

Mr. MANZULLO. I have no more speakers. Can I inquire of Mr. WU if he has any more speakers?

Mr. WU. I understand that we have a couple of additional speakers who are on the way to the floor, but they are not here at this time.

Mr. MANZULLO. I'm ready to yield back the balance of my time, if the gentleman from Oregon is.

Mr. WU. If the gentleman is prepared to close, then I would be prepared to close with the caveat, if additional speakers show up, that I be permitted to recognize them.

□ 1600

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WU. I want to recognize the hard work put in by staff on both sides of the aisle, particularly Elsa Tung on my staff, and Cobb Mixer on the Foreign Affairs staff. I want to thank their counterparts on the Republican side.

I want to thank Members on both sides of the aisle for signing aboard this resolution, bringing it to the floor quickly, permitting its markup in committee very, very quickly last week, and having it here on the floor within 8 days of this terrible humanitarian disaster. I ask all Members to support this resolution.

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Resolution 1195 authored by my good friend from Oregon, Mr. WU, and of which I am a proud cosponsor. H. Res. 1195 expresses our condolences and sympathy to our friends of the People's Republic of China for the tragic loss of life and devastation caused by the earthquake in Sichuan Province.

On May 12, 2008, a massive 7.9-magnitude earthquake shook China's mountainous southwest Sichuan province. This powerful quake and its aftershocks have killed over 40,000 people, injured hundreds of thousands more, and destroyed entire communities. The full impact of this disaster will not be realized for some time as rescue and recovery efforts are still ongoing.

I applaud the courage and determination of the emergency workers that are placing themselves in treacherous situations while still searching for survivors. The recent report of over 200 emergency workers overcome by a mudslide is testament to their peril.

The increased openness to news coverage in the devastated areas is also encouraging and has allowed the international community to share in China's sorrow and witness their massive emergency efforts. In support of these efforts, the United States offers any assistance that it can provide.

I would also like to reiterate my condolences and sympathy to the Burmese people tragically impacted by Cyclone Nargis, and sincerely hope that the Burmese regime recognizes the desperate need for immediate unfettered international assistance.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in support of H. Res. 1195. In times of great natural disasters, all humanity suffers. As the people of China have come together for a moment of silence, the world community must also unify in support of those that have suffered by these natural disasters.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 1195, expressing condolences and sympathy to the people of the People's Republic of China for the grave loss of life and vast destruction caused by the massive earthquake centered in Sichuan Province. I would like to thank my colleague Representative DAVID WU of Oregon for introducing this important legislation that reaffirms the humanitarian commitment of the United States to the people of the People's Republic of China who have become victims of a catastrophic earthquake. Let me also thank the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Chairman BERMAN, for his leadership in bringing this resolution to the floor today.

As my colleagues are aware, the province of Sichuan, in southwest China, was struck by a 7.9 magnitude earthquake on May 12th. Centered in Wenchuan County, the earthquake brought a plethora of devastating aftershocks, casualties, and tragedy. It is reported that the death toll has approached 40,000, and a further 250,000 people have been injured. With tens of thousands of people still missing, it is likely that these figures will only rise. Furthermore, the earthquake has left an estimated 4.8 million people homeless making this one of the most devastating earthquakes in China since the 1976 Tangshan earthquake.

A New York Times article published this morning describes the many residents of neighboring counties who have traveled long distances without hesitation to volunteer their services to the humanitarian needs of the victims. Record sums of money had also been donated to the victims of the earthquake. I hope that this resolution and stories of heroic action will also inspire others to take part in the global community to take action in contributing humanitarian aid.

While the human toll is tragic, the sheer numbers of people who have lost their homes is truly colossal. Though rescue efforts may be nearing a close, relief efforts are only just beginning. Five million people are reported to be homeless in the wake of the earthquake, with government officials citing a "desperate need for tents." Even as we work to meet these emergency needs, Mr. Speaker, we must also focus our efforts in studying and implementing ways on which we can prevent future disasters from affecting as many people.

As Chair of the Congressional Children's Caucus, I am particularly concerned by the large number of children who were trapped within collapsing school buildings when the earthquake hit. Particularly tragic was the collapse of a three-story school building in the city of Dujiangyan, burying an estimated 900 students. According to reports, it is still not known how many children were killed by their own schools as the buildings fell down on their heads, and the Chinese government has reportedly called for an investigation into the collapse of school buildings. I would especially like to extend my condolence to many children caught up in this immense disaster.

Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to commend the thousands of police and civilian rescue workers who have been working tirelessly in disaster areas to aid in rescue and recovery efforts. They are truly a testament to the good that exists in the world today.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation to extend sincere con-

dolences and further the efforts of the United States to ensure the complete restoration of the tragic loss of life and devastation of the People's Republic of China.

Mr. WU. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CAPUANO). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WU) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1195, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REAFFIRMING SUPPORT FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON UNDER PRIME MINISTER FOUAD SINIORA

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1194) reaffirming the support of the House of Representatives for the legitimate, democratically-elected Government of Lebanon under Prime Minister Fouad Siniora.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1194

Whereas, on May 7, 2008, the terrorist group Hizballah, in response to the justifiable exercise of authority by the sovereign, democratically-elected Government of Lebanon, initiated an unjustifiable insurrection by fomenting riots, blocking roads, seizing buildings, and organizing marauding groups of gunmen who took control of much of Beirut, including the sites of key government institutions, and provoked sectarian fighting elsewhere in Lebanon;

Whereas, in the course of this ongoing insurrection initiated by Hizballah, more than 80 Lebanese citizens have been murdered and more than 250 have been wounded;

Whereas, in the course of this fighting, Hizballah and allied fighters attacked the residences of Future Party leader Saad Hariri and Progressive Socialist Party leader Walid Jumblatt, both of whose parties are members of the legitimate governing coalition under Prime Minister Fouad Siniora;

Whereas, in the course of their insurrection, Hizballah and allied fighters forced the Future Party's television station off the air and burned the building housing the Future Party's newspaper;

Whereas Hizballah and its allies have turned over some of the areas they conquered in Beirut to the Lebanese Armed Forces;

Whereas key government institutions, including the prime ministry, remain under siege, as do the residences of Saad Hariri and Walid Jumblatt;

Whereas the purpose of Hizballah's insurrection is to intimidate the legitimate, democratically-elected Government of Lebanon, the Lebanese Armed Forces, and other legitimate Lebanese authorities, so that Hizballah will have maximum freedom of military action, can deepen its control over its "state within a state" in Shiite-dominated areas of Lebanon, and can enhance its influence on Lebanese Government decision-

making in order to render Lebanon subservient to Iranian foreign policy;

Whereas United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1559, 1680, and 1701 affirm the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity, and political independence of Lebanon under the sole and exclusive authority of the Government of Lebanon;

Whereas United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1559, 1680, and 1701 call for the disbanding and disarming of all militias in Lebanon;

Whereas United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701 insists that no country transfer arms into Lebanon other than with the consent of the Government of Lebanon;

Whereas United Nations Security Council Resolution 1747 explicitly forbids Iran from transferring arms to any entity;

Whereas Hizballah has contemptuously dismissed the requirements of the United Nations Security Council by refusing to disarm;

Whereas Hizballah and its allies have repeatedly sought to undermine the legitimate Government of Lebanon under Prime Minister Siniora by preventing parliament from meeting and blocking the election of a new President, leaving that office vacant for the past half-year;

Whereas, contrary to the explicit and binding mandates of the United Nations Security Council, Iran continues to provide training, arms, and funding to Hizballah;

Whereas, contrary to the explicit and binding mandates of the United Nations Security Council, Syria continues to facilitate the transfer of arms to Hizballah via its territory;

Whereas Syria, through, inter alia, its support of Hizballah's efforts to undermine Prime Minister Siniora, its suspected campaign of assassinations of Lebanese leaders, its minimal cooperation with the international investigation of these assassinations, and its refusal to delineate its border with Lebanon, shows every sign of wanting to control Lebanon as it did prior to its April 2005 withdrawal;

Whereas it is highly likely that Hizballah provoked the recent fighting in Lebanon with the blessing of Syria and Iran; and

Whereas Hizballah and its Lebanese political allies continue to pursue an agenda favoring foreign interests over the will of the majority of Lebanese as expressed in a legitimate and democratic election: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) reaffirms its strong support for the legitimate, democratically-elected Government of Lebanon under Prime Minister Fouad Siniora;

(2) expresses its profound sympathy to the people of Lebanon, who have again been thrust unjustly, and against their will, into a conflict initiated by Hizballah;

(3) offers its condolences to all those in Lebanon who have suffered displacement, injury, or death in their family, or among their loved ones, as a consequence of Hizballah's unjustifiable insurrection against the Government of Lebanon;

(4) condemns—

(A) Hizballah's illegitimate assault on the sovereign Government of Lebanon, which has led to the worst sectarian warfare in that country since the civil war from 1975 to 1990;

(B) Hizballah for its unprovoked attacks against Lebanese leaders, citizens, and against Lebanese public and private institutions and for its illegal occupation of territory under the sovereignty of the Government of Lebanon; and

(C) Syria and Iran for illegally transferring arms and providing other forms of military support to Hizballah, in clear violation of

United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1559, 1680, 1701, and 1747;

(5) demands that Hizballah immediately cease its attacks and withdraw from all areas in Beirut and elsewhere in Lebanon that it has occupied since May 7, 2008, as a first step towards its total disarmament; and

(6) urges—

(A) the United States Government and the international community to immediately take all appropriate actions to support and strengthen the legitimate Government of Lebanon under Prime Minister Fouad Siniora;

(B) the United Nations Security Council to—

(i) condemn Syria and Iran for their blatant violation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1559, 1680, and 1701;

(ii) condemn Iran for its violation of Chapter-VII-based United Nations Security Council Resolution 1747; and

(iii) as part of sanctions on Iran for violating Chapter-VII-based United Nations Security Council Resolution 1747, prohibit all air traffic between Iran and Lebanon and between Iran and Syria;

(C) every country controlling possible transit routes from Iran to Lebanon to impose the strictest possible controls on the movement of Iranian vehicles, airplanes, and goods to ensure that Iran is not exploiting its land and airspace for the purpose of illegally transferring arms to Hizballah and other terrorist groups; and

(D) the European Union, in light of recent and earlier Hizballah actions, to designate Hizballah as a terrorist group and to treat it accordingly.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ACKERMAN) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. MANZULLO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ACKERMAN. 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 New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the resolution and yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to thank Chairman BERMAN for his leadership in getting this vitally important resolution to the floor so quickly. It's extremely important that the House be on record telling the brave men and women who fought and died defending Lebanon's independence and sovereignty that America has not forgotten you and will not abandon you.

While many in the Middle East, particularly in Lebanon, are trying to make sense of what has happened, I believe that it is critical that they know that the United States and the U.S. Congress still strongly support the democratically elected and legitimate Government of Lebanon, that we will stand behind its efforts to fully restore Lebanon's sovereignty and independence, and that the future of Lebanon is

not with Iranian and Syrian sponsored thugs and bullies, but with the decent people of Lebanon of every sect and confession who only want the normal and peaceful life for themselves, for their children, and for their country.

Mr. Speaker, just as Hezbollah sucked Lebanon into its conflict with Israel in 2006 by hiding behind its women and children, they have now forced the Lebanese people to endure their war against the Lebanese state. The insurrection by Hezbollah was unjustified, illegitimate, and immoral. No conceivable Lebanese interest was served by it. Only the goals of Iran and Syria were advanced by Hezbollah and its allies' assault on the sovereignty of the Lebanese Government.

The pretense that Hezbollah is an authentic Lebanese political actor has fallen away, and in the arrogance of power they have declared their true allegiance. It is not to Lebanon, and it is not even to the Lebanese Shia. Their loyalty is to Iran and Syria, and to the needs and interests of Tehran and Damascus. In their Lebanese puppet state, Ayatollah Khamenei will be the true president and Bashar al-Assad the real prime minister.

We have seen this kind of fraud before in the 20th century. The culmination was called the Warsaw Pact. But what was true in Europe in the Cold War remains true today in the Middle East—a captive nation is no true ally of its captor, and no amount of power can make a lie become the truth. And no amount of thuggery, torture, intimidation and murder can make Hezbollah anything other than the terrorist arm of foreign powers and an enemy of Lebanese independence and sovereignty.

The United States and every other decent nation must continue to support the Government of Lebanon. The Lebanese Government was democratically elected, it is legitimate, and it deserves our aid. Justice must ultimately be done for those recently and unjustly killed, as well as all those Lebanese murdered for their support of Lebanese sovereignty going back to the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafic Hariri. I have said many times before, and I will keep repeating it, there must be no deal or arrangement that undercuts the Special Tribunal for Lebanon.

Mr. Speaker, you either believe that Lebanon is a sovereign and independent state that is to be governed by and for the Lebanese people alone, or you don't. The overwhelming majority of Lebanese, whether they're Sunni, Shia, Maronite, Orthodox, Druse, or any other group, believe in this principle. The entire international community, with the reprehensible exceptions of Syria and Iran, believes in this principle. The United States certainly believes in it. Only Hezbollah, Amal, and the delusional Aounists do not. And that is why Lebanon has suffered and remains in pain today.

I'm very proud of the resolution before us today. I strongly urge its adoption by the House.

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

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

I rise in support of House Resolution 1194, which reaffirms America's support for the Government of Lebanon and condemns the violent Islamic group Hezbollah and its state sponsors, Iran and Syria, for undermining the sovereignty and independence of Lebanon.

For over two decades, Hezbollah and its state sponsors have done everything in their power to destroy any hope for a free and democratic Lebanon. In response, some have tried to compromise with Hezbollah to incorporate it into the Lebanese electoral system, to pretend that it is a group of Lebanese freedom fighters instead of a wholly-controlled subsidiary of Iran and Syria, to permit it to arm and re-arm in violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions, and to excuse its relentless attacks and incitement against America and Israel.

Mr. Speaker, America and other responsible nations must stop Hezbollah's current attempt to rule by the gun. We must support efforts in the U.N. Security Council and elsewhere to ensure that Hezbollah is disarmed and that Iran and Syria are barred from re-arming that group. Moreover, we must hold Iran and Syria accountable for the continuing efforts to spread violence and to undermine our allies in the Middle East, including Lebanon, Iraq, and Israel.

Mr. Speaker, Iran and Syria continue to start fires throughout the region only to disingenuously step forward and offer to put them out for an unconscionable price. We must cease falling prey to their deception, and we must stop their deadly behavior, which undermines the security of Lebanon and the entire world.

I thank my good friend and colleague from California, Chairman BERMAN of the Foreign Affairs Committee, for introducing this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LAHOOD), an esteemed member of the Committee on Appropriations.

(Mr. LAHOOD asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution and ask all Members to support the resolution.

I want to compliment Chairman BERMAN and Chairman ACKERMAN and Ranking Member MANZULLO for their leadership in bringing this very important resolution to the House floor.

No one has suffered more in the Middle East than the small country of Lebanon, caught in the crossfire of many different attacks from many different forces, not the least of which is Hezbollah. This resolution reaffirms

the House's strong support for the legitimate democratically elected government, expresses sympathy to the people of Lebanon and condolences to those in Lebanon who have been displaced, injured, and lost relatives as a result of Hezbollah's violent action.

It urges the U.S. Government and the international community to immediately take all appropriate actions to support and strengthen the legitimate Government of Lebanon under the extraordinary leadership of Prime Minister Siniora, condemns Hezbollah and its state sponsors, Iran and Syria, for its efforts to undermine the Lebanese Government, including from approximately May 5-12, fomenting riots, blocking roads, seizing buildings, seizing control of West Beirut, and engaging in sectarian fighting in much of Lebanon.

The resolution demands that Hezbollah, as a first step toward total disarmament, immediately cease its attacks and withdraw from all areas in Lebanon that it has occupied.

The resolution urges the U.N. Security Council to condemn Iran and Syria for their violations of multiple UNSC resolutions and to sanction those nations by banning air traffic between Iran and Lebanon and between Iran and Syria. It urges every country controlling possible transit routes between Iran and Lebanon to impose strict controls to prevent Iran from arming Hezbollah. And it urges the European Union to designate Hezbollah as a terrorist group. This is a very good resolution.

Mr. Speaker, as someone who has traveled to Lebanon 12 out of the 14 years that I've been a Member of the House, I can tell you that Lebanon is caught in a very, very difficult situation.

I want to give credit, also, to President Bush and Secretary Rice for the interest that they've taken in Lebanon. More recently, the President was in the Middle East and spoke out in defense of Lebanon and calling on those countries, including the group Hezbollah, to cease and desist from their activity that they're participating in in this small country. I compliment President Bush and Secretary Rice for their involvement and their encouragement to the country of Lebanon and to the leaders that they met with most recently to become more involved in trying to help solve the problem and detach Hezbollah from the kind of hold that they have on the country.

One other thing, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to also encourage the Parliament in Lebanon, who have the responsibility for electing a president and have not taken on that responsibility, and given the fact that the Office of President of Lebanon has been vacant for a number of months, I call on the Parliament of Lebanon to convene themselves and elect a president. This would send a very strong message around the region and around the world that Lebanon is a

country that can stand on its own and stand up to these terrorist groups if it has the help from other countries.

So I encourage the Speaker of the Parliament in Lebanon to take on the responsibility to call the Lebanese Parliament into session and to elect a president. I think it would be a very, very important move.

Again, I thank the Committee on Foreign Affairs for their interest in the country of Lebanon and the way that they have struck a very strong cord against Hezbollah and their activities in Lebanon. I urge all Members to support the resolution.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio, the chairman of the Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittee on Domestic Policy, DENNIS KUCINICH.

Mr. KUCINICH. I thank the gentleman.

I think that this House has concurrence, that we share concern about Lebanon. I certainly do, having had the chance, twice in the last 2 years, to not only visit the country, the northern and the southern part, but to meet with all the parties to the disputes.

One of the things that I thought was most telling was that there was a concern about working out an agreement without the interference of outside parties, without the interference of Iran or the interference of the United States. There is a feeling of Lebanon-for-Lebanon that exists very strongly in Lebanon. Yet the Lebanese have not had the opportunity to really stand that way.

Having gone to Lebanon, as I did right after the war that went past one month in the summer of 2006, and seeing the devastation there, there is no appetite for war on the part of the Lebanese people.

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The role of Hezbollah is certainly worth looking at. It's also worth considering the depth of support they have among the Lebanese people.

We have to be very careful about how we dictate a certain policy in Lebanon for its effect on Lebanon and for its effect on the region. So, therefore, I must reluctantly oppose this resolution, as well intended as it might be, because I'm concerned that it will be seen by some as the United States trying to instigate more civil unrest in Lebanon at the same time that we say that we're supporting the central government.

I have met with Prime Minister Siniora. He has been a good friend of the United States. But he had to sit by while the United States either looked the other way or encouraged, depending on whose story you accept, the continued bombing of Lebanon, which actually undermined his government.

So we have a condition in Lebanon that really has been going on now for over 25 years, with Lebanon having only tenuous control of their own affairs, with the interference of so many outside governments.

We should be doing everything we can to strengthen a process of dialogue in Lebanon. I don't believe that this resolution accomplishes that. I think it accomplishes the opposite.

Again, I'm in support of whatever we can do to stabilize Lebanon. I just have my doubts that this resolution will accomplish that. I appreciate the concern of the sponsors. I think we need to have more of a discussion—

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

Mr. KUCINICH. I certainly will.

Mr. LAHOOD. The gentleman knows that he and I have had a number of discussions about Lebanon.

I know of your deep interest in the country, and I know that you've traveled there.

The one thing, Mr. Speaker, that I would say to the gentleman is that Prime Minister Siniora did not turn a blind eye on a number of occasions when the bombing was taking place. He called for a cessation of the bombing in the southern part of the country; so I want to be sure the record is clear on this.

Mr. KUCINICH. I appreciate your pointing it out.

Mr. LAHOOD. He did not sit by and allow his country—

Mr. KUCINICH. I agree with you, and I appreciate your correcting the record in that he wasn't for it, that's for sure. But I'm suggesting to you that the fact that we had someone who was supporting us, and yet we continued as a government, our government did nothing to discourage the continued bombing of Lebanon during that period after the 6 days that Israel thought they basically had accomplished their objectives.

I was in southern Lebanon. I saw the devastation. And I talked to people both on the Israeli side and on the Lebanese side, and I see that there was a desire to stop but it continued. We undermined the Siniora government. What I'm suggesting is that it's the United States interference in Lebanon that does not serve the country's purpose of peace well. I don't see our purpose there as being benign, to my good friend, and I say this having talked to all sides. Let Lebanon be for Lebanon. Let the United States and all the other nations of the world provide some support when asked for it, but we have to be very careful about injecting ourselves in a way that we try to determine the outcome for that country. We do not do well when we try to determine the outcome of who should govern another country. It always, in the last few years, has been very difficult for us to do that.

I appreciate, though, the dedication that my good friend has to peace in Lebanon. We both agree on the necessity of civility there. We may have differences as to how that would be achieved.

I thank the gentleman.

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LAHOOD).

Mr. LAHOOD. I don't want to belabor this to my friend from Ohio, Mr. Speaker, but I want to say this: I visited right after the bombing stopped in the southern part of Lebanon. I visited there, Mr. Speaker, with some other Members of Congress, and I can tell you this: The Siniora government and all government officials decried very much what was happening in the southern part of the country and asked the United States to help in this instance to raise an enormous amount of money to help rebuild the southern part of the country. And President Bush got on the telephone, Mr. Speaker, talked to a number of countries, raised an enormous amount of money, billions of dollars. Siniora, the Prime Minister, went to France and actually met with leaders and raised an enormous amount of money.

The country of Lebanon, the Prime Minister of Lebanon, has encouraged the kind of involvement of our country to help raise money to rebuild the south and also to say to those who have taken a place in the country for no other good but to disrupt the country that this is not the kind of activity that they want.

And so we do disagree on this, Mr. Speaker, and I do disagree with the gentleman from Ohio. We need to speak out. That's what this resolution does. It speaks out about a group of people in Lebanon whose only goal is to disrupt the country and to try to take over, for no good, and that's why this resolution is well drafted and well written.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, will my friend yield?

Mr. LAHOOD. Of course.

Mr. KUCINICH. I'm maintaining that our government, the United States, has really not been for dialogue so as to try to bring all the parties together. We have pursued a path that has been quite narrow and that, in effect, keeps the conflict going. So I have concerns about that.

I would agree that Mr. Siniora is trying to do everything he can, but I also think that he's limited to what he can do because of the parameters that he has to work within in order to keep the confidence of the administration in Washington, DC. And that's my concern.

So this resolution, I don't think, really addresses the much deeper need for dialogue within Lebanon by the Lebanese instead of the United States injecting its point of view and its mandate onto Lebanon.

Mr. LAHOOD. Well, I would say this, Mr. Speaker: I would say there are a lot of back-channel talks going on that don't get the kind of headlines and the kind of publicity. But there are activities taking place, unbeknownst to many who serve here and unbeknownst really to the public. I think these are good discussions. But I urge the House to support this resolution because for one of the few times that I've been here in 14 years, it really sets out, I think, the right language that we, as the

House of Representatives, want to send as a message to the Prime Minister of Lebanon and to a group there that wants to hurt the country and hurt the people in the country and have set on a course to do that.

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

First let me express my appreciation for the gentleman from Ohio and for his good intentions and for his support of dialogue. Certainly nobody is against dialogue.

But we have a situation here where a democratic, freedom-loving, sovereign people are insisting on the results of their own self-determined election that they came to through democratic processes and are doing that in the face of outside interference in the form of armed opposition, murders, assassinations that are being sponsored by Hezbollah, financed by the Iranian and Syrian regimes. And the gentleman instead calls for dialogue. We call for nothing other than dialogue.

This is a nonbinding sense of the Congress resolution. And while other countries are running interference and murdering the people of Lebanon and preventing their democratic government from governing, we are sending them a message of hope, a message of support. And the gentleman's protestations say that we shouldn't interfere, let them have a dialogue.

What we are looking at, Mr. Speaker, is the equivalent of a rape, and I have just heard the argument that what we should do is not interfere and take sides between the victim and the raper and to say let them have a dialogue and work it out, while each and every day the rape continues. As a civilized, democratic society, we cannot sit idly by without saying a word.

I do appreciate the argument of those who are against violence, who are against arms, and who are against war. I stand with them on that. But we have no alternative than to act and at least send a message of support. There is no interference other than our best wishes while others are sending arms. There is nothing in the 17 whereas in this resolution that suggests that we're in favor of violence. And if the gentleman and those who argue his argument are truly opposed to raising an army, let them at least raise their voice. Let them speak out with us on this resolution. Let us reaffirm our dedication to the principles of democracy and self-determination of a people who have already made their choice in their election, and to stand by them, not by providing arms or violence, but by sending them the wishes of this Congress, of the American people, expressing our support for their determination to continue in their quest to effectuate the democracy to which they are entitled.

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

Mr. ACKERMAN. I yield to my friend.

Mr. KUCINICH. My concern is this: that you had an assistant Secretary of

State for the U.S., David Welch, who went to Lebanon, and he went there to basically make sure that the government took a hard-line position and that it would forestall the possibility of any dialogue. And then one of the clients of the United States, or so-called clients, basically escalated the situation by taking on the issue of disarmament of Hezbollah, which really ought to be done within the parameters of the Lebanese discussion.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Reclaiming my time, the Security Council of the United Nations has asked for the disarmament of Hezbollah. This is not our request. This is the United Nations. This is the international community. This is the entire peaceful world that has asked for that.

As far as the administration, I don't speak for the administration, heaven forbid. This is our Congress, and together Democrats and Republicans have joined in with words. Words are powerful. Words are important weapons. And if you want to avoid the weapons that go bang in the night, then words of support are important, important to a people who are under siege, whose democracy is being eroded by rogue states and terrorist organizations using violence and assassination, trying to blow up members of their elected parliament so that they no longer have a majority to continue their democratic work.

Mr. KUCINICH. Will my friend yield?

Mr. ACKERMAN. I yield.

Mr. KUCINICH. How much more effective it would be if the disarming of Hezbollah, which should occur, would occur within the context of an agreement within Lebanon as opposed to being imposed by someone else. The Lebanese should have control of their own government.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Let me say I'm not opposed to that happening. Let them disarm themselves. But let us in the meantime do what we can to be the voice of democracy and freedom.

The world looks at us as a beacon. We have spent so much of the goodwill that we have built up over 230 years of this democracy. At least let us speak out for freedom, speak out for freedom in the case of a people who are under siege, who are in the throes of having their duly elected government taken away from them by terrorist organizations and rogue regimes.

We know what Hezbollah is. The world knows what it is. We cannot stand idly by and not utter a word of support. This is our word of support. This is the resolution of this Congress. Would that it be more. Would that it be more forceful. Would that it be more effective. But at least we can continue to give those people who insist on living lives of freedom a rekindling of the belief that we too believe in what they believe in and that we support them in their struggle.

If the gentleman is prepared to yield back his time, I will do so.

Mr. MANZULLO. I am prepared to yield back. I want to commend the gentleman for his impassioned speech.

I thank you for the things you have said this afternoon in this Chamber.

Mr. ACKERMAN. You're quite welcome.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H. Res. 1194, mainly because this legislation reads like an authorization to use force in Lebanon.

As the key resolved clause of H. Res. 1194 states:

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

* * * * *

(6) urges—

(A) the United States Government and the international community to immediately take all appropriate actions to support and strengthen the legitimate Government of Lebanon under Prime Minister Fouad Siniora;

This language is eerily similar to a key clause in the 2002 Iraq war authorization, H.J. Res. 114, which read:

(a) AUTHORIZATION—The President is authorized to use the Armed Forces of the United States as he determines to be necessary and appropriate in order to—

(1) defend the national security of the United States against the continuing threat posed by Iraq;

I find it outrageous that this legislation, which moves us closer to an expanded war in the Middle East, is judged sufficiently "non-controversial" to be placed on the suspension calendar for consideration on the House Floor outside of normal parliamentary order. Have we reached the point where it is no longer controversial to urge the President to use "all appropriate actions"—with the unmistakable implication that force may be used—to intervene in the domestic affairs of a foreign country?

Mr. Speaker, the Arab League has been mediating the conflict between rival political factions in Lebanon and has had some success in halting the recent violence. Currently, negotiations are taking place in Qatar between the Lebanese factions and some slow but encouraging progress is being made. Regional actors—who do have an interest in the conflict—have stepped up in attempt to diffuse the crisis and reach a peaceful solution. Yet at the critical stage of negotiations the U.S. House is preparing to pass a very confrontational resolution endorsing one side and condemning competing factions. In threatening to use "all appropriate actions" to support one faction, the United States is providing a strong disincentive for that one faction to continue peaceful negotiations. Passing this resolution will most likely contribute to a return of violence in Lebanon.

This legislation strongly condemns Iranian and Syrian support to one faction in Lebanon while pledging to involve the United States on the other side. Wouldn't it be better to be involved on neither side and instead encourage the negotiations that have already begun to resolve the conflict?

Afghanistan continues to sink toward chaos with no end in sight. The war in Iraq, launched on lies and deceptions, has cost nearly a trillion dollars and more than 4,000 lives with no end in sight. Saber rattling toward Iran and Syria increases daily, including in this very legislation. Yet we are committing ourselves to intervene in a domestic political dispute that has nothing to do with the United States.

This resolution leads us closer to a wider war in the Middle East. It involves the United States unnecessarily in an internal conflict be-

tween competing Lebanese political factions and will increase rather than decrease the chance for an increase in violence. The Lebanese should work out political disputes on their own or with the assistance of regional organizations like the Arab League. I urge my colleagues to reject this march to war and to reject H. Res. 1194.

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. ACKERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1194.

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. LAHOOD. 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.

□ 1630

CONFERENCE REPORT ON S. CON. RES. 70, CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2009

Mr. SPRATT submitted the following conference report and statement on the Senate concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 70) setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2009 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2008 and 2010 through 2013:

CONFERENCE REPORT (S. CON. RES. 70)

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the House to the concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 70), setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2009 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2008 and 2010 through 2013, having met, after full and free conference, have agreed to recommend and do recommend to their respective Houses as follows:

That the Senate recede from its disagreement to the amendment of the House and agree to the same with an amendment as follows:

In lieu of the matter proposed to be inserted by the House amendment, insert the following:

SECTION 1. CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2009.

(a) DECLARATION.—Congress declares that this resolution is the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2009 and that this resolution sets forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal year 2008 and for fiscal years 2010 through 2013.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—

Sec. 1. Concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2009.

TITLE I—RECOMMENDED LEVELS AND AMOUNTS

Sec. 101. Recommended levels and amounts.