I support passage of this resolution, H. Res. 951, and urge my colleagues to do so as it supports the sovereign right of Israel to defend its territory and stop the rocket attacks on its citizens. It further calls on all nations, including Egypt, to take affirmative steps to stop the flow of rockets and other materials and equipment used by terrorists into Gaza and other Palestinian territories. Finally, it reaffirms the strong and unyielding friendship between the governments and the people of Israel and the United States.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL), the chairman of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 951. I am the lead Democrat on the resolution, and I am proud to be the lead Democrat, and I am glad it is a bipartisan resolution.

This resolution condemns the Palestinian rocket attacks on civilians in the south of Israel and supports Israel's right to self-defense. I ask my colleagues: When are these horrendous, unprovoked attacks going to stop?

□ 1130

Last week a student at Sapir College in Sderot was killed, and one other person wounded by shrapnel after a Kassam rocket fired from the Gaza Strip by Palestinians hit the western Negev campus. The rocket that struck the college's parking lot was one of a barrage of six fired 1 week ago, two of which landed in Sderot.

I've been in Sderot. It is a good town. There are good people there, and they live in fear.

According to the Jerusalem Post, a total of 22 Kassam rockets were launched in the south of Israel on that day from the Gaza Strip. In fact, Mr. Speaker, more than 4,000 rockets and

mortars have been fired at Israel from Gaza since Israel withdrew in 2005. And my colleagues have mentioned that Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005. People say there should be land for peace in the settlement. Well, Israel gave up land, didn't get peace. It's not land for peace, it's land for war, and it's got to stop.

Today, longer range Palestinian rockets are hitting larger Israeli cities, representing a serious escalation in Hamas' terror war against Israel. The Hamas rockets simply continue the pattern of indiscriminate attacks on innocent men, women and children, which has been the strategy of the Palestinian terror groups for decades. They represent a blatant violation of human rights and international law by intentionally targeting civilian populations and using human shields to hide the rockets.

I am further concerned by the source of these weapons of terror. Published reports indicate that Iran and Syria have provided material support and training to those carrying out the rocket attacks. I was pleased to be the author of the Syria Accountable Act, and we must make sure that Syria is held accountable, and Iran as well.

The world stood with the U.S. after the terrorist attacks of September 11, and we must strongly support our friend and ally, Israel, at this time. The people of Israel must know that we will stand shoulder to shoulder with them as they seek to defend themselves against the terror.

It is important to point out that Israel's military response has been carefully calibrated to halt the rocket fire, surgically eliminate the terrorists firing the rockets, and ensure the safety of Israeli citizens, while at the same time making every effort to limit Palestinian civilian casualties. In this, the Israelis have my full support.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 951 takes a firm stand against the Palestinian rocket attacks and condemns Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist organizations carrying out the terrorism. It holds Syria and Iran responsible for their roles enabling the terrorist organizations and offers America's strong support to our ally, Israel, as it responds in self-defense.

Mr. Speaker, rocket attacks against Israel must end. We must support this resolution.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS).

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 951, sponsored by Congressmen GARRETT and ENGEL, condemning the rocket attacks on innocent Israelis in Sderot and Ashkelon.

Israel is our greatest ally and our best friend. Our nations share a strong commitment to freedom and democracy. We have worked together in confronting the serious and very real threat posed by Islamist terrorists.

The tensions and violence between Israelis and Palestinians have gone on

far too long. Hamas, a violent terrorist organization, has squandered every opportunity to demonstrate it can coexist peacefully with Israel by promoting suicide bombings on innocent civilians and by firing thousands of rockets into neighboring Israeli cities.

The terrorist attacks on Israeli citizens are no different than the cowardly attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. Clearly, Israel has the right and the obligation to defend its citizens and status as a nation.

Unless Hamas recognizes the State of Israel, ceases incitement, and permanently disarms and dismantles its terrorist infrastructure, the United States cannot work with this terrorist government, nor can Israel.

Israel has the right to exist free from terror. Its people, who can never and will never forget Hitler's Germany, have every right to expect the world will uniformly condemn Hamas.

I urge the resolution's adoption and thank the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) for bringing this to the floor.

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

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CANTOR).

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I commend those sponsors of the bill who brought this piece of legislation to the floor. And I rise to recount a story that I was told in August when I was in Israel with several of our colleagues. We visited a young family who was then living in Sderot. And the mother told a story about the pain that her children are living through and about the requirement that her kids now understand that wherever they go throughout their day, they must first know where the safe room is because they will know ultimately that rocket will sound and the kids will have to scurry to safety.

But what touched me the most about the story of this young family was the mother, again, explained how 2 years ago they uprooted their family from Gush Katif, a community in the south of Gaza when Israel pulled out of the Gaza Strip. And it was then that her children asked her, why, Mother? Why do we have to do this? And she explained to the children that they have to do this to give peace a chance so that they and the people of Israel could live in peace and live a normal life. And now where are they?

Clearly, a contagion of fear has spread across their community. But they should ask, what is it that they've done wrong to live under these kind of conditions?

And frankly, whatever conclusion the world comes to, we know now that the only crime they've committed is trying to live in freedom in a Jewish state. And that is what Hamas is going after, because for Hamas and their terrorist allies, the primary objective is to destroy Israel.

But important to all of us in this Congress is the fact that what befalls

Israel in its struggle against Hamas, its rockets and other attacks have severe implications for us in America and the rest of the civilized world. The Israeli people are squaring off against an arm of the radical Islamic movement that includes al Qaeda in Iraq, al Qaeda in northwest Pakistan and Afghanistan, as well as Hezbollah in Iran. Hamas' success and ability to win sympathy from the world will only motivate and encourage these various movements.

So, Mr. Speaker, as the United Nations engages in its denunciation of Israel's acts of defense, we in America must unite in solidarity with our only democratic ally in the Middle East, Israel.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING).

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, more than 4,500 rockets and mortar shells have been fired at Israel from the Gaza Strip by Hamas and other terrorist organizations since Israeli forces withdrew from there in 2005.

Nearly 1,000 of these rockets and mortar shells have been launched into Israel just since New Year's Day this year. The near daily rocket fire has been targeted primarily and intentionally at civilian communities in Israel, such as Sderot and Ashkelon, and the rockets being used are getting bigger and traveling farther. Some rockets have blown through living room ceilings, crashed through classrooms and downed power lines. And as a result, Israel has suffered dozens of casualties, hundreds of shock victims, thousands of traumatized children.

I've heard from Ruthie Eitan, a professor at Sapir College in Israel, just a mile from the Gaza Strip, who told us how the entire campus lives in constant terror. It would be like any college town in America, except this college has been hit with hundreds of rockets since the year 2000, and the barrage is not stopping. In fact, just last week, one of the students died shortly after sustaining massive wounds to his chest from a rocket in a parking lot on campus.

Ruthie tells us that many of Sapir's classrooms and auditoriums are unusable, either because of past rocket damage or from being in the line of future rocket fire. But somehow life attempts to go on.

But for Ruthie and thousands like her, we introduced this resolution to condemn in the strongest possible terms the ongoing Palestinian rocket attacks on Israeli civilians and to support the sovereign right of the Government of Israel to defend its territory and to stop the rocket attacks on its citizens.

And perhaps most importantly, Mr. Speaker, we reaffirm the strong and unyielding friendship between the governments and the people of Israel and the United States.

I strongly urge support of all my colleagues for H. Res. 951.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the author of this measure, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT).

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. I thank the gentleman for yielding the time.

Mr. Speaker, today the United States Congress will stand up for the people of Israel by sending a message to the terrorists and also to those countries that aid them. Rocket attacks and intentional violence against innocent civilians will not be tolerated. Israeli communities like Sderot and Ashkelon have sustained terrible, egregious damage, and the citizens have suffered from serious injuries, even fatalities. I should point out that oftentimes Palestinians as well, those who do not support the violence, are also victims of the crossfire. It is time that this brutality come to an end for all people.

Passing this resolution today truly is just a stepping stone to help end those egregious, aggressive acts of Palestinian terrorists and ensuring that innocent civilians in Israel can live together and live peacefully. It is violent Palestinian groups and terrorist organizations that must be held accountable for their horrific acts. Organizations such as Hamas, the Islamic Jihad and the Popular Resistance Committee, the PRC, need to understand that when they attack the people of Israel, the United States and other countries and the U.S. House of Representatives will not remain silent. Unjust actions like this must not go unpunished.

Today, we have a gentleman from one of those communities, Sderot, with us here in the House, in the House galleries. If he was here on the floor with us, he could share with us the life-and-death circumstances that he and his family and his neighbors and his community experience on a day-to-day basis.

As we are here on the floor of this House, in the safety of this city and of this community and of this country, we have to think about the men and women, think about the children who are back there right now, the children who, for all we may know, are in their safe rooms cowering, wondering when the next attack may be coming.

Many of those members of the community have already made the decision that it is just unbearable to live under that threat, under the constant pressure of not knowing when the next attack, when the next missile strike will come. And upwards around 20 percent of the country or the community has left, fled the area to safer havens, wherever they may be.

If this was an incident occurring in our country, along the borders of the United States, would we sit idly by while our neighboring country or the terrorists within that were lobbing rockets into it, into our territory? I think not.

It is for that reason that it is so unfortunate that other portions of the world community, parts of the U.N., have condemned Israel for taking defensive measures such as they have here.

I come to the floor today with my colleagues as well from both sides of the aisle and I appreciate the bipartisan support, to say, who will condemn the attackers?

Well, Mr. Speaker, I will. We will. This House of Representatives will, and this country will. Rest assured that I will continue to ensure that the Islamic radicals are held responsible for launching these vicious attacks, and also that countries like Iran, Egypt and Syria, which support terrorists and allow this activity to continue, should be held accountable as well.

I will join with my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to continue this fight until the global community joins in with the U.S. in condemning terrorism and its violent acts.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I really urge strong support for this resolution. We can't put up with this any longer. And I really appreciate this resolution. I want to thank the author and the chairman on this. And I urge strong support, as I said.

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Resolution 951, condemning the ongoing Palestinian rocket attacks on Israeli civilians and unequivocally supporting Israel's right to defend its citizens against this continuous threat.

As you know, nearly a quarter of a million Israeli citizens living in Sderot, Ashkelon, and other cities and towns close to Gaza are under attack daily and are living in a constant state of fear. It is critical that Congress stand with Israelis who are under constant threat of rocket attacks perpetrated by Hamas. To that end, I am proud to stand with my colleagues as a sponsor of this resolution and as an unequivocal supporter of Israel's right to defend itself against this constant threat.

The international community must join with the United States in condemning the thousands of rockets that have been maliciously launched from Gaza by Hamas since Israeli forces withdrew from Gaza in 2005. It is unconscionable for the United Nations or any nation to chastise Israel while rockets reign down unabated. Instead of criticizing Israel, the United Nations and the international community should be condemning Hamas and their deadly attacks. The international community, which has been largely silent on these attacks, should publicly condemn Hamas, which is intentionally targeting civilian communities in Israel when it fires these rockets. These attacks have led to dozens of casualties, thousands of shock victims, and an uncountable number of children who have been traumatized and will live in fear for years to come. The international community should also support Israel's right to go on the offensive in Gaza in an effort to eliminate Hamas' terrorist infrastructure and destroy Hamas' ability to continue this campaign of terror.

Unfortunately, the rocket attacks continue, and the threat Hamas poses to Israelis with more sophisticated rockets still looms. As a close friend and ally of Israel and a staunch

defender of freedom around the world, America must stand with Israel in its efforts to end these attacks and defend Israel's right to live in peace free from rocket attacks.

The resolution we are debating today clearly expresses my support as well as that of my colleagues for Israel's right to defend itself against the deadly threat Hamas poses, and encourages Palestinians who reject Hamas and all forms of terrorism to denounce these attacks and dismantle the terrorist infrastructure in Gaza. This resolution also squarely places direct responsibility for these attacks on Hamas, and reaffirms the unyielding friendship between the governments and the people of Israel and the United States. As Israel faces the terrorist threat of Hamas, I will continue to encourage my colleagues in Congress to join me in supporting Israel's right to self defense. The plea of Israelis under this constant threat has been heard in Congress, and House Resolution 951 is a clear statement that Congress and the American people stand with the Israelis at this difficult time.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, from time to time, I've heard some of our colleagues wondering why there are so many resolutions about Israel, and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Why, they may wonder, do we have to take up these issues? Doesn't everyone already know that the Congress supports Israel? And it's true, American support for Israel is overwhelming, it is bi-partisan, and it is nearly universal in Congress. But sadly, we are the exception in the world.

Around the globe, there have been protests going on about the situation in Gaza. What may not be known is that these demonstrations are not about the rockets that have been falling on Israeli civilians. These protests are not against Hamas. These protests are not about the absurdity of expecting Israel to provide electricity and fuel to the people attacking them.

These protests are against Israel and its right of self-defense. They are against demanding that Hamas stop the terror. They are against putting responsibility on the shoulders of Hamas for the welfare of the people in Gaza.

To us, in the United States, such protests seem perverse. People who intentionally fire artillery rockets at civilians are properly called "war criminals." People who deliberately seek the death of the innocent are not called "militants," or "activists," or "guerillas." They are properly called "terrorists," and it is hard for us to imagine that these are not universal beliefs.

But they're not. What we have seen in the past, and are seeing again is an offensive and deplorable double standard: Every nation is obliged to protect its citizens—except the Israelis; they should be patient and exercise restraint. Every nation is entitled to fight terrorism—except the Israelis; they should have a dialogue with the people who call for their extermination. Every nation is entitled to use force defend itself—except the Israelis; they should only use force if there won't be civilian casualties.

Mr. Speaker, we all mourn the loss of innocent life, and the sympathy of decent people is not limited by nationality. The American people are concerned about both Israeli and Palestinian lives. But that concern is not a excuse to dispense with judgement. There is guilt and there is innocence; and there is ag-

gression and there is self-defense. Refusal to acknowledge, or to insist on these distinctions is not only immoral, but dangerous.

And that is why the business in Gaza is the business of this House. America, as a leader among the community of nations, has an obligation to stand up in defense of certain values. And it is never so essential to do so than when those values are under attack, and that is what is happening right now.

That is why we have to condemn Hamas. That is why we have to condemn the rockets that are still falling on Israeli towns and cities. That is why we have to stand with a democratic ally. That is why we have to declare again and again from this house that the people of Israel—no less than any other people—are entitled to live in peace and security. Certainly we Americans would accept nothing less for ourselves.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 951, a resolution condemning the ongoing Palestinian rocket attacks on Israeli civilians.

Since January 1st of this year, Palestinians have fired more than 450 mortar shells into Israel. Let's put that number into perspective, that's 7 shells a day or 45 shells a week every week since the beginning of this year.

Since the Israeli forces withdrew from the Gaza Strip in 2005, more than 4,000 rockets and mortar shells have been fired at Israel from the Gaza Strip by Hamas and other terrorist organizations.

This rocket fire has intentionally targeted civilian communities in Israel and made life for these people a living nightmare.

Even folks at the U.N.—an institution that has consistently where Israel is consistently discriminated against—have condemned these acts of violence. John Holmes, the U.N. undersecretary general for humanitarian affairs, said recently "We condemn absolutely the firing of these rockets. There's no justification for it. They are indiscriminate, there's no military target."

Did you hear that no military targets. Hamas rulers in the Gaza Strip are intentionally injuring and killing innocent civilians. In recent years 12 people have been killed and dozens have been wounded. In fact, just last an 8 year old boy lost his leg in one of the attacks. These acts of brutality have to stop.

These acts of terror are unacceptable and it's about time the world community collectively expresses its opposition to Palestine's rocket attacks on innocent civilians and supports the sovereign right of Israel to defend its territory and stop the rocket attacks.

And that's just the way it is.

Mrs. McCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my strong support for H. Res. 951, a resolution condemning the ongoing Palestinian rocket attacks on Israeli civilians, and for other purposes. I am proud to have been a cosponsor of this resolution and helped gather support for its consideration on the House floor today.

This resolution is very timely as Israel faces new and increasing threats to its security. Palestinian rockets have been fired from Gaza and hit Israeli communities on an almost daily basis. More than 200,000 Israeli citizens are within range of these Palestinian rockets.

In 2005, as part of an effort to move the peace process forward, Israel removed all of its civilian and military personnel from the Gaza Strip. There was hope that a Palestinian

state could emerge and co-exist peacefully alongside Israel. However, Hamas has taken control and instead of working toward peace and efforts to improve the lives of the Palestinians, has decided to inflict terror upon Israel. In recent weeks, the Israeli communities of Sderot and Ashkelon have been especially hard-hit, resulting in numerous casualties and psychological trauma to its citizens.

Furthermore, just this week, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told the Security Council that Hizbullah has 30,000 rockets in southern Lebanon—10,000 of the rockets are long-range and 20,000 are short-range. Israel faces many threats on multiple fronts.

The resolution before us appropriately condemns the rocket attacks on Israeli citizens and supports the right of the Israeli government to stop the rocket attacks on its citizens. While Israel has shown restraint in dealing with the Palestinians, along with a willingness to work towards peace, the Israeli citizens who are under attack are looking toward their government to protect them. We must support the efforts of the Israeli government to keep its people safe.

I am grateful that we have the opportunity to consider this resolution on the House floor and send a strong message that attacks against Israeli citizens are not acceptable. Israel is one of America's closest allies and we must do all that we can to ensure the security of the state of Israel and its people. Terrorism is not acceptable here and is not acceptable around the world. Americans, Israelis, and others should be free to live their lives without fear of being attacked. Children should be able to go to school and not have to worry about a Palestinian rocket attack.

I urge all of my colleagues to stand up for safety and security and send a message to the International community. Pass H. Res. 951.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, over the past few days we have witnessed the Annapolis peace process come unraveled. There have been grave escalations between Israel and Hamas. These are a symptom of failed policies, irresponsible actions, and a lack of strategic thinking. Further escalation of the violence in Gaza may deal a fatal blow to the credibility and viability of any peace process. It would further erode support for the peace process. It would further erode support for the peace process among both Israelis and Palestinians.

No one can help but feel deep concern for the residents of Israeli communities near Gaza, who have been suffering from a campaign of Qassam rocket attacks. Israel has the right and must take measures to protect its citizens, as well as to seek to free its captured soldier Gilad Shalit. But excessive response that endangers innocent lives and threatens emergency care and services in hospitals is likely to cause graver harm than good.

Certainly Hamas understands that its crude rockets, while able to create fear and suffering in Sderot and, now, Ashkelon, can neither destroy Israel, nor break its economic blockade—just as Israel's citizens and military leaders appreciate that while its air force and army can achieve lethal short-term tactical gains in Gaza, this strategy has only enhanced popular support for Hamas, coalesced West Bank sympathy for the Gazan population, and harmed any realistic chances for lasting peace.

I firmly believe that any realistic, sustainable resolution to this crisis will require all parties including the United States to engage, directly or indirectly, to achieve a ceasefire. For that reason, I would prefer that the resolution before us were focused not on condemning one side, but rather on supporting more constructive and balanced efforts to achieve a meaningful cease fire and constructive engagement. I believe that any resolution of this conflict needs to recognize and address the current humanitarian crisis facing the people of Gaza. How many more innocent Israelis and Palestinians will die or be wounded before our country attempts a more productive policy approach?

While the Bush Administration has recently become more proactive in its efforts to attain a ceasefire, stabilize Gaza, and re-build Palestinian national unity, the policy of not including all parties and of blockading Gaza, risks making our country less and less relevant. We need more constructive leadership on all sides.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, today I will vote "Present" on H. Res. 951.

Its stated purpose is "condemning the ongoing Palestinian rocket attacks on Israeli civilians and for other purposes." Everyone in this House, including me, condemns these rocket attacks. If that had been all that H. Res. 951 expressed, of course I would vote in favor.

But as so often happens in resolutions that concern matters of bipartisan and overwhelming support, vague and ill-considered "other purposes" were added. The United States needs the cooperation and involvement of nations throughout the region, including Syria and Iran, if we are to help bring about a stable and lasting peace to Lebanon, Iraq, and to help crack down on the very smuggling that is enabling these rocket attacks.

The State Department has repeatedly met with representatives of Iran and Syria to engage them, and is pursuing difficult diplomatic tracks with both countries. I applaud these efforts and recognize the difficult job State has. Injecting Congress into this mix, as expressed in this Resolution, at this point in time, is not helpful.

By not simply condemning the rocket attacks coming from Gaza and declaring our solidarity with the Israeli civilians threatened by them, by not simply condemning those in Gaza who are bombarding Israeli civilians, but drawing in the governments of Iran and Syria, we could diminish our diplomatic course and, at the same time, inflame tensions.

Who does this help? How does this contribute to resolving problems in the region? Why did a House vote on what should have been a simple statement turn into a complicated effort to add to difficulties with Iran and Syria?

I strongly condemn these rocket attacks; let there be no doubt about that. At the same time, I strongly support our State Department and its efforts to find a path to a lasting peace in the region. Let's not do anything that might interfere with that difficult yet vital goal.

Mr. FATTAH. Mr. Speaker, I have always been a strong supporter of Israel and I am pleased with the friendship that the United States has forged with the people and government of Israel. I am appalled at the current situation in Israel and heavily condemn the ongoing Palestinian rocket attacks on Israeli civilians.

For three years, over 4,000 rockets and mortar shells have been fired at Israel from the Gaza strip by Hamas and other terrorist organizations. These destructive terrorist rocket attacks have crippled Israel's infrastructure, traumatized and injured its citizens, and severely disrupted ongoing daily life. I can only offer my unending support of Israel in its sovereign right to defend its territory and people.

I would like to join in with the rest of my colleagues in expressing my disapproval of the terrorist rocket attacks on Israel, and I look forward to the day that peace is restored to the region.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, we have no further speakers.

I do want to congratulate the gentleman from New Jersey for presenting this. The passage of time since he introduced it has only made the logic of it even more compelling. I join my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in urging passage.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 951, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. 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.

□ 1145

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.R. 4191, by the yeas and nays;

H. Con. Res. 278, by the yeas and nays;

H. Res. 951, by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

WRIGHT BROTHERS-DUNBAR NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK DESIGNATION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4191, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr.

RAHALL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4191.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 407, nays 4, not voting 17, as follows:

[Roll No. 91]

YEAS—407

Abercrombie	Davis, David	Jackson-Lee
Ackerman	Davis, Lincoln	(TX)
Aderholt	Davis, Tom	Jefferson
Akin	Deal (GA)	Johnson (GA)
Alexander	DeFazio	Johnson (IL)
Allen	DeGette	Johnson, Sam
Altmire	Delahunt	Jones (NC)
Andrews	DeLauro	Jones (OH)
Arcuri	Dent	Jordan
Baca	Diaz-Balart, L.	Kagen
Bachmann	Diaz-Balart, M.	Kanjorski
Bachus	Dicks	Kaptur
Baird	Dingell	Kennedy
Baldwin	Donnelly	Kildee
Barrett (SC)	Doolittle	Kilpatrick
Barrow	Doyle	Kind
Bartlett (MD)	Drake	King (IA)
Barton (TX)	Dreier	King (NY)
Bean	Duncan	Kingston
Becerra	Edwards	Kirk
Berkley	Ehlers	Klein (FL)
Berman	Ellison	Kline (MN)
Berry	Ellsworth	Knollenberg
Biggert	Emanuel	Kuhl (NY)
Billbray	Emerson	LaHood
Bilirakis	Engel	Lamborn
Bishop (GA)	English (PA)	Lampson
Bishop (NY)	Eshoo	Langevin
Bishop (UT)	Etheridge	Larsen (WA)
Blackburn	Everett	Larson (CT)
Blumenauer	Fallin	Latham
Blunt	Farr	LaTourette
Boehner	Feeney	Latta
Bonner	Ferguson	Lee
Bono Mack	Filner	Levin
Boozman	Forbes	Lewis (CA)
Boren	Fortenberry	Lewis (GA)
Boswell	Fossella	Lewis (KY)
Boucher	Fox	Linder
Boustany	Frank (MA)	Lipinski
Boyd (FL)	Franks (AZ)	LoBiondo
Boyda (KS)	Frelinghuysen	Loeb
Brady (PA)	Gallegly	Loeb, Zoe
Braley (IA)	Garrett (NJ)	Lowey
Brown (SC)	Gerlach	Lucas
Brown, Corrine	Giffords	Lungren, Daniel
Buchanan	Gilchrest	E.
Burgess	Gillibrand	Lynch
Burton (IN)	Gingrey	Mack
Butterfield	Gohmert	Mahoney (FL)
Buyer	Goode	Maloney (NY)
Calvert	Goodlatte	Manzullo
Camp (MI)	Gordon	Markey
Campbell (CA)	Granger	Marshall
Cannon	Graves	Matheson
Cantor	Green, Al	Matsui
Capito	Green, Gene	McCarthy (CA)
Capps	Grijalva	McCarthy (NY)
Capuano	Gutierrez	McCauley (TX)
Cardoza	Hall (NY)	McCollum (MN)
Carnahan	Hall (TX)	McCotter
Carney	Hare	McCrery
Carter	Harman	McDermott
Castle	Hastings (FL)	McGovern
Castor	Hastings (WA)	McHenry
Chabot	Hayes	McHugh
Chandler	Heller	McIntyre
Clarke	Hensarling	McKeon
Clay	Herger	McMorris
Cleaver	Herseth Sandlin	Rodgers
Clyburn	Higgins	McNerney
Coble	Hill	McNulty
Cohen	Hinchey	Meek (FL)
Cole (OK)	Hinojosa	Meeks (NY)
Conaway	Hirono	Melancon
Cooper	Hobson	Mica
Costa	Hodes	Michaud
Costello	Hoekstra	Miller (FL)
Courtney	Holden	Miller (MI)
Cramer	Holt	Miller (NC)
Crenshaw	Honda	Miller, Gary
Crowley	Hoolley	Miller, George
Cubin	Hoyer	Mitchell
Cuellar	Hulshof	Molloy
Culberson	Hunter	Moore (KS)
Cummings	Inglis (SC)	Moore (WI)
Davis (AL)	Inslee	Moran (KS)
Davis (CA)	Israel	Moran (VA)
Davis (IL)	Issa	Murphy (CT)
Davis (KY)	Jackson (IL)	Murphy, Patrick