

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. SIREN. 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

Catholic and Muslim leaders that is scheduled for this November.

This initiative reflects the same spirit as that of several other major interfaith initiatives meant to strengthen relations among the Abrahamic faiths, such as the 2005 Amman Initiative of King Abdullah II of Jordan and the 1998 initiative launched by the now Israeli President Shimon Peres, by King Juan Carlos I of Spain and by the late King Hassan II of Morocco.

Ever since Samuel Huntington coined the phrase, much is said in our public discourse about a “clash of civilizations” and about how to avoid it, but we really have to shoot higher than that. We have to aim to seek a comedy of civilizations. To do so, Muslim, Christian, Jewish, and other religious leaders must emphasize the core similarities of their faiths and values.

This resolution encourages understanding and partnership among Christians, Muslims and Jews. Much of the cultural heritage of the West and the Middle East can be ascribed to these three Abrahamic religions, but of course interfaith dialogue doesn't need to and should not stop there. We should support and encourage the sentiments expressed in this resolution in favor of dialogue, not only among Abrahamic religions but among all religions.

While there is much work still to be done to reach our goals, I again want to thank Mr. ELLISON and Mr. WAMP for this resolution that points the way towards developing societies, in the words of the resolution, based on peace, reconciliation and on a commitment to tolerance.

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

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

I rise today in support of House Concurrent Resolution 374, which expresses the House's backing for interfaith dialogue between Christian, Jewish and Muslim leaders.

Mr. Speaker, at a time when violent extremists are misusing Islam in order to encourage others to commit mass murder and to do away with liberty, it is more important than ever for true moderates from all faiths to come together and to unequivocally repudiate hate and violence and to embrace peace, tolerance and religious freedom for all.

As true moderates do come together for this most noble of purpose, they should know that America stands with them in their quest.

Mr. Speaker, while this important resolution deals with interfaith dialogue involving adherence to Christianity, to Judaism and to Islam, I would like to note that interfaith dialogue and religious freedom should encompass all faiths.

Finally, I would like to thank my distinguished colleague and dear friend, Mr. WAMP of Tennessee, for introducing this important resolution and for presenting it before us today.

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

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 4 minutes to a cosponsor of the resolution, to a gentleman who brought it to my attention some months ago. He is the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON).

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I know that it's protocol and important to thank the Chair of the committee and the ranking member, but today, I have to convey my very sincere and heartfelt thanks to Chairman BERMAN and to Ranking Member ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN. Of course, I have to also thank my dear friend ZACH WAMP, who came to me many months ago and proposed that we offer this resolution together.

I believe this is an historic day, and I am deeply humbled. Other than the day that I had to come here before the House to talk about the collapse of our bridge in Minneapolis, I feel the most sense of emotion and of weight and of gravity today.

I also want to point out that this resolution that comes to the floor today takes place during a very special time for people of the Muslim faith, which is the month of Ramadan—a month of reflection, of fasting and, based on this resolution's coming to the floor, of good things as well.

The passion that my colleague Mr. WAMP and I share for this resolution may strike some Members as unusual, but it shouldn't. Indeed, as Members of Congress on different sides of the political aisle, Mr. WAMP and I may not always agree on policy, but we are two men who have come together as people of faith to highlight what we both believe are historic interfaith developments within the Christian, Jewish and Muslim faiths.

In late 2007, 138 Muslim scholars from every sect of Islam, representing communities of faith in countries both friendly and hostile to the United States, sent a letter to Christian leaders everywhere, declaring common ground between our faiths and seeking dialogue among leaders of two traditions that represent nearly half the world's population.

□ 1815

Responding to that letter, some 300 Christian leaders, including many leaders in the United States, declared in November 2007 their appreciation and support for this historic outreach. In March 2008 the Vatican announced that the Pope had invited these scholars to a first-ever summit, which will meet in Rome in November 2008.

I believe the mutual respect by all participants in this effort holds tremendous transformative power, not only for relations between Christians and Muslims, but also for Islam's entire relationship with the West.

I believe it is in the best interests of the United States to support and encourage those efforts so that the world knows that our Nation stands with

those people who reject extremism and violence and hate and embrace reconciliation.

Let me read from the resolution: “It is the sense of Congress . . . that the United States encourages the many people of faith around the world who reject terrorism, radicalism, and extremism to join these and similar efforts to build a common bond based on peace, reconciliation and a commitment to tolerance . . . Furthermore, the United States appreciates those voices around the world who condemn terrorism, intolerance, genocide and ethnic and religious hatred, and instead commit themselves to global peace anchored in respect and understanding among the adherents of the three Abrahamic faiths,” Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

Today, our world knows too many people who are divided, rather than healed, by faith. I speak for myself, but I am sure most Members of the House would agree that our religious faith is a great source of strength and has the transformative effect of bringing people together, not pushing them apart.

I believe this resolution will serve to send a strong message to people everywhere that Members of the House stand in solidarity with members of the Christian, Jewish and Muslim faith as they confront ancient and modern divisions so that peace may prevail. It is brought up during a particularly special month for me.

I urge my colleagues to support this truly bipartisan resolution.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield such time as he may consume to the author of this resolution, my good friend from Tennessee (Mr. WAMP).

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Speaker, over the last 14 years that I have had the privilege to serve here in the House, many times I have come to the floor from the head.

Today, I totally come to the floor from the heart, and that was the initial motive that I had was from the heart. We can't really speak for each other because we are speaking from our faith perspectives, but I do think that our motives are all for peace, and that is the common denominator that brings us together today. It is historic in the sense that three principal sponsors here are a Muslim, a Jew and a Christian. I happen to be an evangelical.

But we are here in a country that is pluralistic, that separates us from the entire world in that we honor and respect everyone's religious views. We may have a foundation that's Judeo-Christian, but it's so important that we cling to this pluralistic approach. We are not theocratic, and we do not want the world to be divided over our religious beliefs.

The common denominator today is that we stand together against radicalism and violence and terrorism. I have seen polling data in the Islamic world that shows that 92 percent of Islam denounces and does not believe

that terrorism is an acceptable means to an end. That's the good news.

The bad news is that 8 percent is a very large number of people. But we want to encourage the moderates, the peace lovers in all of the Abrahamic faiths to stand together against radicalism and extremism and promote tolerance and a pluralistic view, as we have in this country, that is part of our foundation that says every one has the right to worship as they please and to believe as they please, even not to believe, if they please. That is part of our fabric.

The divisions over religion in the world create this danger of some kind of an event where, over religious intolerance and difference in the world, we can have a Crusades-like event.

Now Jesus to me is love. That's my belief. I come to the floor today to say I in no way want to water down anyone's faith or beliefs, but I do believe that Jesus taught us blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall inherit the kingdom of heaven, and I want that to be me.

I am speaking for that belief, and I believe there is a time for war. I believe when we are attacked, we have to defend ourselves and our freedom and our way of life.

But there is also a time for peace, and I hope and pray that is now. I think you have to risk peace from time to time, and that's what I am doing on the floor today. I think we must, as a Nation, risk peace.

I want to commend Tony Hall, who is part of the formation of the Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land, also known as the Jerusalem Council, where Mr. BERMAN, Mr. ELLISON and I got together with the religious leaders from the Holy Land of all three Abrahamic faiths to promote peace.

Many times the state departments and the governments of these countries get together to talk peace, but then religious leaders are not there, engaged, buying into what the policies are that will maintain peace. We want the religious leaders to also come together and stand against radicalism and violence and division in the world.

I think the scope of these divisions are so great that this is the greatest pursuit we can engage in to lasting peace, is to stand together against radicalism and to respect each other's religious views. That's what I call risking peace. That's the common denominator.

I don't want to say that I know Mr. ELLISON's motives or Mr. BERMAN's motives, but I know mine. I ask the House to come together and stand together, even if it's for this brief moment, respecting our traditions of pluralism, and the freedom of religion, but standing together united against radicalism and violence and terrorism and encouraging all in the Islamic world, and all in every faith, to stand together against violence and destruction and death so that we have the hope of a

world that could exist together in peace, because blessed are those peacemakers.

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, with great appreciation to both of the sponsors of this resolution, I yield back the remainder of 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 concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 374, as amended.

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

The title was amended so as to read: "Concurrent resolution supporting Christian, Jewish, and Muslim interfaith dialogue that promotes peace, understanding, unity, and religious freedom."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

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. 6983, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 5352, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 642, 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.

PAUL WELLSTONE AND PETE DOMENICI MENTAL HEALTH PARITY AND ADDICTION EQUITY ACT OF 2008

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6983, as amended, 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 New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6983, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 376, nays 47, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No. 625]

YEAS—376

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Alexander
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca

Bachus
Baird
Baldwin
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley

Berman
Berry
Biggart
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blackburn
Blumenauer

Bono Mack
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (SC)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite,
Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson
Castle
Castor
Cazayoux
Chabot
Chandler
Childers
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cohen
Cole (OK)
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Edwards (MD)
Edwards (TX)
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Fallin
Farr
Fattah
Ferguson
Filner
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Frank (MA)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Gerlach
Giffords

Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hall (TX)
Hare
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Hayes
Heller
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Hinchey
Nadler
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hobson
Hodes
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Hulshof
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee
(TX)
Jefferson
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (NC)
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
King (NY)
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Lampson
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Ryan (WI)
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebach
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel
E.
Lynch
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Manzullo
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McDermott
McGovern
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon

McMorris
Rodgers
McNerney
McNulty
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murphy, Tim
Murtha
Musgrave
Myrick
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Nunes
Oberstar
Obey
Oliver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Pearce
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Platts
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reynolds
Richardson
Rodriguez
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sanchez, Linda
T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sestak
Shays
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter