

clear message that no act of terror will be able to go unpunished.

Last year I twice visited Afghanistan as part of a congressional delegation to the regions. We received briefings from both American and Afghani political leaders and their military leaders. The question I asked nearly everyone who would listen to us was, Where is Osama bin Laden, and what are we doing to capture or kill this man?

Our recent success in killing and capturing his allies gives me confidence that the appropriate steps are being taken to bring this murderer to justice. In fact, Commander of U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan, General Stanley McChrystal, recently confirmed that the military is actively trying to find and kill bin Laden. I was very pleased to hear General McChrystal confirm his commitment as he continues his excellent service in Afghanistan.

The strategy in Afghanistan and Iraq is two-pronged and not only a military endeavor. In addition to wrapping up our missions to capture and kill terrorists, we are also now placing a greater emphasis on preventing the recruitment of violent extremists by preventing these countries from returning to the conditions that fueled such hate in the past.

In fact, just a couple of hours ago, I participated in a video teleconference with the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team in the 3rd Infantry Division of the U.S. Army. The "sledgehammer brigade," as they are nicknamed, told me about over 120 projects they have completed or will soon be completed in a five-province region in Iraq. Their efforts are a big reason we have seen significant progress and stabilization in Iraq over the past 2 years.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to continue to support our forces in these two endeavors.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

SAN JACINTO DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today is April 21, and when I grew up in Texas April 21 was a holiday. We didn't go to school, and the reason I thought we didn't go to school was because April 21 is my mother's birthday and she always led me to believe that school was out because it was her birthday.

Later I learned that wasn't actually correct, that we had celebrated April 21 as a State holiday in Texas because it is one of the most, if not the most important day in Texas history. Because

on April 21, 1836, 174 years ago, Texas gained complete independence from Mexico and became a free and independent nation for over 9 years.

A little history is due, I think. It all started when Mexico was a republic, a democracy, similar to the United States. Texas belonged to Mexico. But a person by the name of Santa Ana became President of Mexico. When he became President, he abolished the Mexican constitution and became dictator. And once he became dictator, he eliminated civil rights for everybody that lived in Mexico, including what is now Texas. So Texas sought independence, and on March 2, 1836, Texas declared independence from Mexico and cited the reasons, because of the dictator, the tyrant who had denied civil rights to all those living in Texas.

At the same time a group of 187 volunteers, of all races from all the States in the Union and many foreign countries, assembled at a beat-up old Spanish church in central Texas called the Alamo. That's right, 187 volunteers stood in defiance of Santa Ana's army, who invaded Texas. Several thousand enemy soldiers came in. We all know the history, that after 13 days of fighting those battles, the Alamo fell and all the defenders were killed.

However, that battle allowed for General Sam Houston, who was commander of the Texas army, to build an army to fight back. As William Barrett Travis said at the Alamo, who was the commander, a 26-year-old individual from South Carolina, that victory will cost the enemy more dearly than defeat. And he was right. Because of the massive losses of Santa Ana's forces at the Alamo, he had to regroup. He started then chasing Sam Houston.

Sam Houston was moving east. He was headed toward the Sabine-Neches area, the Sabine-Neches River, which is next to the United States. We call that Louisiana. He had yet to fight a battle. Santa Ana's armies had been very successful in defeating the Texas armies in almost every battle. And Sam Houston had yet to fight, but he found himself, on April 21, 1836, between the Buffalo Bayou and the San Jacinto River in a marshy land called San Jacinto. There he stood to fight.

Most battles are fought in the morning after sunrise, but on April 21 the Texas army was so eager to fight that at 3 o'clock in the afternoon they decided to march on Santa Ana's forces, which outnumbered the Texans over two to one.

The Texas army was an odd-looking bunch. They were volunteers, but they were from, once again, all over the country. They were frontiersmen. They were shopkeepers. They were lawyers and doctors. They were made up of Texans and of Hispanic dissent. We call those Tejanos. They were led by Captain Juan Seguin, and his Tejanos were part of the calvary. So as not to be mistaken for the Mexican army, because the Texans had no uniforms, Juan Seguin's troops wore a playing

card in their hat band to make sure that the Texans knew who they were.

So the Texans marched on Santa Ana's forces completely by surprise and defeated them, an overwhelming defeat, one of the biggest upsets in military history. Half of Santa Ana's forces were killed; the other half were captured. The battle lasted 18 minutes, and one-third of the land in the United States, which is now the United States, switched hands.

This is a map of the way Texas looked after April 21, 1836. Texas claimed all of the land, which is part of Texas, part of Oklahoma, New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, and Kansas.

Texas became a free and independent nation that day, stayed a republic for 9 years, and then joined the United States. Texas only got into the United States by one vote when a Louisiana Senator finally changed his mind and allowed Texas to come into the United States.

I mention this, April 21, because it's an important day not only for Texas but for all people who believe in freedom. That these freedom fighters, these volunteers in 1836, many of them gave their lives for that word "liberty." A word that we still fight for today. In our history a lot of people fought for that word and died for independence, both for Texas and for the United States.

So we honor those brave Texans on this April 21, the anniversary of San Jacinto Day.

And that's just the way it is.

HONORING ISRAELI INDEPENDENCE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTCH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, as the Nation's newest Member of Congress, it is truly an honor to have my first remarks on the floor be in commemoration of Israel's 62nd anniversary.

Today I proudly rise in support of House Concurrent Resolution 260, which recognizes the independence of the Jewish state of Israel and reaffirms the unyielding friendship and unshakable alliance between our two great nations.

As Israelis and Jewish communities throughout the world celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut, this resolution holds a special significance for me and my constituents in Florida's 19th District. I proudly represent a district with one of the Nation's largest number of Jewish

Americans, as well as Holocaust survivors.

So many of my constituents remember when the promise of Israel was only an unlikely possibility, and over the years they watched the amazing realization of this dream and the establishment of this great nation.

For so many of my constituents and to so many Americans, that day in 1948 when Israel declared its independence was the day that a promise was fulfilled to the Jewish people who for so long struggled to find a place they could call home. Sixty-two years later, Israel has grown into a thriving democratic state with a technologically advanced economy and a rich, democratic culture.

The people of Israel embrace freedom, and through art and literature, music and business, the entire globe has benefited from Israel's existence and success. Throughout these 62 years, the people of Israel have shown an open-hearted desire to live in peace and a fierce resolve to protect the security of their citizens no matter what the cost. This nation and these citizens have shown incredible determination and fortitude in the face of terrorism and threats from those who deny and threaten Israel's very existence. Whether they be attacks from terrorist groups like Hamas and Hezbollah or the continued financial sponsorship of terrorism by Syria and Iran, the people of Israel should know that the United States will always, unequivocally stand in support of Israel's right to self-defense.

The relationship between the United States and Israel is unbreakable. The relationship is one between two peoples, our common values, the history we share, our commitment to freedom, and our joint vision of a secure and peaceful Middle East.

From the recognition of the new state of Israel by President Harry Truman in 1948 through today, let me make this clear: The United States stands with Israel and the United States will always stand with Israel. The relationship is secure and the relationship is strong.

This resolution not only reaffirms Israel's right to self-defense but recognizes that the single most serious threat facing Israel's security is that of a nuclear-armed Iran. Iran's illicit quest for nuclear weapons poses an existential threat to the state of Israel and an unacceptable threat towards the United States. The importance of this issue cannot be understated.

Just this week, the very week we celebrate Israel's independence, news organizations have reported that President Ahmadinejad has approved new uranium enrichment plans in Iran. This threat is real and it is unacceptable. Congress and the administration must work together and use every tool at our disposal to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. The United States must take immediate aggressive action to ratchet up economic pressure

on Iran, which I am hopeful the House will continue to work on tomorrow, and we must continue to demand that the international community join with us in this critical effort.

As a new Member of Congress, I look forward to working with my new colleagues from both sides of the aisle on initiatives that will strengthen our bond with Israel, enhance Israel's defense capabilities, and thwart Iran's nuclear weapons program.

America and Israel share a commitment not just to confronting terrorism and extremism but to bolstering freedom, human rights, and democracy across the globe.

The generosity and kindness of the Israeli people could not have been more evident than the days following the devastating earthquake in Haiti. It was Israel that arrived on the scene first and began rescuing men, women, and children trapped in the rubble. It was Israel that built the first field hospital in Haiti and began offering immediate medical care to the injured. And it was Israel that stood with those most in need because of a simple belief in universal human dignity.

Let us stand with Israel today by passing House Concurrent Resolution 260 and by expressing our most sincere hope that our dear ally Israel achieves the lasting peace it has long deserved.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to congratulate our friend and ally, the State of Israel, on the 62nd anniversary of her founding.

A week ago, I had the honor of attending the National Days of Remembrance ceremony in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda. I was joined by 3 of my constituents, Marlboro residents Toby Shylit Mack, Community Relations Committee Chair of the Jewish Federation of Monmouth County, and her husband Bob Mack, and North Brunswick resident Lee Livingston, President of the Jewish Federation of Greater Middlesex County.

As always, it was a very moving ceremony. Sitting in the Rotunda, amidst survivors and liberators from the U.S. Armed Forces, I was reminded that even in 1945—out of the ashes of the most unimaginable tragedy in human history—there was nothing pre-ordained about the founding of the State of Israel. When he was President, Dwight Eisenhower said, "Our forces saved the remnants of the Jewish people of Europe for a new life and a new hope in the reborn land of Israel."

However, it took three years of tireless work of leaders like David Ben Gurion, Chaim Weitzmann, and Golda Meir—coupled with the dedicated support of Jews in the U.S. and throughout the world—to make the dream of a reborn land of Israel become a reality. Even upon its founding 62 years ago, there was nothing pre-ordained about Israel's survival.

The State of Israel was created with great courage, and it is from this courage that Israel continues to maintain its vibrant and strong democracy today. Israel's achievements over the last 62 years—in areas ranging from education and economics to science and agriculture—far surpass what could reasonably be expected of such a young nation. During my trips to Israel, I have witnessed the ingenuity and entrepreneurship of Israelis firsthand.

The United States always should be proud that our nation was the first country to recognize officially the new nation. In doing so President Truman confidently said, "I believe it has a glorious future before it—not just another sovereign nation, but as an embodiment of the great ideals of our civilization."

Our strong commitment to Israel's existence and prosperity remain steadfast today. Our nations' special relationship extends beyond friendship. It is built on the common values of equality and opportunity for all and our shared commitment to freedom, justice, and peace. Israel is more than just an ally; Israel is an inspiration.

Yet this outpost of democratic ideals in the Middle East continues to face external threats to her very existence. I have seen Israeli families terrorized by rocket attacks, and my visits have only strengthened my conviction that the United States must be unwavering in our support for the right and responsibility of Israel to protect her citizens from legitimate threats. While serving in Congress, I have voted for over \$35 billion in economic and military assistance for Israel, and I will continue to support such measures in the future.

Ultimately, the only way to achieve lasting peace and security for the citizens of Israel is to secure a just, permanent, and peaceful settlement between Israelis and Palestinians. I believe that the greatest service the United States can provide to Israelis is as a facilitator in negotiations among the parties. It is my deepest hope that Israeli and Palestinian leaders soon will join each other at the negotiating table, with the support of the U.S. administration, to make swift progress toward an enduring peace agreement.

On Israel's 62nd anniversary, I believe more than ever that the future of Israel and the Middle East is one of peace, cooperation, security, and prosperity. I am pleased to join the Jewish community of New Jersey and all Americans in celebrating Israel's national successes, her great contributions to the international community, and her continued existence as an inspiration for us all.

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 62nd Anniversary of Israel's Independence. Yom Ha'atzmaut, as it is called in Hebrew, allows us in the American Jewish Community to pay tribute to Israel by reflecting on its past achievements, while simultaneously realizing its capacity to contribute further to the global community and the advancement of human knowledge. As a member of the House Science and Technology Committee, I would like to pay tribute to Israel's Independence by highlighting some of its many accomplishments in the fields of science and technology.

The aspiration of Israeli pioneers to transform a country, which is 60 percent desert and lacks an abundance of natural resources, into a modern state, led to strategic investments in the fields of science and technology, which are now among Israel's most developed sectors. Today, Israeli scientists have contributed to advancements in the fields of agriculture, computer sciences, electronics, genetics, medicine, optics, solar energy, health sciences, and various fields of engineering. Israel is also home to many groundbreaking companies in the high-tech industry, such as Symantec and Allot. Symantec helped develop cloud computing which secures and manages information on the internet, and Allot produces the broadband pipes needed for smart phones.

Israel has over 3,850 start-ups that have been established in Israel, and has the largest number of NASDAQ-listed companies outside of North America. Most NASDAQ Israeli firms are high-tech companies, and over a dozen have market capitalizations of over \$500 million.

Proportionally to its size, Israel's contributions to science and technology over the past decades have been significant. Israel has made important contributions in a number of areas in space research, including laser communication, research into embryo development, and osteoporosis, pollution monitoring, mapping geology, and soil and vegetation in semi-arid environments. Israel's lack of conventional energy sources has propelled extensive research and development of alternative energy sources—specifically innovative technologies in the solar energy field. For example, Israel has become the world's largest per capita user of solar water heaters in the home. A new, high-efficiency receiver to collect concentrated sunlight has been developed, which will enhance the use of solar energy in industry as well.

One of the major problems confronting the global water supply today is pipe leakage. For Israel, which is two-thirds desert, water-saving technologies are of critical importance. The International Water Association has cited Israel as one of the leaders in innovative methods to reduce non-revenue water, which is water lost in the system before reaching the customer. Additionally, Israel has surpassed many countries in the fields of computer engineering and computer science. Israel's Weizmann Institute of Science and the Technion, Israel Institute of Technology are ranked among the top 20 academic institutions in the world in computer science.

Israel began research and development in space exploration after establishing the Israel Space Agency to coordinate and supervise a national space program. Israel launched its first satellite, Ofek-1, in 1998, and has since made major contributions in space research, including in areas of laser communication and pollution monitoring. Ilan Ramon became the first Israeli astronaut in space when he was chosen as a Payload Specialist on the Space Shuttle Columbia.

Israeli companies have excelled in computer security technologies, semiconductors and communications. Intel and Microsoft both built their first overseas research and development centers in Israel, and other high-tech multinational corporations, such as IBM, Cisco Systems, and Motorola, have opened facilities in the country. An Israeli, CEO and president of M-Systems, Dov Moran, invented the first flash drive in 1998.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I celebrate the accomplishments of the State of Israel on the 62nd anniversary of her founding. Israel's successes are a reflection of their commitment to education and innovation, and a tribute to the future of the Jewish State and its people. Our shared dedication to these matters only further strengthens the bond between our two countries. For these and many other reasons, I join with my colleagues in celebration of Israel's anniversary—and as an ally for the protection and advancement of Israel's future.

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and commemorate the 62 anniversary the State of Israel.

At the same time we celebrate this occasion, we also are recollecting the 65th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps and celebrating the annual Days of Remembrance commemorating the 6 million Jews murdered in the Holocaust as well as the millions of other victims of Nazi persecution. It was out of this torturous past that this new nation was formed.

On May 14, 1948, the people of Israel proclaimed the establishment of the sovereign and independent State of Israel. Literally, within minutes, the United States recognized the modern nation of Israel and welcomed it into the international community. That was the beginning of a longstanding and cherished friendship between the two nations that endures to this day.

The State of Israel remains one of the United States' strongest allies and its endurance is a testament to the ideals of freedom and democracy. Our nations share the common goals of peace, freedom, security, and prosperity for their citizens and for the region. It is this commonality that allows this relationship to endure despite changes in Administrations, of Congresses, and even disagreements that emerge from time to time.

Despite many difficulties and challenges, thanks to its greatest resource—its people—and the help of supporters throughout the world—Israel has built a vibrant democracy and a thriving economy and society.

We must continue to strongly support Israel's right to exist, its prosperity, and security. One of the best ways to ensure this is for the United States to continue to work to bring life to the peace process between Israel and its neighbors.

While recognizing that success ultimately depends on the parties themselves finding compromises and agreements, active U.S. engagement as an honest broker and mediator remains critical.

This will not be easy. Neither was establishing the State of Israel. Nor has it been easy to create a democratic state in a region where many of these tenets remain largely unknown and if known, unpracticed. Yet, 62 years later, Israel stands firm.

Again, I want to extend my congratulations and best wishes to the people of Israel as they celebrate the 62nd anniversary of its independence.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, today, not only do we celebrate the 62nd anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel, we also celebrate the strong bonds of friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel. Our country, under the leadership of President Harry Truman, was the first country to recognize the State of Israel. And he later said, "I had faith in Israel before it was established. I have faith in it now. I believe it has a glorious future before it, not just as another sovereign nation but as the embodiment of the great ideals of our civilization." President Truman was right and we need to maintain the special relationship we have with Israel based on shared values, common strategic interests, and moral bonds of friendship. Today, we honor not only that country's independence but the significance of what Israel stands for.

It represents the centuries-long yearnings of the Jewish people for a homeland of their own in the land of their forebears. The pogroms in tsarist Russia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and the Holocaust under the Nazi

regime in the 1930s and 1940s made the idea of a Jewish people having a state of their own where they could feel secure and never again be subjected to such horrors and brutality even more compelling and necessary.

After many years of struggle, Israel emerged as an independent state. It gave refuge to tens of thousands of Holocaust survivors, many of whom had been languishing in temporary resettlement camps in Europe. Israel also became the home for Jews from scores of countries around the world and continues to provide a refuge to those who face anti-Semitic persecution.

In 62 years, Israel has transformed itself from chiefly an agricultural exporter to an international high-tech superpower, and it has used its wealth and power to come to the aid of others in times of need. I want to especially commend the people of Israel, its defense forces, and the team of 250 Israeli doctors, nurses and relief workers who worked tirelessly to bring aid and comfort to the victims of the devastating earthquake that struck Haiti on January 12, 2010.

Since its creation, Israel has continually confronted hostile forces that threaten its existence, and the United States must remain steadfast in ensuring the security of Israel. With the assistance of the United States, Israel was able to achieve peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan in the 1970s and 1990s, respectively. These agreements made Israel more secure and greatly lessened the chances for another Arab-Israeli war with those two countries. Despite the threats it continues to face from hostile neighbors and violent militants, the people of Israel have established a vibrant, pluralistic democracy that incorporates the freedoms cherished by all Americans.

It is my sincere wish that peace negotiations between Israel and its neighbors will succeed, and that the Israeli people and all peoples of that troubled region will be able to live in a lasting peace.

On the occasion of its 62nd anniversary, I wish the people of Israel continued growth and prosperity. I will continue working with my colleagues in Congress, with the Administration and with the American people to ensure that the enduring bond that unites our two peoples endures for the years and centuries to come.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, on this, the 62nd anniversary of the founding of Israel, I want to extend my warmest regards to the people of Israel and all those who made the Middle East's first democracy possible.

In the wake of one of the most horrific crimes against humanity ever perpetrated, Jews from across the globe sought to form their own homeland, one that enshrined in their constitution 'freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture.'

President Harry Truman was the first international leader to recognize the state of Israel, and we've been proud allies ever since.

In Israel, Americans can see much to be admired, and we share common goals and desires. We are both home to countless innovators, entrepreneurs, scholars, thinkers, activists, immigrants, and democrats. We both strive for peace and a more just and stable world. And we are both familiar with

the hard trials, tribulations, and triumphs that come to define a people and a culture.

Let's continue our strong and hopeful relationship as we work toward peace across the globe.

Mr. NYE. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Dr. Israel Zoberman, founding rabbi of Congregation Beth Chaverim in Virginia Beach, Virginia, this passage shall be recorded in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD of the United States of America:

"The 62nd anniversary of the State of Israel is a genuine cause for celebration. It is sadly not a given having a sovereign Jewish state following a long history of denial, and current attempts to delegitimize. Israel is both the fulfillment and unfolding quest of two millennia of prayerful persistence and unyielding faith. From Inquisition to pogroms to finally a consuming Holocaust designed to seal the anti-Semitic rejection of Jewish insistence to live in fidelity to its own Biblical covenant with God—Israel's triumph of survival is thus a statement of hope in the human potential to endure monumental hardships.

"Yet what is a people to do if destined to experience the miracle of rebirth in a region as problematic as today's Middle East? That strategic geo-political gateway to continents has always enticed the appetite of empires for control, gaining access to resources, expansion and power. Colonialism took its toll, materially and psychologically, and forced the eruption of conflict between Jews and Arabs.

"The Palestinian national identity, on the soil that had been the setting for centuries of Jewish life and creativity, brought the two into tragic and perpetual conflict whose full resolution still eludes us though progress has been made. However, the reason for guarded optimism is rooted in the ultimate interests of the wider Arab and Muslim world, whose tacit recognition of Israel's factual and future existence through Egypt's and Jordan's breakthrough diplomatic ties is positive. Let all the Arab and Muslim states reach out to formally join and reassure Israel of their intentions at this critical juncture.

"What has replaced much of the anti-Israel ideology is the even more potent power of an extreme Iran, whose leaders' political plan of regional domination and world influence is cloaked in religious absolutism that loathes compromise, seeking total victory over its adversary. Consequently, Iran has been fanning and financing the dangerous turmoil produced by their proxies of Hamas and Hezbollah whose goal is to foil an Israel-Palestinian peace settlement while engaging Israel in a war of attrition on two fronts. Iran's nuclear drive is geared toward neutralizing Israel's essential deterrence, dominating the Arabs and establishing Iran as a prestigious arbiter in world affairs, while offering its Ayatollahs critical hegemony of imperialistic magnitude.

"The United States is bound to Israel through a special relationship born of compelling legacies of both countries, the common democratic ethos of free nations and shared security concerns to combat religious fundamentalism, including radical Islam.

"Overall, Israel has achieved much that is exemplary given constricting conditions. It has absorbed and saved millions of Jewish refugees. It has reached out to offer professional expertise and economic aid to many developing countries across continents. And Israel has revived the Hebrew language and culture

and its higher learning institutions rank among the best with a flourishing top notch hi-tech industry. Israel has proven that for peace sake it is ready to compromise, as with the painful Gaza Disengagement that Hamas failed to appreciate. Hamas is yet to release Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. A united Palestinian front, free from Iran's and Syria's menacing involvement, and one eager to live peacefully as Israel's neighbor will not be disappointed in Israel's response.

"As the only democratic state, the West's canary, in the Middle East celebrates a hard-won milestone and heroically maintained independence, its fondest dream and secret weapon remains an undying attachment to the promise of shalom's blessings, and its consecrated mission of an historic people to continue inspiring the human family to bring out the best within it."

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I rise today to celebrate the 62nd anniversary of a great democracy and our close friend and important ally, Israel.

The United States and Israel share a unique and unbreakable bond. This bond is based upon friendship, common values, and a strong interest in a peaceful future for the Middle East. From its first breaths in 1948 until today, Israel has stood as the foremost beacon of democracy in the Middle East.

As the sole democracy in the region, Israel is the United States' most strategic ally in the Middle East, and I have supported policies that strengthen its safety, security and welfare. Israel must be able to rely on the friendship of the United States as it takes the bold steps necessary towards peace in the Middle East.

Some of this reliance comes in the form of U.S. foreign assistance. Providing foreign assistance to Israel is important as Israel faces legitimate, external threats to its survival—Hamas, Hezbollah, and Iran.

We must also provide Israel diplomatic support in the form of sanctions against the Iranian government, before it is too late. Iran's pursuit of a nuclear weapon is a real and immediate threat to the existence of Israel, and a serious and troubling threat to the security of the entire Middle East and the U.S. A nuclear Iran is simply unacceptable, and we must do what we can to deter this threat.

The Iranian government, and the international community, must recognize the Jewish, democratic state of Israel's legitimacy and right to exist, given the Jewish people's three millennia of history in the land of Israel. Israel is Jewish land, and this must be recognized.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Israel on its 62nd anniversary. It is imperative that we continue to remain firmly behind our friends in Israel. As our strongest ally in one of the most volatile regions in the world, our country's first priority must be to be a true friend a partner with Israel.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the 62nd anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel.

Americans stand beside the Israeli people in commemoration of Israel's independence, and we celebrate the vision of the 37 Israelis who established the founding declaration on April 20, 1948, in order to secure a free, just, and peaceful new nation.

Shortly after Israel was founded, President Harry Truman became the first national leader to recognize Israel as a friend and partner of the United States. Since that time, Congress-

sional support for the State of Israel has not wavered, and ties between our two countries remain inextricably linked.

Last August, I was fortunate enough to visit Israel with a number of my Congressional colleagues. That visit left an indelible impression on me. It is one thing to read of Israel's history and about that region of the world, but it is quite another to walk through the streets in Jerusalem, see Israel from the Golan Heights, and spend time at Yad Vashem and at Masada. While there, I also visited Ramallah and met with Palestinians who are engaged in the peace process.

Along with my colleagues in Congress and my constituents back home in Hawaii, I look forward to the day when the Middle East is a region at peace. I am confident that our governments will continue to work together as allies to ensure that the goal of achieving a comprehensive peace in the region becomes a not-so-distant reality.

Congress must also work with the Obama administration to make certain that Israel's security remains intact. On April 15, 2010, a number of my colleagues from both sides of the aisle sent a letter to President Obama assuring him of bipartisan support to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons capability using the tools we have at our disposal, including engagement with the Iranian regime and targeted sanctions. Although I was in Hawaii and did not have an opportunity to sign it, I would like to go on record in support of this letter, which reiterates congressional support for President Obama to do what is necessary to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. Late last year, I voted in support of H.R. 2194, a bill that amends the existing Iran Sanctions Act of 1996 and imposes additional sanctions that would curb energy investments in Iran. Soon the House and Senate will vote on a conference measure, and I hope that passage of this legislation will further deter the security threat that Iran's regime poses to Israel.

I join my colleagues in wishing the Israeli people a happy Independence Day and reaffirm Congress's commitment to our relationship with the Israeli state.

Ms. TSONGAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate the 62nd anniversary of Israel Independence Day.

I was fortunate to travel to Israel in 1982 and still have strong memories of my visit to that tiny strip of land that holds so much meaning for so many. Much has changed since that time, and I have heard repeatedly that it is like a whole new country worth visiting again, which I intend to do.

Israel has developed a vibrant and diverse democratic society. It is home to an innovative technology sector with more start-ups than any other country except the United States. I am proud to say that many of these organizations have strong research and development relationships with organizations throughout my home State of Massachusetts and that these relationships continue to create jobs for both Americans and Israelis.

Israel has been a place of refuge and opportunity for thousands coming from countries as diverse as Ethiopia and the former Soviet Union. And Israel has provided relief around the world for victims of natural disasters in Haiti, Southeast Asia and elsewhere.

It has done all this while being surrounded by enemies. In this environment, Israel has

forged hard won peace with both Egypt and Jordan, and despite tragic setbacks, the Israeli people continue to yearn for peace with their neighbors.

The strong bonds that exist between Israel and the United States are based on our shared ideals—democracy, opportunity, freedom, and peace—and the mutually beneficial cooperation between our two countries will continue long into the future.

Again, I rise to celebrate the 62nd anniversary of Israel's independence and to recognize the lasting friendship between our two countries.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Israel's 62nd Independence Day.

Israel is not just a vitally important ally to the United States, it is a beacon of democracy in a part of the world where democracies are few and far between.

Sadly, all too often, Israel is forced to defend these democratic values against countless who wish to wipe Israel off the map.

The threat of rocket attacks is nearly constant for Israelis. I had the opportunity to visit Israel last year, and I witnessed firsthand some of the damage caused by rocket attacks by Hamas from Gaza. I am amazed at the determination of the Israelis to continue to lead normal lives despite the constant threats and reminders of terrorism. It was particularly evident during a trip to Sderot, at an indoor playground that also functions as a bomb shelter.

The threat from Iran is even more ominous. Between the Holocaust denials, the arms shipments to terrorists, and the quest for nuclear weapons, Iran is not only a threat to Israel, it is a threat to the United States.

That's why, as we commemorate Israel's Independence Day, I can think of no more appropriate action for those of us here in Congress than to finish our work on Iran sanctions legislation, and to deliver a final bill to President Obama as quickly as possible.

Last year, the House passed H.R. 1327, the Iran Sanctions Enabling Act by a vote of 414 to 6, as well as H.R. 2194, the Iran Refined Petroleum Act by a vote of 412 to 12. In January, the Senate approved S. 2799, the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2009 by voice vote.

There is clearly broad, bipartisan support for this legislation, and I believe we must act without further delay.

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, this week, Israel marks the 62nd anniversary of the historic date in the Hebrew calendar when the British Mandate over Palestine expired and a modern Jewish state was reborn.

Each year, Israel Independence Day, Yom Ha'atzmaut, is an opportunity to catalogue the remarkable accomplishments of a nation built on the hopes of generations. And it is an opportunity for us to reiterate the enduring support and friendship of the United States government and the American people.

This year, we celebrate a country that has engineered immense economic prosperity, even in the face of the worst economic challenge since the Great Depression. Today, Israel has the second largest number of technology startup companies in the world, after the United States. As we mark the 25th anniversary of the 1984 U.S. Free Trade Agreement, Israel boasts the largest number of NASDAQ-listed companies outside of North America. Considering Israeli leadership in biomedical, alternative energy, and defense re-

search, it is no surprise that Israeli GDP now rivals countries in Europe.

Military and intelligence cooperation between the United States and Israel has reached unprecedented levels with operations like the joint missile defense exercise Juniper Cobra, approved sales of sensitive military technology, and regular Israeli participation in NATO patrols of the Mediterranean.

In November, I had the honor of attending the dedication of the 9/11 Living Memorial, a monument established by the Jewish National Fund in the foothills of Jerusalem beside a forest planted in the memory of those who perished on 9/11. It is the only memorial outside the United States that names all of the victims and a powerful example of the enduring and emotional connection between our nations.

This year, Yom Ha'atzmaut also comes at a moment of great anxiety. Iran is ramping up efforts to obtain nuclear weapons capability which poses an existential threat to the country's survival. Hezbollah is arming itself with Scud missiles. Gilad Shalit remains in captivity. Gaza remains unstable and in the coming months the United Nations General Assembly will again seek action on the flawed, inaccurate, and biased Goldstone Report on the war in Gaza.

In the face of all these issues, it is clear that the United States is working side-by-side with Israel to meet and resolve all of these challenges.

In the past few weeks, there have been tensions and arguments among good friends. Emotions were high after Vice President BIDEN's recent visit to Israel. It was distressing that the mishandling of a housing planning announcement tarnished a concrete peace initiative to launch proximity talks designed to facilitate the return to direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. But Israel is not retreating from the road of diplomacy, and neither is the United States. The Palestinian Authority should also stay the course.

What is more significant, are the exceptionally strong statements of support for Israel, its security and our alliance by the President, the Vice President, and the Secretary of State's and Prime Minister Netanyahu's reiteration of his commitment to participate in talks, proximity or direct, without pre-conditions.

Although Israel's enemies want to portray an atmosphere of crisis, there is nothing for them to exploit. The one-state solution they advocate to eradicate the Jewish state is transparently a policy of genocide not peace.

When peace is finally achieved, Jerusalem will remain, as it is today, the eternal capital of Israel. And this will be embraced by the United States in spirit and in law, just as it is today.

The most resounding answer to Israeli's critics is the strength and vibrancy of its democracy, its commitment to live in peace with its neighbors, and its dedication to promoting stability and security in the region.

The United States and Israel have much common ground to celebrate this year as always and we stand proud to do so.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, since the founding of the State of Israel sixty two years ago, the United States has had no greater friend in the Middle East. The U.S.-Israeli friendship is based on shared democratic values, progress, and our hope for peace between nations. This friendship is buttressed by our nation's unshakeable commitment to Israel's security.

Since its founding in 1948, Israel has spurned the authoritarian model that dominates its region and has built a world-class civilization: a vibrant democracy, a thriving economy, and a culturally and academically rich society.

Israel produces more scientific papers per capita than any other nation. Nearly a quarter of the Israeli workforce holds university degrees, ranking Israel third in that category in the industrialized world, after the United States and Holland. Israel also claims one of the world's highest numbers of books and museums per capita.

Over the last sixty two years Israel has become a global leader in medicine and technology. Israeli medicine and medical equipment is exported world wide. And Israeli technologies are protecting and assisting U.S. military personnel deployed around the globe.

High-tech companies are rushing to get an Israeli presence. In addition to boasting the highest density of start-ups in the world (a total of 3,850 start-ups, one for every 1,844 Israelis), more Israeli companies are listed on the NASDAQ exchange than all companies from the entire European continent.

Moreover, Israel is leading a green revolution with its high-tech companies and Israel is the only country in the world that entered the 21st century with a net gain in its number of trees.

The American people—and particularly the United States Congress—have contributed mightily to Israel's sustenance and security over the years. Of that we are justifiably proud.

Still, despite its strength, Israel faces incredible challenges to its existence. The Islamic-militant group Hamas, which is determined to bring about Israel's destruction, remains in control of the Gaza strip and continues to plot against Israel. Hamas is actively working to disrupt the return to peace negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians.

Hezbollah, which is sustained by Iran and supported by Syria, remains perched on Israel's northern border. As The New York Times recently noted, it is believed that Syria has delivered accurate long-distance Scud missiles to Hezbollah, placing cities deep in Israel's heartland, including Tel Aviv, within range.

Furthermore, the Islamic Republic of Iran, a theologically-based state whose President has threatened to "wipe Israel off the map", is rapidly developing nuclear weapons and long-range missiles.

In my view, there is no greater threat to Israel, the United States, and the world than the prospect of a nuclear Iran. For this reason, in the coming weeks the Congress will send President Obama legislation designed to strongly sanction Iran in order to cripple its nuclear weapons program. I am proud to be the sponsor of that legislation.

In closing, I congratulate Israel on its 62nd anniversary of independence. Today we reaffirm our nation's pledge to Israel: that we will stand in solidarity with Israel against all violent assaults on its security and well-being. Israel's security is America's security, Israel's hopes for peace are America's hopes for peace, and we will always stand side by side.

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Mr. Speaker, I recognize the sixty-second anniversary of Yom Ha'atzmaut, to congratulate the State of Israel on its Independence Day, and to celebrate the unshakeable U.S.-Israel relationship.

As the daughter of a Holocaust survivor, I understand personally how important Israel is for all Jews everywhere. On May 14, 1948, Israel declared independence, providing a new safe haven for Holocaust survivors and for Diaspora Jews before and since the Holocaust, who experienced a millennium of anti-Semitism.

In honor of Israeli Independence Day and in recognition of the close relationship between Israel and the United States, we will continue to work with our trusted ally to pursue a secure and peaceful Middle East, assuring liberty, economic prosperity, and security for Israel and its neighbors. While Hamas, Hezbollah and Iran threaten this security with words and missiles, the U.S. Congress stands committed to work towards a secure Israel where all of its citizens can live, prosper, and dream in security.

In its 62 years of nationhood, Israel exemplifies freedom, opportunity, and democratic values. Its unfettered elections, transparent press, and vital economy distinguish it as a leader in the Middle East. It is our closest ally in the region. As such, I welcome the opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate its independence and our shared efforts to ensure its safe and secure future.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. BERKLEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HONORING ISRAELI INDEPENDENCE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KLEIN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support House Concurrent Resolution 260 and acknowledge both the sacrifices and the celebrations of the Israeli people on their Independence Day, Yom Ha'atzmaut.

Sixty-two years ago, the founders of the Jewish state gathered together in Tel Aviv to declare: "Exiled from the land of Israel, the Jewish people remain faithful to it in all the countries of their dispersion, never ceasing to pray and hope for their return and the restoration of their national freedom."

In every turn of Jewish history, expulsion after expulsion, pogrom after pogrom, the vision and the dream of the return to Israel would keep the Jewish people going. It was this hope that fueled the establishment of the state of Israel, and through every battle and every war, the words of the Israeli Proclamation of Independence

continued to hold true. The people of Israel's connection to the land keeps them faithful to the ideals of the state that was established 62 years ago.

□ 1700

I feel this commitment every time I visit Israel and see the unshakeable dedication to improving the Jewish homeland. Since its founding 62 years ago, Israel has become a modern state, a beacon of democracy, and a hub of technological advancement. And the world has benefited from Israel's contributions.

Israel is the world's largest per capita user of solar water heaters in their homes. Israel will be launching the world's first electric car network throughout the country, reducing their dependence on foreign oil, and serving as a model to the rest of the world. Israel's experience on the front lines of terrorism have allowed them to use their first responder skills when humanitarian crises occur around the world, not just in Israel. Just a few months ago, Israel dispatched a team to Haiti, setting up a field hospital, delivering medical care, and saving lives. They were the first ones on the ground.

Finally, Israel has taken painful steps toward peace, making sacrifices, sometimes unilaterally, toward the goal of reaching an agreement with its Arab neighbors. Israelis live under constant threat from Hamas's barrage of rocket attacks from Gaza, from the dangerous and genocidal words of a dictator in Iran, from a buildup of weapons on its northern border, from a despicable campaign to delegitimize Israel on the international stage.

While the threats against the United States and Israel grow and strengthen, so too must our joint resolve to confront them. I am proud to be a supporter of a strong U.S.-Israel relationship. We are stronger together through our friendship. We are safer together through our cooperation. And in this uncertain world, the United States and Israel need each other.

On this Israeli Independence Day, I acknowledge the brave men and women and their families who have sacrificed so much for the Jewish homeland, and I look forward to the day when Israel can celebrate independence in peace and security.

HONORING FIRST LIEUTENANT ROBERT COLLINS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart and a humble spirit that I come today to this People's House, to this floor of the People's House to honor an American hero.

Mr. Speaker, First Lieutenant Robert Collins answered his Nation's call to duty after graduating from West Point Military Academy in 2008. And earlier this month he made the ulti-

mate sacrifice on behalf of his fellow countrymen. Lieutenant Collins was deployed to Iraq only last fall, and was based with his unit in the northern part of the country.

Lieutenant Collins recently wrote that he was working to improve security conditions and the quality of life for the Iraqi people. In this year's national elections in Iraq, his platoon helped provide security for a free and fair election process, and I know that he took great pride in that.

He was a man willing and ready to serve his country. As a dedicated soldier, he wanted to help spread far and wide the same freedom we love and cherish here in the United States. Lieutenant Collins' willingness to help others came as no surprise to anyone who knew him. A native of Tyrone, Georgia, and a graduate of Sandy Creek High School, he was well respected among his peers. In fact, one former classmate wrote that Collins "was compassionate and at the same time had a great sense of humor that could not be matched. Robert would always be there for people when they needed help."

His parents, Deacon and Sharon, are both retired lieutenant colonels. They proudly served our Nation, and they proudly supported their son's decision to serve our country. While we honor Lieutenant Collins, we should also think of Deacon and Sharon. Lieutenant Collins was also blessed to have Nicole, his fiancée, and childhood sweetheart.

Last week Lieutenant Collins came home to Georgia for the last time, and his community came out to honor him. From local veterans to ordinary citizens, the procession route was lined with people waving American flags and paying their great respect to this hero. One gentleman summed it up best when he said, "I am a patriot. Anyone who gives up their life for my freedom, well, this is the least I can do."

Today I stand here to honor First Lieutenant Robert Collins because it was the least I could do. He stood for me and all Americans by serving and sacrificing to our Nation, and he is an American hero. I want to thank him from me and my family and the generations to come. And I also want to thank his loving parents for the sacrifice that they have given to this great Nation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. ENGEL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ISRAEL'S 62ND INDEPENDENCE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. CHU) is recognized for 5 minutes.