

scapegoating any people, which includes as well the Jewish people and the State of Israel.

Madam Speaker, I believe that this is a right step. I wish we had had this document. I wish we had had a high-level delegation some years ago. And if I might quickly acknowledge Mary Robinson.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman from Texas has expired.

Mr. BERMAN. I yield the gentlelady an additional 30 seconds.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I acknowledge the then Human Rights Commissioner, Mary Robinson, who was the architect somewhat of this idea. Her heart was in the right place. She was there. She wanted us to speak on the issues that this conference needed to grapple.

Racism, Madam Speaker, is intrinsic. It is deep. It is in the souls of many. It covers ethnicities and language. It is difficult to deal with. This is an important conference. This legislation should craft it, design it and stand for it in the right way.

Let me thank the NAACP for its support of this legislation. And I understand Wade Henderson, who was one of the architects of working with this, this is the right direction to go. I'm looking forward to a conference that speaks to the issues and embraces all of those who have been victims of racism and discrimination and to end it forever and ever.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise to support H. Res. 1361, a resolution that urges the U.S. government to prevent the upcoming U.N. World Conference on Racism from being hijacked by those seeking to spread anti-Semitism and hate. The theory behind a conference on racism, where members of all nations come together to fight hate and promote diversity, is an important goal. Unfortunately, just as they have in the past, the organizers of this U.N. conference on Racism seem to have buried the task at hand.

In 2001, the conference was held in Durban, South Africa, and was hijacked and transformed into an anti-Israel tirade. While racism and the promotion of hate are taught in many classrooms around the world, the organizers of this U.N. conference unfairly chose to single out Israel. This must stop.

The United States must take a leadership role now, while the conference is still in planning stages, to ensure that such a despicable charade will not be repeated. The administration must work with our allies and use its leverage to ensure that this conference lives up to its name. And, if it seems that the conference is going to mock the world's fight against racism and it becomes clear that the conference will become a forum to promote hate and anti-Israel sentiment, then I urge the administration to pull U.S. support and work with our allies to show the conference for what it is: a sham.

Finally, I join the sponsors of this legislation in commending the efforts of our allies, France, Canada, and Israel for declaring their intentions not to participate in Durban II if its agenda is diverted.

It is imperative that the United States not stand idly by while countries around the world

belittle the fight against racism. I look forward to working with my colleagues, the administration and countries around the world until we get this right.

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

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield back our 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. 1361, 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.

The title of the resolution was amended so as to read: "Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States should lead a high-level diplomatic effort to ensure that the Durban Review Conference serves as a forum to review implementation of commitments made at the 2001 Durban Conference to combat all forms of racism by defeating the campaign by some members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to divert the United Nation's Durban Review Conference from a review of problems in their own and other countries by attacking Israel, promoting anti-Semitism, and undermining the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERMISSION FOR MEMBER TO BE CONSIDERED AS FIRST SPONSOR OF H.R. 643

Ms. BERKLEY. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that I may hereafter be considered as the first sponsor of H.R. 643, a bill originally introduced by Representative Stephanie Tubbs Jones of Ohio, for the purposes of adding cosponsors and requesting reprints pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII.

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

There was no objection.

RECOGNIZING NGO WORK ON ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PEACE

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1369) recognizing nongovernmental organizations working to bring just and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1369

Whereas the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has cost many innocent lives and continues to bring terrible suffering to both peoples;

Whereas despite the ongoing conflict, Israeli and Palestinian individuals and nongovernmental organizations have been work-

ing for decades to build bridges between the two peoples, to address humanitarian concerns, and to further the cause of peace;

Whereas such individuals and nongovernmental organizations that are committed to nonviolence, recognize Israel's right to exist, and are dedicated to achieving a two-state solution deserve recognition and encouragement to continue their important work;

Whereas the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is currently at a critical juncture, and sustained progress towards peace depends on the commitment of individuals and organizations that choose dialogue, friendship, and openness;

Whereas the Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act of 2006 (Public Law 109-446) permits the provision of United States assistance to nongovernmental organizations to provide for basic human needs, the protection of basic human freedoms, and the promotion of human rights, nonviolence, and for a just and peaceful reconciliation, provided that such assistance does not knowingly and directly benefit any terrorist organization;

Whereas the initiatives of these individuals and nongovernmental organizations reflect the tenacity of those with a true commitment to peace, mutual respect, and coexistence, and demonstrate the real impact that such people can make on the lives of individuals and communities; and

Whereas such initiatives build hope and trust among both peoples and can help pave a path to peace; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the vital role of nongovernmental organizations in peace-building efforts between Israel and Palestinians, and encourages them to remain steadfast in their commitment to nonviolence, recognition of Israel's right to exist, dedication to achieving a two-state solution, and work toward building trust and cooperation between the two peoples;

(2) applauds the tireless work of these individuals and nongovernmental organizations, and urges them to continue their efforts;

(3) acknowledges and encourages the important efforts and support that these nongovernmental organizations, religious organizations, and individuals committed to peace and nonviolence contribute to these initiatives;

(4) affirms the importance of United States support to nongovernmental organizations that provide humanitarian aid and work for democracy, human rights, and peace and reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians; and

(5) urges Israeli and Palestinian leaders to embrace the spirit of nongovernmental peace builders toward achieving a just and lasting peace.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BERMAN. Madam 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. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution, and I yield myself 3 minutes.

I would like to thank, Madam Speaker, my friend and distinguished colleague, Representative BARBARA LEE, for introducing this important resolution to highlight the work done by the NGO community in support of Israeli-Palestinian dialogue. In spite of the shaky cease-fire reached between Israel and Hamas on the Gaza Strip, Hamas and other extremist Palestinian groups have neither changed their stated aim, namely, the destruction of the State of Israel, nor given up the use of terrorism and violence as a means to achieve that end.

But while the terrorists of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic jihad continue to threaten innocent civilians and undermine peace efforts, we should recognize the courageous efforts being made by many nongovernmental organizations to do just the opposite, that is, to foster conditions that can lead to peace. Many of these groups work tirelessly and selflessly not only to improve the daily lives of Palestinians but also to effect peaceful coexistence between Palestinians and Israelis. One example, Seeds of Peace, brings Israeli and Arab youth together for summer retreats that cultivate a culture of understanding and tolerance among tomorrow's leaders.

As this resolution affirms, it shall remain U.S. policy to actively support all those nongovernmental organizations that provide humanitarian assistance, promote democracy, human rights and work towards Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation while unequivocally opposing the use of violence. This resolution lends that encouragement and backing only to those NGOs that explicitly renounce violence, accept Israel's right to exist and support existing agreements between Israel and the Palestinians.

I join the author of this resolution, Congresswoman LEE, in lauding contributions to peaceful coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians made by nongovernmental organizations. I hope, and believe and want to believe that this is the way of the future. I urge all my colleagues to support this resolution.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

House Resolution 1369 recognizes the efforts of nongovernmental organizations working to bring just and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

□ 1800

I would like to thank my good friend from California, the gentlelady, Ms. BARBARA LEE, for her hard work in drafting this important resolution. We all want to see peace, stability and security prevail in the Middle East and, indeed, in all regions of conflict. However, that goal remains elusive when leaders act in ways that distort, perpetuate and aggravate otherwise resolvable disputes between nations and

peoples. Such leaders make peace impossible by programming their citizens into viewing other nations and other people as wicked, as inhuman, as worthy of hatred and even of death.

Fortunately, the work of nongovernmental organizations and of individuals committed to nonviolence and to Israel's right to exist as a Jewish and as a Democratic state provide a counterweight to the purveyors of this terrible rhetoric. These individuals and NGOs cultivate relationships that oppose violent extremism and hateful propaganda, that promote a culture, instead, of life and that seek peaceful, rational and mutually beneficial solutions to seemingly intractable problems.

So I commend the gentlelady from California (Ms. LEE) for its introduction, and I urge the passage of this important resolution.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, we have one speaker, the sponsor of the resolution, and I yield her, Congresswoman BARBARA LEE, 4 minutes.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, let me just say once again that I want to expressly thank the Chair of our committee, Mr. BERMAN, for his leadership and for his support in bringing this resolution to the floor.

Also, I want to thank our ranking member, Congresswoman ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, for her assistance in making sure that we can have a bipartisan resolution.

Every now and then, I think we ought to talk about peace. You know, that seems not to be a word or a term that we discuss very often on this floor, so we have a chance to just say "peace" a few times today.

Thank you, Mr. BERMAN and Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, for giving us that chance.

This resolution recognizes the vital role of nongovernmental organizations in peace-building efforts between Israelis and Palestinians, and it encourages them to remain steadfast in their commitment to nonviolence, in their recognition of Israel's right to exist, in their dedication to achieving a two-state solution, and in their work towards building trust and cooperation between the two peoples.

Mr. Speaker, this bipartisan resolution is strongly endorsed by many organizations and groups that have been long dedicated to the cause of peace, justice and of reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians. I'd like to mention for a minute the supporters of this resolution:

The Churches for Middle East Peace, which is a coalition of 22 public policy offices of national churches and agencies—Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant—working to realize the vision of a region where two viable states, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders; the Alliance for Middle East Peace, which is an alliance of 57 NGOs that are promoting people-to-people coexistence, cooperation and reconciliation between

Israelis, Palestinians, Arabs, and Jews in the Middle East; the Israel Policy Forum, which is an independent, non-partisan organization advocating for sustained American, diplomatic efforts to end the conflict between Israel and her neighbors and to actively promote the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; and the Middle East Policy Advisory Committee, which is a coalition of organizations that my congressional district formed to bring a just peace between Palestinians and Israelis.

Mr. Speaker, in a region that has suffered so much loss and seemingly interminable conflict, these efforts are critically important in addressing the daily struggles and challenges faced by Israelis and Palestinians.

Sixty years ago, the great Senator Hubert Humphrey said that people are the issue of the 20th century. I might add now the well-being of people is the critical issue of the 21st century, and peace is needed for people to flourish.

As the great theologian Saint Augustine reminds us, peace is the necessary condition in which people can be free to work out in their private destiny.

That's why it's fitting and proper to recognize, as my resolution does, the efforts of Israeli and Palestinian individuals and of nongovernmental organizations that have been working, really, for decades to build bridges between the two peoples—to address humanitarian concerns and to further the cause of peace.

Although the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has cost too many innocent lives and though it continues to bring terrible suffering to both peoples, we can all be thankful that there are many nongovernmental organizations comprised of men and women of goodwill, working to build schools and hospitals, to foster cultural exchanges, to increase commercial ties, economic development, and to promote interreligious dialogue and understanding.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is currently at a critical juncture. Sustained progress toward peace depends on the commitment of individuals and of organizations that choose dialogue, friendship and openness.

So this amendment recognizes the efforts of those unsung heroes and heroes, and it encourages them to continue their important work.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COHEN). The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. BERMAN. I yield the gentlelady an additional 30 seconds.

Ms. LEE. It also salutes them for their commitment to nonviolence, to the recognition of Israel's right to exist and to their dedication to achieve a two-state solution.

I would like to thank our staff, Mr. BERMAN. I would like to thank Alan Makovsky and Matthew Zweig of the staff of the Foreign Affairs Committee, and I would also like to thank Gregory Berry and Scott Exner on my staff.

This is the spirit in which I hope we can move forward in terms of nongovernmental peace builders and move

toward achieving a just and lasting peace. Let's be cognizant of the fact today that peace is possible.

Thank you, Mr. BERMAN. Thank you, Ms. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN. I thank the committee for the resolution.

THE REBUILDING ALLIANCE,
Palo Alto, CA, September 23, 2008.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE, I am very proud to support H. Res 1369, a positive and constructive resolution to advance the cause of peace and justice in Israel and Palestine and I urge you to vote for it. I am really proud that Representative Lee was willing to work with us at the Rebuilding Alliance and the Middle East Policy Advisory Committee to bring this resolution to the floor.

At its heart, H. Res. 1369 recognizes those people—Israelis and Palestinians—who continue to pursue peace and justice with every breath they take, despite their own overwhelming personal losses. These are the people who make a difference in their communities, and it is to them we offer encouragement. Let me tell you about some of them:

I want Congress to care about the peacemakers in the Village of Al Aqabah and all those who seek to help them:

Last week, Mayor Haj Sami Sadik came, in his wheelchair, to Washington DC to meet with Congressional and Senate staff. He is the mayor of the Palestinian West Bank Village of Al Aqabah and he came to ask your help to save his kindergarten and village from demolition. Israeli Architect Shmuel Groag, a founder of BIMKOM: Planners for Planning Rights, joined him, along with me, American Donna Baranski-Walker, executive director of the Rebuilding Alliance, the SF Bay Area nonprofit that helped the village build their kindergarten and brought them here to ask Americans to help save it.

I care about Al Aqabah. I care about their kindergarten with 130 students. The village holds full title to its land, without question—and they even won an earlier case before the Israeli High Court of Justice to remove the Israeli Army's training camp from the village gates. As they were rebuilding their kindergarten, the Israeli Army issued demolition orders against the kindergarten, the medical center, the mosque, and nearly all the homes in the village. The village held to their belief that justice will prevail as Mayor Haj Sami Sadik again petitioned the Israeli High Court of Justice to recognize their village's right to exist. Now he filed the village's own master plan with the Israeli Army's Civil Authority and asks the world's help to see the village's plan approved, and to help his village thrive.

I care about the Rachel Corrie Charity in Rafah, Gaza, holding their soccer tournament on the land where 2200 Palestinian homes once stood, as a way to build community and goodwill near a very traumatized refugee camp. The Rebuilding Alliance brought one of the founders of this group, Khaled Nasrallah, to the U.S., joining Cindy and Craig Corrie, parents of the late American Rachel Corrie, in a six-state speaking tour three years ago. The Rachel Corrie Charity is being sponsored by the Gaza Community Mental Health Organization, a Palestinian non-governmental organization that deeply opposes violence and is itself an outspoken advocate of freedom, fairness, and democracy—and many congressional staff met with one of the founders of Gaza Community Mental Health Programme, Mr. Husam El Nounou, along with Rebuilding Alliance board member from Jerusalem, Rabbi Jeremy Milgrom, helping Mr. El Nounou return home when the Gaza's borders were first blockaded in 2006.

I care about the Free Gaza Movement and the Americans, Internationals, Israelis, and

Palestinians who worked together to steer their boats through international waters to break the siege of Gaza last month. My friend and Representative Lee's constituent, Paul Larudee, was on one of those boats. It is important to recognize their nonviolent activism and urge an end to the collective punishment of 1.4 million people in Gaza and speak out against using blockades and siege as tools of diplomacy.

I care about the Israeli and Palestinian peacemakers who are part of a group called Combatants for Peace. These are Israeli former soldiers and Palestinians who have been in Israeli jails who now pledge not to use violence, but instead to work together for peace and justice. Their Palestinian cofounder, Bassam Aramin, lost his daughter Abir to a soldier's rubber coated bullet. Their Israeli cofounder, Elik Elhanan, lost his sister when a suicide bomber detonated. Together they and 500 more like them, choose peace. Combatants for Peace has launched the Abir's Garden Project to build playgrounds at Palestinian schools in memory of Abir Aramin.

These are but four groups working to bring about a real peace in Israel and Palestine. I look forward to inviting all the peacemakers in each congressional district to forums with their Representatives to describe their work for peace in Israel and Palestine. Honorable Representatives, I hope each of you will send letters of encouragement to those Peacemakers in Israel and Palestine who they support.

H. Res 1369 moves beyond condemnation to begin a process of recognition and encouragement.

I believe that this form of recognition can open doors and I urge your support. To the peacemakers, may you know that your work makes a difference. May you continue your efforts and may the Congress of the United States join you to help you realize your goals. To the honorable members of the U.S. House of Representatives, I urge you to vote for H. Res. 1369 and recognize these and many more peacemakers in Israel and Palestine. Please use your influence to keep them safe, help them achieve their goals, and press for a negotiated peace agreement between Israel and Palestine that is viable and fair to all.

Sincerely,

DONNA BARANSKI-WALKER,
Executive Director of the Rebuilding Alliance.

CHURCHES FOR
MIDDLE EAST PEACE,
Washington, DC, September 23, 2008.

Attn: Foreign Affairs Legislative Aide.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: Churches for Middle East Peace, a coalition of 22 Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant national church bodies, urges all Members of the House to support H. Res. 1369, recognizing nongovernmental organizations working to achieve a just and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians. This resolution was unanimously approved by the House Committee on Foreign Affairs in July and is scheduled to be considered under suspension of the rules today.

Passage of H. Res. 1369 would send a strong message of Congressional support for efforts to further the cause of Middle East peace. At this critical time, when progress on the political process is uncertain, this resolution affirms the important role that civil society plays in laying the groundwork for peace. It provides hope and encouragement to the many Israelis and Palestinians who have long worked to foster peace and reconciliation, promote human rights, democracy and nonviolence, and address humanitarian concerns. In our frequent visits to Israel and the Palestinian Territories, and through our

long-standing relationships with partner churches and their relief and development agencies, we know well the fruits of their good works. We believe the commitment of these dedicated individuals and organizations, together with robust U.S. diplomacy and the commitment of Israeli and Palestinian leaders, can finally help realize the vision of two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security.

We ask today for your support of H. Res. 1369 and look forward to continued work with the U.S. Congress to finally achieve peace in the Holy Land.

Sincerely,

Bishop Wayne Burkette, President, Southern Province, The Moravian Church in America.

James Fine, Legislative Secretary for Foreign Policy, Friends Committee on National Legislation.

Catherine Gordon, Representative for International Issues, Washington Office, Presbyterian Church, USA.

Dr. Duncan Hanson, The Reformed Church in America, Supervisor for Europe and the Middle East.

Mark Harrison, Director, Peace with Justice Program, General Board of Church and Society, United Methodist Church.

Aura Kanegis, Director, Public Policy and Washington Office, American Friends Service Committee.

Rev. Michael Kinnamon, General Secretary, National Council of Churches USA.

Rev. Jim Kofski, MM, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns.

Peter Makari, Middle East and Europe Global Ministries, United Church of Christ and Christian Church, Disciples of Christ.

Rev. John L. McCullough, Executive Director and CEO, Church World Service.

T. Michael McNulty, SJ, Justice and Peace Director, Conference of Major Superiors of Men, CMSM.

The Very Rev. George Rados, Representative, Antiochian Christian Orthodox Archdiocese of North American.

Marilyn Rouvelas, Representative, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

Rachelle Lyndaker Schlabach, Director, Washington Office, Mennonite Central Committee US.

Maureen Shea, Director, Office of Government Relation, The Episcopal Church.

Russell Testa, Director, JPIC, Franciscan Friars, OFM.

Rev. Susan P. Wilder, Director for Middle East Policy, Washington Office, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, a sincere thank you to Representative BARBARA LEE. In this Congress, there is no greater voice for peace than Congresswoman LEE.

I rise today in strong support of this Resolution recognizing non-governmental organizations working to help bring a just and lasting peace to Israelis and Palestinians.

Peace will not be brought about by governments and presidents. Peace will only be achieved when people come together to support a common goal—security and prosperity for all.

More than any conference or summit, the work of local and international NGOs have brought the region closer to a non-violent resolution to the ongoing crisis. Their work is invaluable.

From student exchanges to high-level reconciliation programs, NGOs are irreplaceable in the peace process.

I applaud this Resolution's commitment to peace and nonviolence and urge my colleagues' support today.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 1369, Recognizing nongovernmental organizations working to bring just and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians, which I am a co-sponsor of. This bill was introduced by my distinguished colleague from California Congresswoman BARBARA LEE. This important legislation encourages countries in the Middle East to find a solution that will ensure long lasting stability, prosperity, and self-sufficiency in their region and affirms the importance of nongovernmental organizations to this process.

GENERAL

For decades, the United States and Israel have maintained strong bilateral relations based on a number of factors, including strong domestic U.S. support for Israel; shared strategic goals in the Middle East; shared democratic values; and historic ties dating back to U.S. support of the creation of Israel in 1948. U.S. economic and military aid has been a major component in cementing and reinforcing these ties. Although there have been occasional differences over Israel's settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and Israeli arms sales to China, successive administrations and many lawmakers have long considered Israel to be a reliable partner in the region, and U.S. aid packages for Israel have reflected this sentiment.

However, the elongated years of fighting between Israel and Palestine are indirectly detrimental to the position of our country in the Middle East. The most beneficial solution for the United States, Israel, and Palestine is lasting peace in the holy regions, and as the Congress of the United States we must recognize that nongovernmental organizations can facilitate this process and aid every country involved. The stability of the Middle Eastern region is important to the United States, and this resolution will reaffirm our commitment to supporting any steps towards peace in the Israel and Palestine.

PREVIOUS LEGISLATION

Earlier this year, I supported H. Con. Res. 322, recognizing the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel and reaffirming the bonds of close friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel. I have supported Israel in the past, and the national interest of Israel is in the national interest of the United States. The best outcome for the country of Israel is a peace resolution that will quell the fighting, encourage peace, and allow the country a chance to recover from years of hostile encounters.

If the best way to facilitate and encourage peace between Israel and Palestine is to offer our support of the involvement of nongovernmental organizations, then I strongly support H. Res. 1369, and I encourage my colleagues to do the same. We must do what we can to support peace negotiations in the Middle East and support the national interest of Israel.

Mr. SIRE. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise in support of House Resolution 1369, which recognizes the work of nongovernmental organizations in helping to bring peace between Israelis and Palestinians. It is through the tireless efforts of so many dedicated and talented individuals on the ground in the region that we have been able to see progress. Nongovernmental organizations have worked for years at a grassroots level to build relationships between Israelis and Palestinians; neighbor to neighbor. These organizations have a true

commitment to peace and to coexistence. The relationships they nurtured have helped to build bridges within these communities that I hope will sustain a lasting peace in the region.

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

Mr. BERMAN. 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 California (Mr. BERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1369.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SUPPORTING CHRISTIAN, JEWISH, MUSLIM INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 374) supporting the spirit of peace and desire for unity displayed in the letter from 138 leading Muslim scholars, and in the Pope's response, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 374

Whereas interfaith dialogue among Christians, Jews, and Muslims is a powerful way to bridge the chasms of mistrust and misunderstanding that can divide adherents to the 3 Abrahamic faiths;

Whereas a number of important initiatives to enhance interfaith dialogue have been launched in recent years;

Whereas in 1997, the Three Faiths Forum was founded in London and has focused on "improving understanding between the Muslim, Christian, and Jewish communities";

Whereas in 1998, the Foundation for the Three Cultures of the Mediterranean was founded in Seville, Spain, by former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres, King Juan Carlos I of Spain, and King Hassan II of Morocco, with the objective of promoting cooperation between Christians, Jews, and Muslims;

Whereas in 2005, King Abdullah II of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan launched the "Amman Interfaith Message" in order to "establish full acceptance and goodwill" between Christians, Jews, and Muslims;

Whereas in 2007, 138 Muslim scholars, leaders, and activists sent a letter to numerous Christian leaders expressing their support for peace, harmony, and goodwill between Christians, Jews, and Muslims;

Whereas in 2007, the Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land was founded "to advance [the] sacred values [of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism], to prevent religion from being used as a source of conflict, and instead serve the goals of just and comprehensive peace and reconciliation";

Whereas the Vatican has announced that the Pope intends to address a Catholic-Muslim summit of religious leaders in November 2008;

Whereas interfaith dialogue has the potential to inspire men and women around the world to appreciate the common values shared by adherents of different religions,

thereby strengthening the bonds of respect, cooperation, and tolerance against the forces of radicalism, extremism, and hatred;

Whereas these initiatives provide an opportunity to elevate the voices of people of faith who, often at risk to themselves, advocate for peace and understanding, courageous positions too often drowned out by radical extremists; and

Whereas unity among leaders of different faiths is a powerful weapon to fight intolerance, marginalize extremism, and defeat the agents of terrorism: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the United States supports the spirit of peace and desire for unity displayed in initiatives of interfaith dialogue among leaders of the 3 Abrahamic faiths;

(2) the United States further supports additional meetings of Christian, Jewish, and Muslim religious leaders aimed at greater dialogue between the religions;

(3) the United States encourages the many people of faith around the world who reject terrorism, radicalism, and extremism to join these and similar efforts in order to build a common bond based on peace, reconciliation, and a commitment to tolerance; and

(4) the United States appreciates those voices around the world who condemn terrorism, intolerance, genocide, and ethnic and religious hatred, and instead commit themselves to a global peace anchored in respect and understanding among adherents of the 3 Abrahamic faiths.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) 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 to 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 yield myself such time as I may consume but no longer than 3 minutes as I need an arbitrary restraint.

I want to begin first by thanking both the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. WAMP) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON) for this resolution and for coming to the committee with a sense of the importance of this resolution and for the broader sentiment this resolution reflects, which is a broad and sincere commitment to global interfaith dialogue. I think it's a brilliant proposal.

I am pleased to have before us this resolution that supports such interfaith dialogue. I know its authors were inspired by a dialogue that 138 Muslim scholars, from all major sects of Islam, initiated in a letter to the Pope and to other Christian leaders. The letter emphasizes the importance of religious tolerance and of mutual respect between Christians and Muslims. In fact, the Pope graciously responded to this letter by agreeing to host a summit of