

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 3447, the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Improvements Act of 2010. I commend Chairman IKE SKELTON of the House Armed Services Committee, Chairman JOHN SPRATT of the House Committee on the Budget, and Chairman BOB FILNER of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs for their commitment, hard work and dedication to expanding education benefits for the men and women who have served our great nation in uniform since September 11, 2001. The work of committee leadership ensures that this Congress will make a meaningful positive impact on our Armed Forces.

The improvements to the bill will make it easier for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the military services to implement the program thereby speeding up the time it presently takes to use the benefits. Further the proposed legislation expands tile types of training which can be pursued to include vocational and technical schools, apprenticeships and on the job training that were not previously covered. Another important improvement to the Bill includes expanded financial assistance to active duty members to cover the cost of books and administrative fees and to broaden the opportunity to participate in distance learning programs.

Another critical component of the legislation is expanding eligibility to many men and women of the National Guard who serve under Title 32 authority. Men and women of the National Guard continue to be called upon to serve at home and abroad to protect our national interests. The distinction between different types of orders is often blurred due to archaic procedures and operational requirements. The legislation significantly enhances benefits for men and women of the National Guard by including active duty time spent for the purpose of organizing, administering, recruiting, instructing, or training the National Guard. It also includes time spent under section 502(f) of title 32 when authorized by the President or the Secretary of Defense for the purpose of responding to a national emergency declared by the President and supported by Federal funds.

This legislation continues our solemn commitment to veterans and servicemembers. The bill improves the processing of these benefits and ensures that we fulfill our commitment to all servicemembers and veterans. As such, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting S. 3447.

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

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time. This is an important bill that extends benefits to even more of our veterans and tries to enhance the benefits for those who already are receiving them. I ask for unanimous support, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LANGEVIN). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 3447.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

SUPPORTING A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION TO THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1765) supporting a negotiated solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and condemning unilateral declarations of a Palestinian state, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1765

Whereas a true and lasting peace between Israel and the Palestinians can only be achieved through direct negotiations between the parties;

Whereas Palestinian leaders have repeatedly threatened to declare unilaterally a Palestinian state and to seek recognition of a Palestinian state by the United Nations and other international forums;

Whereas Palestinian leaders are reportedly pursuing a coordinated strategy of seeking recognition of a Palestinian state within the United Nations, in other international forums, and from a number of foreign governments;

Whereas, on November 24, 2010, Mahmoud Abbas, leader of the Palestinian Authority and the Palestine Liberation Organization, wrote to the President of Brazil, requesting that the Government of Brazil recognize a Palestinian state, with the hope that such an action would encourage other countries likewise to recognize a Palestinian state;

Whereas, on December 1, 2010, in response to Abbas's letter, the Government of Brazil unilaterally recognized a Palestinian state;

Whereas, on December 6, 2010, the Government of Argentina announced its decision to recognize unilaterally a Palestinian state, and the Government of Uruguay announced that it would unilaterally recognize a Palestinian state in 2011;

Whereas, on March 11, 1999, the Senate adopted Senate Concurrent Resolution 5, and on March 16, 1999, the House of Representatives adopted House Concurrent Resolution 24, both of which resolved that "any attempt to establish Palestinian statehood outside the negotiating process will invoke the strongest congressional opposition";

Whereas, on October 20, 2010, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton stated, "There is no substitute for face-to-face discussion and, ultimately, for an agreement that leads to a just and lasting peace.";

Whereas, on November 5, 2010, United States Department of State Spokesman Mark Toner, responding to a question about the Palestinians possibly taking action to seek recognition of a Palestinian state at the United Nations, said, "[T]he only way that we're going to get a comprehensive peace is through direct negotiations, and anything that might affect those direct negotiations we feel is not helpful and not constructive";

Whereas, on November 10, 2010, Secretary Clinton stated, "we have always said and I continue to say that negotiations between the parties is the only means by which all of

the outstanding claims arising out of the conflict can be resolved . . . There can be no progress until they actually come together and explore where areas of agreement are and how to narrow areas of disagreement. So we do not support unilateral steps by either party that could prejudice the outcome of such negotiations.";

Whereas, on December 7, 2010, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs Philip J. Crowley stated, "We don't think that we should be distracted from the fact that the only way to resolve the core issues within the process is through direct negotiations.";

Whereas, on December 10, 2010, Secretary Clinton stated, "it is only a negotiated agreement between the parties that will be sustainable";

Whereas the Government of Israel has made clear that it would reject a Palestinian unilateral declaration of independence, has repeatedly affirmed that the conflict should be resolved through direct negotiations with the Palestinians, and has repeatedly called on the Palestinian leadership to return to direct negotiations; and

Whereas efforts to bypass negotiations and to unilaterally declare a Palestinian state, or to appeal to the United Nations or other international forums or to foreign governments for recognition of a Palestinian state, would violate the underlying principles of the Oslo Accords, the Road Map, and other relevant Middle East peace process efforts: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) reaffirms its strong support for a negotiated solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict resulting in two states, a democratic, Jewish state of Israel and a viable, democratic Palestinian state, living side-by-side in peace, security, and mutual recognition;

(2) reaffirms its strong opposition to any attempt to establish or seek recognition of a Palestinian state outside of an agreement negotiated between Israel and the Palestinians;

(3) urges Palestinian leaders to—

(A) cease all efforts at circumventing the negotiation process, including efforts to gain recognition of a Palestinian state from other nations, within the United Nations, and in other international forums prior to achievement of a final agreement between Israel and the Palestinians, and calls upon foreign governments not to extend such recognition; and

(B) resume direct negotiations with Israel immediately;

(4) supports the Administration's opposition to a unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state; and

(5) calls upon the Administration to—

(A) lead a diplomatic effort to persuade other nations to oppose a unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state and to oppose recognition of a Palestinian state by other nations, within the United Nations, and in other international forums prior to achievement of a final agreement between Israel and the Palestinians; and

(B) affirm that the United States would deny recognition to any unilaterally declared Palestinian state and veto any resolution by the United Nations Security Council to establish or recognize a Palestinian state outside of an agreement negotiated by the two parties.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) 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 have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 1765, and I yield myself 3 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I brought this resolution to the floor because I believe negotiations are the only path to a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For this reason, the United States Congress has every reason to be concerned about efforts of some in the Palestinian Authority leadership to attain recognition of statehood while bypassing the accepted negotiation process.

□ 1910

These efforts run counter to the Palestinians' own internationally witnessed commitments at the 1991 Madrid Conference and under the 1993 Oslo Agreement and the 2003 Roadmap. Most important, the Palestinians will only get a state by negotiating with the Israelis.

That is but one reason I am deeply disappointed by the recently announced decisions of Brazil and other Latin American countries to recognize an independent Palestinian state, actions prompted by a direct request from Palestinian President Abbas.

Ultimately, such recognition of nonexistent statehood gives the Palestinians nothing. In 1988, Yasser Arafat declared a state and garnered recognition from more than 100 states; now, 22 years later, there is still no state. The Palestinian people don't want a bunch of declarations of statehood. They want a state. And they should have one, through the only means possible for attaining one, negotiations with Israel.

The Obama administration has been unwavering on this point. Unless an independent Palestinian state is formed via a negotiated settlement, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will not be solved. Only through direct negotiations can difficult compromises be reached on the core issues of borders, water, refugees, Jerusalem, and security. Unilateral declarations of statehood will not eliminate the sources of the conflict; they will exacerbate them. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton could not have been more correct when she said just this past Friday that "it is only a negotiated agreement between the parties that will be sustainable."

I believe that Palestinian Authority President Abbas and Prime Minister Fayyad are committed to a peaceful resolution of their conflict with Israel, so I hope they will take Secretary Clinton's message to heart. This body has

been very generous in its support of their worthy efforts to build institutions and the economy on the West Bank. In fact, I believe we are the most generous nation in the world in that regard. So I think our friends should understand: If they persist in pursuing a unilateralist path, inevitably, and however regrettably, there will be consequences for U.S.-Palestinian relations.

I encourage all of my colleagues to support this important pro-negotiations, pro-peace resolution.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I am proud to be a cosponsor of this legislation. I strongly support a negotiated solution for peace in the Middle East, and this resolution will help do that.

Unfortunately, behind closed doors and behind the backs of Israelis and the United States, Palestinian leaders are reportedly holding high-level, unilateral discussions in pursuing recognition of a Palestinian state by the United Nations and other international forums. In fact, the U.N. Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Robert Serry, on October 26 of this year said he supported recognition of a Palestinian state by the United Nations. The answer is to negotiate with Israel to make sure that there is a Palestinian state and not operate unilaterally without the help and negotiation of Israel. But this is not all.

Earlier this month, three South American countries—Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay—recognized Palestine as a state. Palestinian statehood recognition outside of talks with Israel is a bad idea, and it is not a peaceful solution to this problem.

If the Palestinian state is a sovereign state, what are the borders of this state going to be? Will terrorist acts now be seen as an act of war from a recognized state? Is this going to be a sovereign state within the sovereign State of Israel? No one knows because none of these questions have been answered with these countries who want to have a unilateral recognition of this state.

I am not saying that there can never be a Palestinian state, but what I am saying is certain conditions certainly should be met before a state can be established. And one of those, the foremost important one, is get to the table and negotiate with Israel. Quit worrying about what Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay think and be more concerned about what Israel thinks, because Israel must agree to whatever solution comes about in this negotiation.

If other countries follow Brazil and recognize Palestine, why would Palestine return to negotiations with Israel? They are already getting what they want without negotiations. I believe that without further negotiations with Israel, there will be violence in the Middle East; in fact, peace in the Middle East will be a far-off dream.

I think the administration needs to come out very strongly in opposition to this idea before more states recognize a Palestinian state. I think it is important that Congress show Israel that we stand with them. We stand for them because what is bad for them is bad for the United States and for the world and for the Middle East. So it is simple: Get back to the table with the people that are most concerned about a Palestinian state, that being the Israelis.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 15 seconds.

I thank the gentleman for his position, for his resolution, and for his cosponsoring of this resolution. And I am here to stand not only with the Israelis, but I stand with the Palestinians on this issue because the Palestinians want this state, and negotiations are the way to get it.

I am pleased to yield for a unanimous consent request to my colleague from California (Mr. MILLER).

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support for a negotiated solution to the decades-long conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. I will be voting in favor of the resolution introduced by my friend from my home state of California, Congressman BERMAN, as I believe that only a negotiated solution to which all parties agree will achieve lasting peace.

However, I would like to note that I believe that this resolution unwisely addresses only one issue standing in the way of Israeli-Palestinian peace, even while numerous other issues continue to plague the peace process. I believe that the resolution is fully correct that the Palestinian Authority should not seek statehood unilaterally. Yet, I do not believe that unilateral actions by either side that undermine efforts to achieve a negotiated solution are helpful in achieving our shared goal of peace in the region. In fact, I believe that they are extremely counterproductive.

Moreover, I believe that it is critical that this Congress support the Obama Administration's continued efforts to negotiate with each of the parties over substantive issues to make progress toward a settlement so that an eventual return to direct negotiations can be successful. Indeed, Special Envoy for Middle East Peace George Mitchell is in the region now working to make substantive progress.

Once again, I support this resolution, but I believe that it unfairly only addresses one of a number of complex issues standing in the way of achieving a negotiated peace settlement in the Middle East.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from New York (Mr. ACKERMAN), the chairman of the Middle East and Southeast Subcommittee.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, this resolution is absolutely vital. It should be called the Peace Process Preservation Act because that is exactly what it is all about.

I understand that to many Israelis and many Palestinians, there is enormous frustration and disappointment and impatience with the peace process, but there is absolutely no acceptable alternative to it. Only negotiations can promise a real and durable peace, a peace with security for Israel, as a Jewish and democratic state, and independence for a sovereign and viable Palestinian state. There is no magic wand. There is no shortcut. The only way to peace is negotiating in good faith and making the hard choices that it demands.

Israel has shown time and again that it is ready. In the year 2000, Israel made a serious and generous offer to the Palestinians at Camp David, and then offered even more at Taba. Israel offered the Palestinians still more in 2008. And last year, Prime Minister Netanyahu, without getting any credit, came out in favor of a two-state solution and has been waiting ever since for the Palestinians to join him at the table.

It is time for Abu Mazen to stop jetting around the looking for alternatives to dealing directly with Prime Minister Netanyahu. Palestinians can't, on the one hand, complain that Israeli settlements prejudice final status issues and then run around calling on other nations to try to impose a solution from the outside.

Personally, I think that the Palestinians' complaints about settlements are overwrought. Prime Minister Netanyahu froze settlement building for 10 months and got only Palestinian scorn for his efforts. Moreover, for peace, or to promote it, Israel has withdrawn completely from Sinai, Lebanon, and Gaza. So the Israeli track record on land for peace is very clear.

But what some Palestinians can't seem to understand is that their legitimate aspirations not only can't be achieved by violence, but are equally unobtainable through unilateral or external declarations. A just and lasting settlement is only possible through a political process, one where both sides make concessions.

Any nation that is truly committed to peace, or sees itself as a friend of the Israelis or the Palestinians, has to recognize that trying to dictate a solution is a recipe for catastrophe. Instead of producing peace, efforts to impose one from the outside will transform a difficult but resolvable conflict between two peoples into a horrific war between two religions.

So if you think the time to resolve this conflict is now, and I do, and if you think both Israelis and Palestinians are entitled to govern themselves, and I do, then you need to support this resolution in favor of negotiations and peace and against imposed or unilateral solutions.

□ 1920

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON), the rank-

ing member on the Middle East Subcommittee, be allowed to control the remainder of my time.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, at this time I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. ENGEL. I thank the chairman for yielding to me. And I, like my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, rise in support of this resolution. My colleagues have said it very, very well, and I reiterate it—the only way that peace can be achieved in the Middle East is by having the two parties sit down and negotiate a settlement that can't be an American plan, that can't be an Obama plan, that can't be a U.N. plan. It has to be a plan between the Israelis and Palestinians. So at the end of the day, we come out with a two-state solution—the Jewish State of Israel and a Palestinian State. And both States ought to live with security along recognized borders.

Now, it is bad enough that these countries like Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay, unilaterally say that they accept or they recognize a Palestinian State. They talk about a Palestinian State within the 1967 borders, which is preposterous. Everyone knows that Israel would never and could never agree with it. Those borders are indefensible, and for that reason Israel would and could not accept it. So, as far as I am concerned, this is just mischief-making. This is the Palestinian leadership not having the guts to sit down and negotiate a difficult situation.

The Palestinian leadership has been throwing all kinds of preconditions out there, saying to Israel, We're not going to sit and negotiate with you unless you do this; we're not going to sit and negotiate with you unless you do that. So the prime minister of Israel, Netanyahu, agrees to a 10-month moratorium on building any kind of settlements or neighborhoods or anything like that, and the Palestinian leadership decried it. They made fun of it. They said it was nothing. And then they waited 9 of those 10 months to actually sit down and negotiate with Israel. So they sat down for 1 month and then the 10 months expired. And now they are demanding another freeze. Well, I find it very odd that now that this freeze on so-called settlement activities is absolutely necessary in order for the Palestinians to sit down and negotiate, when for 9 months they refused to negotiate when Israel had stopped any kind of new settlements. So this is just a further international attempt to delegitimize Israel and to unilaterally declare statehood for the Palestinians. That will never work.

A little history is important here. Back in 1948, when the United Nations resolution passed, taking what was then historic Palestine and dividing it between an Arab State and a Jewish State, the Jews in the area said yes, accepted it, and the Arabs said no. And they went to war against Israel. And went to war against Israel time and time and time again to wipe out the State of Israel.

So we know we have come a long way. And my colleagues have said this. Back in 2000, back in 2001, Prime Minister Barak, Prime Minister Sharon, Prime Minister Olmert all issued and agreed to have negotiations and to give the Palestinians almost everything they wanted; a state of their own. They turned it down. Negotiation is the only step forward, and we should continue on that path.

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

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 2 minutes to a member of the committee, the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA).

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

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I do want to thank the distinguished gentleman from California, the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and I want to state for the record I associate myself with the comments and the position taken by the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee concerning this issue that is now before the House.

Mr. Speaker, there is no question that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for the past 60 years, in my opinion, has been something that not only has got the attention of the entire world, it is trying to find a solution to the current issues and the problems existing between the Israeli and the Palestinian people. I also want to commend the Obama administration and certainly Secretary Clinton for initiating the efforts to continue the negotiation process in trying to find a peaceful solution to the current problem existing between Israel and the Palestinian people.

One thing that is quite certain, that is at least a sense of consensus and agreement, is the fact that we recognize that yes, Palestine should be given as an independent and sovereign state just as much as there should be proper recognition of Israel as a sovereign and an independent state. I think the points that have been taken by my good friend, the gentleman from Texas; Mr. BERMAN; and also my colleagues from New York, Mr. ACKERMAN and Mr. ENGEL, are well taken. And I just want to urge my colleagues to support the resolution.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I will continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 2 minutes to a

distinguished member of the Foreign Affairs Committee with an ardent interest in this issue, the gentlelady from Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY).

Ms. BERKLEY. I would like to thank the gentleman from California for yielding and for his extraordinary leadership on this issue and on our committee for the last several years.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support for this important resolution because I am deeply concerned about the chances for Middle East peace. Over the last year, instead of negotiating directly with the Israelis, Palestinian leaders have turned their backs on peace talks. They have come up with all sorts of excuses to avoid negotiations, demanding that Israel stop construction in all settlements, including Israel's capital, before they'll even sit down to negotiate. When Israel took the courageous and difficult step of agreeing to a 10-month moratorium, that wasn't enough. They waited 9 of the 10 months, only coming to the table at the last possible moment. Meanwhile, rather than negotiating, the Palestinians have decided to pursue a unilateral strategy, seeking global recognition for their "state" instead of making peace with the State of Israel. Shamefully, several countries have even rewarded the Palestinian stonewalling instead of urging them to return to the negotiating table where they belong. The negotiating table is the only way to bring a true and lasting peace to the region. All peace-loving nations must reject this Palestinian manipulation and insist that they return immediately to negotiations. There is simply no other path to peace.

It is the Palestinians that have the most to lose if there isn't a negotiating path to peace. While Israel has a strong country and a good education system, a vibrant economy, a national identity, a cultural identity and a strong democracy, the Palestinians, because of their poor leadership, have absolutely none of those. And they will never get any of that until there is peace between the parties. The only way to do that is to sit down and negotiate in good faith. If I was Abu Mazen, you couldn't drag me away from the negotiating table. I would sit there until I delivered for my people a Palestinian State. It occurs to me that maybe that's not what his motives are. If he was interested in it, with a 10-month moratorium he should have started on day one of the moratorium instead of waiting until the end.

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

□ 1930

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 2 minutes to one who has been, really, an ardent supporter of the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and peace in the Middle East, my friend from California (Mrs. CAPPS).

Mrs. CAPPS. I thank the distinguished chairman for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in very reluctant support of this resolution. Unfortunately, we have before us today yet another one-sided resolution regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I will vote in favor of it because I do oppose unilateral declarations of Palestinian statehood, and I do believe that a negotiated solution is the only way forward for Palestinian statehood to actually happen. However, this resolution ignores other facts on the ground that have led to the current breakdown in negotiations, most notably Israel's expansion of settlements.

Mr. Speaker, it is truly absurd to argue that serious negotiations can occur when both actors are engaged in activities that threaten the credibility of the peace process. It is likewise unwise to ignore that both Israelis and Palestinians bear responsibility for engaging in these activities.

Resolutions, like the one we are considering today, are clearly done for domestic political consumption much more than for having any positive impact on the conflict. We should not be ignorant of the fact that this Chamber's pattern of passing resolutions that are one-sided can, indeed, undermine our credibility to be serious brokers for peace.

No one is doubting the important relationship between the United States and Israel. Israel is our strongest ally and the only true democracy in the region, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't speak the truth in identifying Israeli policies that are harmful to promoting peace in the region and that advance the United States' national interests.

If I could rewrite this resolution, it would highlight the responsibilities of each partner to take actions demonstrative of its commitment to peace. Israelis and Palestinians alike share this responsibility, and so does the United States as an honest broker.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I think Israel continues to do everything they can to bring about a peaceful solution to the problems in the Middle East regarding the Palestinian issue, but they don't have a partner, and the Palestinians continue to do an end run around the negotiation process.

Number one, it isn't going to work. Number two, it shows the insincerity of the leadership of the Palestinian Authority when it talks about peace. In the past 5 years, we have given over \$2 billion in assistance to the Palestinian Authority, and we have been reinforcing and rewarding bad behavior on the part of the Palestinian Authority when it has proven to us, by doing the things it is doing right now, that it is really not worthy of the support we are giving it. We should finally hold the Palestinian Authority leaders accountable.

A couple of things really bother me. One is when I hear the leader of the Palestinian Authority and the PLO,

Abu Mazen, praise the recently deceased mastermind of the PLO's massacre of the Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics. This is the leader, and he is praising the massacre that the whole world abhorred. He also expressed what he called his "firm rejection of the so-called Jewishness of the State of Israel," saying, "This issue is over for us. We have not and will not recognize it."

That's a heck of an attitude for people to have who say they want a Palestinian state and who say they want to negotiate while, at the same time, they're making these statements and are doing an end run around the entire process.

Last year, Abu Mazen said, "Presently, we are against armed struggle because we cannot cope with it, but things could be different at some future phase."

That indicates again and again and again their insincerity of negotiating in good faith. They are talking about at some point in the future having another armed struggle. Israel has gone beyond the pale time and again. Bibi Netanyahu, the Prime Minister, has taken that extra step time and again.

Until we see real concern and real sincerity in the negotiating process, we ought to take a very hard attitude toward the Palestinian Authority. In my opinion, that means cutting off any funding for it until it is willing to seriously sit down and negotiate a peaceful settlement to the problem.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have left?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California has 5¼ minutes remaining.

Mr. BERMAN. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to address the comments of my colleague from California (Mrs. CAPPS).

I am obviously grateful for her support of this resolution and for her agreement with the notion that unilateral steps like this are not the way to achieve peace. Yet she made certain comments regarding issues which are not in the resolution—and she is right. This resolution has nothing about settlements. There is nothing about incitement. There is nothing about the Palestinian denial of the Jewish connection to the Western Wall. As for the settlements, I have my own reservations about Israel's activities, but this resolution isn't about any of those things.

This resolution is about the most central issue of all—the pathway to Palestinian statehood. There is only one path, and that is through negotiations. No negotiations, no state. It is as simple as that.

I am now happy to yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Let me thank the distinguished gentleman for yielding.

I rise to support this legislation. As I listened earlier—and I had to depart from the floor—I wanted to reinforce the comments and perspective that Chairman BERMAN has announced.

Mr. Speaker, diplomacy is bilateral. It is a two-way street. It is a give-and-take. It is the ability to help all of the people who are involved, and it is also the ability for the world to recognize that a coming together has occurred. I have the greatest sense of concern and respect for the Palestinian people and for Palestinian Americans, who themselves have reached out and asked for help.

I believe the people of the West Bank and Gaza want freedom, opportunity, equality, and a peaceful existence. I believe, over the years, the people of Israel and its many leaders have engaged in the process of peace. We in the United States are committed to a two-party state. We are committed to a peace resolution. Make peace today. Unilateral affirmation of one state without the recognition of the importance of both states coexisting and working together does not lead to the recognition that the world should give to two independent states that will be working alongside each other.

So I would simply indicate that, as we move forward, it is enormously important that we get energized on the two-party debate, discussion and diplomacy, and that we provide a peaceful existence as one of the negotiators—the United States—for the Palestinian people and the people of Israel. We should be engaged. We have been asked to be engaged. We can make a difference, and I would support the idea of our making a difference.

To my friends who have proceeded on a unilateral perspective, Mr. Speaker, I would simply say: go this route of a two-party state, engaging to provide peace for the two states.

□ 1940

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would close by quoting from Prime Minister Salam Fayyad in an interview he gave just yesterday—actually, it was tonight in that time zone—where he said, “We want a state of Palestine, not a unilateral declaration of statehood.” He explained that he did not see how a unilateral declaration of statehood would assist the Palestinian cause.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the House to pass this resolution.

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, having repeatedly refused to negotiate in good faith with Israel, the Palestinian Authority is now threatening to abrogate the Oslo Accords by unilaterally declaring its own state at the U.N. For all those Americans and citizens of the world who yearn for peace, prosperity and stability in the Middle East, I warn that nothing could be more detrimental to these hopes.

A unilaterally declared Palestinian state is a rejection of the very essence of the peace process. It is an unambiguous statement that the Palestinians refuse to honor their obligations in the interest of a lasting peace with Israel.

A real, genuine peace won't come out of thin air. It will come when the Palestinians teach their children that Israel has a right to exist as a Jewish State. And it will come when the PA inspires confidence that it has the capability and the will to provide security and safeguard peace with Israel on its own.

That day has not arrived, and it is reckless and harmful to U.S. national security interests to pretend otherwise. Should a state be recognized based on the now-untenable pre-1967 borders, Palestinian terrorists in the West Bank would have the same kind of free rein to shoot rockets, mortars and guns into Israel that they now have in Gaza. Only this time, all of Israel's main population centers will be in the crosshairs. This would lead to a permanent state of war as Israel is forced to defend itself.

Fortunately, the U.S. has the ability to veto any irresponsible Palestinian declaration of statehood at the U.N. By taking up this resolution, the House of Representatives is signaling its belief that the United States' veto authority should be used to preserve stability and prospects for peace in the Middle East.

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I am as disappointed as anyone that the Middle East Peace talks have stalled despite considerable efforts by the Administration and the international community to help both sides make the tough decisions needed to help advance those talks. I understand that some of my colleagues are frustrated with repeated roadblocks that appear only intent on derailing the peace process. I share that frustration. I believe that all who have a clear stake in the peace process are also frustrated.

I have long advocated and reaffirmed my strong support for a negotiated solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with two states living side by side in peace and security. Both parties bear responsibility for the success or failure of the Middle East Peace efforts.

No one pretends that the issues involved here are easy. I think everyone also recognizes the devastating consequences for the region, for our ally Israel, and for U.S. security interests if the right solution is not found.

There are a myriad of issues that have arisen that have complicated talks. Palestinian unilateral declaration of a state is only one, but if you read this resolution you would reach the conclusion that it is the only unilateral action or proposed action that would imperil this process. The House should urge the Administration to take a strong stand with both parties on all unilateral actions that are hindering the peace talks, especially those that were agreed to only a few years ago by the parties in the Roadmap.

Middle East peace requires the active engagement of both parties. The Administration, as well as the House of Representatives, should make the expectations for both parties clear: each party must engage seriously on even the hardest issues—making proposals and counter-proposals—and achieve concrete results.

As I stated in a letter to President Obama earlier this year in support of strong U.S. engagement as an honest broker in renewed Middle East Peace talks, allowing actions by either party that undermine the process to go unchallenged serves to fan animosity and mistrust, which feeds this needless cycle of conflict and violence. This does not serve the interests of the U.S., our ally Israel, or the Palestinians.

This resolution reaches half that goal since it targets only one action by one party. It correctly notes the Administration's opposition to a unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state and the potential harm that would do to a comprehensive Middle East Peace Agreement. The same resolution also conveniently skips around other unilateral actions by the parties that may also harm the atmosphere for peace in the region.

The resolution notes one quote from Secretary Clinton's speech a few days ago on December 10. Let's look a little deeper into some of the Secretary's other comments in that lengthy speech. Secretary Clinton made clear that the U.S. remains committed to reaching a comprehensive peace deal between the parties with the U.S. playing a key role. She also stated that a peace agreement between the two parties is the “only path to achieve the Palestinians' dreams of independence.”

She specifically also noted that “in the days ahead, our discussion with both sides will be substantive two-way conversations with an eye toward making real progress in the next few months . . . The United States will not be a passive participant. We will push the parties to lay out their position on the core issues without delay and with real specificity . . . We enter this phase with clear expectations of both parties.”

In her speech Secretary Clinton noted that “the position of the U.S. on settlements has not changed and will not change. Like every American administration for decades, we do not accept the legitimacy of continued settlement activity. We believe their continued expansion is corrosive not only to peace efforts and a two-state solution, but to Israel's future itself.” The resolution before us today notes support for a negotiated solution but is silent on this issue as if it does not impact achieving that negotiated solution.

Secretary Clinton went on to say that both parties, “to demonstrate their commitment to peace . . . should avoid actions that prejudice the outcome of negotiations or undermine good faith efforts to resolve final status issues. Unilateral efforts at the United Nations are not helpful and undermine trust. Provocative announcements on East Jerusalem are counterproductive. And the United States will not shy away from saying so.”

Unfortunately, the resolution before us today gets half of the message and only a small fraction of the demands on both parties to help move this process forward, laid out by the Secretary of State last Friday.

As noted by Secretary Clinton, Israeli and Palestinian leaders should stop trying to assign blame for the next failure, and focus instead on what they need to do to make these efforts succeed. I believe the House resolution before us today would have been wise to also heed that advice.

The intent of this resolution is to express concern with an action that will put more obstacles in the way of achieving Middle East Peace. I could not agree with that goal more. But let's make sure that we recognize that both parties have an equal responsibility to refrain from such actions.

Mr. BERMAN. 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. 1765.

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.

INTERNATIONAL PROTECTING GIRLS BY PREVENTING CHILD MARRIAGE ACT OF 2010

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 987) to protect girls in developing countries through the prevention of child marriage, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 987

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “International Protecting Girls by Preventing Child Marriage Act of 2010”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Child marriage, also known as “forced marriage” or “early marriage”, is a harmful traditional practice that deprives girls of their dignity and human rights.

(2) Child marriage as a traditional practice, as well as through coercion or force, is a violation of article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states, “Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of intending spouses”.

(3) According to the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), an estimated 60,000,000 girls in developing countries now ages 20 through 24 were married under the age of 18, and if present trends continue more than 100,000,000 more girls in developing countries will be married as children over the next decade, according to the Population Council.

(4) Between ½ and ¾ of all girls are married before the age of 18 in Niger, Chad, Mali, Bangladesh, Guinea, the Central African Republic, Mozambique, Burkina Faso, and Nepal, according to Demographic Health Survey data.

(5) Factors perpetuating child marriage include poverty, a lack of educational or employment opportunities for girls, parental concerns to ensure sexual relations within marriage, the dowry system, and the perceived lack of value of girls.

(6) Child marriage has negative effects on the health of girls, including significantly increased risk of maternal death and morbidity, infant mortality and morbidity, obstetric fistula, and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS.

(7) According to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), increasing the age at first birth for a woman will increase her chances of survival. Currently, pregnancy and childbirth complications are the leading cause of death for women 15 to 19 years old in developing countries.

(8) Most countries with high rates of child marriage have a legally established minimum age of marriage, yet child marriage persists due to strong traditional norms and the failure to enforce existing laws.

(9) Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has stated that child marriage is “a clear and unacceptable violation of human rights”,

and that “the Department of State categorically denounces all cases of child marriage as child abuse”.

(10) According to an International Center for Research on Women analysis of Demographic and Health Survey data, areas or regions in developing countries in which 40 percent or more of girls under the age of 18 are married are considered high-prevalence areas for child marriage.

(11) Investments in girls’ schooling, creating safe community spaces for girls, and programs for skills building for out-of-school girls are all effective and demonstrated strategies for preventing child marriage and creating a pathway to empower girls by addressing conditions of poverty, low status, and norms that contribute to child marriage.

SEC. 3. CHILD MARRIAGE DEFINED.

In this Act, the term “child marriage” means the marriage of a girl or boy, not yet the minimum age for marriage stipulated in law in the country in which the girl or boy is a resident or, where there is no such law, under the age of 18.

SEC. 4. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) child marriage is a violation of human rights, and the prevention and elimination of child marriage should be a foreign policy goal of the United States;

(2) the practice of child marriage undermines United States investments in foreign assistance to promote education and skills building for girls, reduce maternal and child mortality, reduce maternal illness, halt the transmission of HIV/AIDS, prevent gender-based violence, and reduce poverty; and

(3) expanding educational opportunities for girls, economic opportunities for women, and reducing maternal and child mortality are critical to achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the global health and development objectives of the United States, including efforts to prevent HIV/AIDS.

SEC. 5. STRATEGY TO PREVENT CHILD MARRIAGE IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

(a) ASSISTANCE AUTHORIZED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The President is authorized to provide assistance, including through multilateral, nongovernmental, and faith-based organizations, to prevent the incidence of child marriage in developing countries through the promotion of educational, health, economic, social, and legal empowerment of girls and women.

(2) PRIORITY.—In providing assistance authorized under paragraph (1), the President shall give priority to—

(A) areas or regions in developing countries in which 40 percent or more of girls under the age of 18 are married; and

(B) activities to—

(i) expand and replicate existing community-based programs that are successful in preventing the incidence of child marriage;

(ii) establish pilot projects to prevent child marriage; and

(iii) share evaluations of successful programs, program designs, experiences, and lessons.

(b) STRATEGY REQUIRED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The President shall establish a multi-year strategy to prevent child marriage and promote the empowerment of girls at risk of child marriage in developing countries, which should address the unique needs, vulnerabilities, and potential of girls under age 18 in developing countries.

(2) CONSULTATION.—In establishing the strategy required by paragraph (1), the President shall consult with Congress, relevant Federal departments and agencies, multilateral organizations, and representatives of civil society.

(3) ELEMENTS.—The strategy required by paragraph (1) shall—

(A) focus on areas in developing countries with high prevalence of child marriage;

(B) encompass diplomatic initiatives between the United States and governments of developing countries, with attention to human rights, legal reforms, and the rule of law;

(C) encompass programmatic initiatives in the areas of education, health, income generation, changing social norms, human rights, and democracy building; and

(D) be submitted to Congress not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than three years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President should submit to Congress a report that includes—

(1) a description of the implementation of the strategy required by subsection (b);

(2) examples of best practices or programs to prevent child marriage in developing countries that could be replicated; and

(3) an assessment, including data disaggregated by age and sex to the extent possible, of current United States funded efforts to specifically prevent child marriage in developing countries.

(d) COORDINATION.—Assistance authorized under subsection (a) shall be integrated with existing United States development programs.

(e) ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED.—Assistance authorized under subsection (a) may be made available for activities in the areas of education, health, income generation, agriculture development, legal rights, democracy building, and human rights, including—

(1) support for community-based activities that encourage community members to address beliefs or practices that promote child marriage and to educate parents, community leaders, religious leaders, and adolescents of the health risks associated with child marriage and the benefits for adolescents, especially girls, of access to education, health care, livelihood skills, microfinance, and savings programs;

(2) support for activities to educate girls in primary and secondary school at the appropriate age and keeping them in age-appropriate grade levels through adolescence;

(3) support for activities to reduce education fees and enhance safe and supportive conditions in primary and secondary schools to meet the needs of girls, including—

(A) access to water and suitable hygiene facilities, including separate lavatories and latrines for girls;

(B) assignment of female teachers;

(C) safe routes to and from school; and

(D) eliminating sexual harassment and other forms of violence and coercion;

(4) support for activities that allow adolescent girls to access health care services and proper nutrition, which is essential to both their school performance and their economic productivity;

(5) assistance to train adolescent girls and their parents in financial literacy and access economic opportunities, including livelihood skills, savings, microfinance, and small-enterprise development;

(6) support for education, including through community and faith-based organizations and youth programs, that helps remove gender stereotypes and the bias against girls used to justify child marriage, especially efforts targeted at men and boys, promotes zero tolerance for violence, and promotes gender equality, which in turn help to increase the perceived value of girls;

(7) assistance to create peer support and female mentoring networks and safe social spaces specifically for girls; and

(8) support for local advocacy work to provide legal literacy programs at the community level to ensure that governments and