

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

H. RES. 268, REAFFIRMING THE UNITED STATES COMMITMENT TO A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT OF THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT THROUGH DIRECT ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN NEGOTIATIONS

HON. HENRY A. WAXMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 13, 2011

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, the Palestinian plan to unilaterally declare statehood targets the core underpinning of the peace process—the principle of mutual recognition.

In their tactics and their tone, Palestinian leaders have proclaimed that seeking to delegitimize Israel is more important to them than a prosperous future for their own people. It is a travesty and a tragedy.

To reiterate what President Obama made clear in his May 19 speech: “Palestinians will never realize their independence by denying the right of Israel to exist.”

For all the terrorist attacks that have claimed thousands of Israeli lives, for all the domestic trauma and security risks Israel undertook in its withdrawals from Gaza and Lebanon, for all the settlement freezes and stalled talks, Israel has always returned to the negotiating table in faith that a peace agreement is possible. But unilateral Palestinian declaration of statehood is the one thing from which the peace process cannot recover.

What will be left to negotiate? And at this point who will be there to negotiate with? The PLO? Hamas? A “technocratic” unity government that has no political standing?

If the Palestinian leadership is serious about statehood and about entering the United Nations as a responsible, sovereign nation, it should drop its preconditions, reenter direct talks and recognize Israel as a Jewish State.

I strongly support H. Res. 268, which reaffirms Administration policy and previous congressional resolutions on this issue. With this vote, we must redouble efforts to work with our allies and the international community to pressure the Palestinian leadership to change course towards a just and lasting peace.

HONORING GAL SITTY FOR HIS OUTSTANDING HUMANITARIAN ADVOCACY ON BEHALF OF KIDNAPPED ISRAELI SOLDIER GILAD SHALIT

HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 13, 2011

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of an outstanding resident of the district I proudly represent, Gal Sitty. Mr. Sitty has worked hard to raise awareness of kidnapped Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit's plight and the ongoing effort to secure his release.

Mr. Sitty launched a successful effort to raise \$10,000 for the placement of a billboard near the United Nations headquarters in New York City. The billboard featuring a picture of Gilad Shalit will ensure that the captured soldier is not forgotten. It also encourages UN leaders to assist in facilitating his release.

Mr. Sitty was motivated to undertake this effort because he understands that during the five years since Shalit's capture, Gilad and his family have been suffering and living a nightmare. Mr. Sitty's efforts have undoubtedly provided Gilad Shalit's family comfort because they know that the American people stand behind them ready to help.

I commend Mr. Sitty for his advocacy on Gilad Shalit's behalf and thank him for his outstanding efforts to keep the world focused on this tragedy. Mr. Sitty's hard work plays an important role in the effort to return Gilad home to his family.

In conclusion Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the following article published in the May 8th addition of the Jerusalem Post—“Angeleno Launches Drive for Shalit Billboard Near UN”, and I ask that it be published in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

[From the Jerusalem Post, May 8, 2011]

ANGELENO LAUNCHES DRIVE FOR SHALIT BILLBOARD NEAR UN

(By Debra Kamin)

June 25 of this year will mark five years in captivity for Gilad Shalit, and one American is determined to make sure that this anniversary does not go unnoticed.

Gal Sitty, a 28-year-old Los Angeles native, has started a campaign on epicstep.com to fund and erect a billboard near the Manhattan headquarters of the United Nations imploring leaders to take steps to free the captive soldier.

“In [the past] five years I've gone to grad school, had numerous jobs, spent many holidays with my family, had good times with friends and so forth,” Sitty said to The Jerusalem Post when asked about his motivations. “Meanwhile, Gilad Shalit and his family have had none of that. They have been suffering, living a nightmare.”

Epicstep was founded earlier this year by Lev Reys and brothers Gene and Eugene Vekslar. The site works as a fundraising platform for creating billboards—users choose the issue they feel compelled to promote and supporters log on and donate until the final cost, which varies per billboard but for Sitty's campaign is \$10,000, is reached. Supporters' credit cards are not charged until the fundraising goal is reached, so if the campaign to create a billboard fails, no pledges are lost.

Sitty was born in Israel and raised in a Hebrew-speaking home. He is quick to admit that this is an issue that is close to his heart. “The recent Fatah-Hamas reconciliation agreement makes no mention of Gilad Shalit. This means that Fatah and the Palestinian Authority are now complicit in this crime,” he said. “I think getting this billboard up keeps the pressure on . . . leaders of the world to not overlook this human tragedy.”

Sitty, who holds a master's degree in public policy, still lives in Los Angeles, where he

works as a researcher for the Broad Foundation. He selected New York City as the site for his billboard, however, because he believes that no one needs to hear his message more than the delegates at the United Nations.

“Soon the world's diplomats will be assembling at the UN to discuss recognition of a Palestinian state and it is very important that we remind them of Shalit so that the whole world does not become complicit in such crimes,” he said. “If the UN endorses a Palestinian state with Hamas in the government, then the UN indirectly endorses crimes against humanity and puts many more at risk of being kidnapped by terrorist organizations. We cannot allow this to happen.”

What the actual impact of a placard bearing Shalit's face will be remains to be seen. But Sitty is pragmatic when he describes his motivations. “I know that I don't have the power to actually free him,” he said of Shalit, “but by getting this billboard up I think it keeps the pressure on the policy makers.” And while Gilad will not know about the campaign, Sitty is also eager to help two other important figures—Noam and Aviva Shalit.

“I hope that many people, Israelis and non-Israelis, Jews and non-Jews, from all over the world contribute to this campaign and show the Shalit family that we haven't forgotten them, haven't forgotten their son, and will never forget about their suffering,” Sitty said. “We will continue to stand beside them and do whatever we can to help them.”

IN REMEMBRANCE OF MRS. ANNA ALICE OMILANOWSKI

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 13, 2011

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in remembrance of Mrs. Anna Alice Omilanowski who passed away on July 9, 2011.

Mrs. Omilanowski was the daughter of Joseph and Bernice Lewanski, who emigrated from Poland and passed through Ellis Island. She was the oldest of nine children, and grew up on East 40th Street and Superior Avenue.

Anna was a hard worker and took great pride in her work, especially when she worked in a factory that assembled torpedoes during World War II. Later, she applied her strong work ethic to a variety of other positions, including washing dishes at Pete's Wayside Inn, cleaning Parma Schools and working for Broadview Savings and Loan.

She married, Chester, a concentration camp survivor, on June 14, 1958 at St. Casimir Church in Cleveland. Together they raised five children. Mrs. Omilanowski always felt that her most important achievement was having her children by her side.

Anna was involved in her children's activities and was an avid bowler and card player. I had the pleasure of meeting Mrs. Omilanowski during the 1970s on more than one occasion at card parties and was always moved by her kindness.

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honoring Mrs. Anna Alice Omilanowski, a woman whose fun-loving personality, fighting spirit, incredible work ethic, and undying compassion for those around her will be sorely missed.

HONORING THOMAS KLENDER

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 13, 2011

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Thomas Klender. Thomas is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 395, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Thomas has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Thomas has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Thomas has contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Thomas Klender for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

37TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TURKISH INVASION OF CYPRUS

HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 13, 2011

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the dark anniversary of July 20, 1974, when Turkish military troops illegally invaded the sovereign nation of Cyprus.

In the gray pre-dawn hours, heavily armed Turkish troops began the military operation named "Operation Atilla", implementing their strategy of "clearing" the territory in northern Cyprus, a community whose population was previously 80 percent Greek Cypriot.

As a result of these attacks, violent conflict erupted and over five thousand Greek Cypriots were estimated to have been killed; an additional sixteen hundred Greek Cypriots were reported missing; and over two hundred thousand Greek Cypriots were forcefully expelled from their homes.

Unfortunately, this tragedy which began that morning of July 20 continues today, as over 43,000 Turkish military troops occupy almost 40 percent of Cyprus' territory.

That amounts to one Turkish soldier for every two Turkish-Cypriots.

During the thirty-seven years the Turkish military has occupied northern Cyprus, illegal immigrants from Turkey flood into northern Cyprus, with some reports indicating at least 800 illegal migrants each year.

In total since 1974, this influx has resulted in more than 160,000 Turkish mainland illegal immigrants settling in the occupied territory, to the extent that these settlers now outnumber indigenous Turkish-Cypriots two to one.

Many claim that these immigrants are "encouraged" to settle in Cyprus by the Turkish government as part of a cynical strategy to alter the demographic statistics on the island and gain more property in any eventual settlement.

In addition, under the Turkish occupation, hundreds of religious and cultural sites have been desecrated.

Icons, manuscripts, frescoes and mosaics have been looted from Greek Orthodox, Catholic, Armenian Orthodox, Maronite and Jewish religious sites in northern Cyprus.

Over five hundred Orthodox churches or chapels have been demolished or vandalized.

Seventy-seven churches have even been converted into mosques, twenty-eight churches are being used by the Turkish military as hospitals or camps, and thirteen churches have been turned into barns.

For thirty seven years, the Cypriot people have endured conflict, division and foreign occupation.

It is long past time for their liberation.

The United Nations Security Council has passed seventy-five separate resolutions calling for Turkey to allow Greek Cypriots to return to their homes and to withdraw its troops from Cyprus.

In 1976, 1983 and again in 2009, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that Turkey was illegally occupying Cyprus and must return all seized properties to their Greek Cypriot owners.

Yet, to date Turkey continues to ignore such condemnations of its actions.

Meanwhile, two generations of Cypriot youth have now grown up knowing no other reality than the division of their homeland, the segregation of their people, the militarization of part of their country by foreign troops, and the ever present threat of another outbreak of violence.

Many have, or are beginning to, abandon hope of a peaceful settlement.

Unfortunately, the limited progress achieved in the reunification talks since 2008 heightens this general sense of despair.

In fact, a few weeks ago U.N. Special Advisor for Cyprus Alexander Downer even stated, "It could not go any slower without stopping altogether. The last three months have been the worst three months we've ever had since these negotiations began."

This lack of constructive movement can be directly attributed to the behind-the-scenes interference from Ankara and the new hard-line representative from the Turkish community, Dr. Dervish Eroglu.

It is apparent that there are some both in Turkey and in the leadership of the Turkish-Cypriot community who believe that continued obstruction of the talks serves their best interests by garnering domestic political support.

I would argue that such a mercenary approach to these talks in fact prevents the Turkish-Cypriot people from attaining that which is in their long-term best interests.

Until there is the reunification of the country, the Turkish-Cypriot community cannot fully benefit from the economic and social benefits derived from Cyprus' membership in the European Union.

As a result, Turkish-Cypriots endure a far lower standard of living, reduced foreign direct investment, and other limitations on their overall development.

Therefore, I urge the representatives of the Turkish-Cypriot community to promote their

own community's interests rather than their own by working for reunification of the island.

In that regard, I was encouraged by the recent pledge by both parties, President Dimitris Christofias and Dr. Dervish Eroglu, to commit once more to the talks with the aim of making substantial progress this year.

In order for these talks to succeed however, Turkey must grant the Turkish-Cypriot community full autonomy in the reunification negotiations and to publicly commit to abiding by any terms agreed upon in a Cypriot developed reunification agreement.

That includes the full, permanent withdrawal of its troops of occupation from Cyprus.

I will continue to do what I can in my role in Congress to support such reunification efforts, until that long-awaited day when the next generation of Cypriot youth realize the hopes of their predecessors for a sovereign Cyprus— independent, unified, and at peace.

FLOOD INSURANCE REFORM ACT OF 2011

SPEECH OF

HON. TOM REED

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 12, 2011

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1309) to extend the authorization of the national flood insurance program, to achieve reforms to improve the financial integrity and stability of the program, and to increase the role of private markets in the management of flood insurance risk, and for other purposes:

Mr. REED. Mr. Chair, I rise today to express my frustration regarding the FEMA flood remapping process, an issue that will impact my district and many others.

We have recently debated and accepted multiple amendments and voted on H.R. 1309, the Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2011. While I supported this bill and am grateful for all it does to help our constituents navigate through this very complex issue, I think we need to continue to examine the root of the problem, which is the flood mapping process that determines these areas require constituents to purchase flood insurance in the first place.

I understand the importance of the FEMA flood maps. It is vital that we are able to identify flood risk areas and make sure people living in those areas are protected from catastrophic flooding. However, with these new maps, due to be completed in the near future, FEMA has changed the standards which affect more than 100,000 miles of levees across the United States.

As a result, many of my constituents who have never had any issues with major flooding could be forced to purchase mandatory flood insurance costing thousands of dollars a year. This is despite the fact that these constituents enjoy the protection, in the case of a major flood, of a sound levee system.

It may not be the exact protection that FEMA has begun demanding, but it is adequate as constructed by the Army Corps of Engineers following the flooding caused by Hurricane Agnes.

Yet the new regulation requires these hard-working family homeowners to find a way to