

interests around the globe. It is essential that they have the resources they need to perform their jobs on behalf of our nation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6018, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. 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, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

UNITED STATES-ISRAEL ENHANCED SECURITY COOPERATION ACT OF 2012

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 2165) to enhance strategic cooperation between the United States and Israel, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 2165

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 “United States-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act of 2012”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Since 1948, United States Presidents and both houses of Congress, on a bipartisan basis and supported by the American people, have repeatedly reaffirmed the special bond between the United States and Israel, based on shared values and shared interests.

(2) The Middle East is undergoing rapid change, bringing with it hope for an expansion of democracy but also great challenges to the national security of the United States and our allies in the region, particularly to our most important ally in the region, Israel.

(3) The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran is continuing its decades-long pattern of seeking to foment instability and promote extremism in the Middle East, particularly in this time of dramatic political transition.

(4) At the same time, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran continues to enrich uranium in defiance of multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions.

(5) A nuclear-weapons capable Iran would fundamentally threaten vital United States interests, encourage regional nuclear proliferation, further empower Iran, the world’s leading state sponsor of terror, and pose a serious and destabilizing threat to Israel and the region.

(6) Over the past several years, with the assistance of the Governments of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Syria, Hizbollah and Hamas have increased their stockpile of rockets, with more than 60,000 now ready to be fired at Israel. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran continues to add to its arsenal of ballistic missiles and cruise missiles, which threaten Iran’s neighbors, Israel, and United States Armed Forces in the region.

(7) As a result, Israel is facing a fundamentally altered strategic environment.

(8) Pursuant to chapter 5 of title 1 of the Emergency Wartime Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2003 (Public Law 108-11; 117 Stat. 576), the authority to make available loan guarantees to Israel is currently set to expire on September 30, 2012.

SEC. 3. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

It is the policy of the United States:

(1) To reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the security of the State of Israel as a Jewish state. As President Barack Obama stated on December 16, 2011, “America’s commitment and my commitment to Israel and Israel’s security is unshakeable.” And as President George W. Bush stated before the Israeli Knesset on May 15, 2008, on the 60th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel, “The alliance between our governments is unbreakable, yet the source of our friendship runs deeper than any treaty.”

(2) To help the Government of Israel preserve its qualitative military edge amid rapid and uncertain regional political transformation.

(3) To veto any one-sided anti-Israel resolutions at the United Nations Security Council.

(4) To support Israel’s inherent right to self-defense.

(5) To pursue avenues to expand cooperation with the Government of Israel both in defense and across the spectrum of civilian sectors, including high technology, agriculture, medicine, health, pharmaceuticals, and energy.

(6) To assist the Government of Israel with its ongoing efforts to forge a peaceful, negotiated settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that results in two states living side-by-side in peace and security, and to encourage Israel’s neighbors to recognize Israel’s right to exist as a Jewish state.

(7) To encourage further development of advanced technology programs between the United States and Israel given current trends and instability in the region.

SEC. 4. UNITED STATES ACTIONS TO ASSIST IN THE DEFENSE OF ISRAEL AND PROTECT UNITED STATES INTERESTS.

It is the sense of Congress that the United States Government should take the following actions to assist in the defense of Israel:

(1) Seek to enhance the capabilities of the Governments of the United States and Israel to address emerging common threats, increase security cooperation, and expand joint military exercises.

(2) Provide the Government of Israel such support as may be necessary to increase development and production of joint missile defense systems, particularly such systems that defend against the urgent threat posed to Israel and United States forces in the region.

(3) Provide the Government of Israel assistance specifically for the production and procurement of the Iron Dome defense system for purposes of intercepting short-range missiles, rockets, and projectiles launched against Israel.

(4) Provide the Government of Israel defense articles and defense services through such mechanisms as appropriate, to include air refueling tankers, missile defense capabilities, and specialized munitions.

(5) Provide the Government of Israel additional excess defense articles, as appropriate, in the wake of the withdrawal of United States forces from Iraq.

(6) Examine ways to strengthen existing and ongoing efforts, including the Gaza Counter Arms Smuggling Initiative, aimed at preventing weapons smuggling into Gaza pursuant to the 2009 agreement following the

Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, as well as measures to protect against weapons smuggling and terrorist threats from the Sinai Peninsula.

(7) Offer the Air Force of Israel additional training and exercise opportunities in the United States to compensate for Israel’s limited air space.

(8) Work to encourage an expanded role for Israel with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), including an enhanced presence at NATO headquarters and exercises.

(9) Expand already-close intelligence cooperation, including satellite intelligence, with Israel.

SEC. 5. ADDITIONAL STEPS TO DEFEND ISRAEL AND PROTECT AMERICAN INTERESTS.

(a) EXTENSION OF WAR RESERVES STOCKPILE AUTHORITY.—

(1) DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2005.—Section 12001(d) of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2005 (Public Law 108-287; 118 Stat. 1011) is amended by striking “more than 8 years after” and inserting “more than 10 years after”.

(2) FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1961.—Section 514(b)(2)(A) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2321h(b)(2)(A)) is amended by striking “fiscal years 2011 and 2012” and inserting “fiscal years 2013 and 2014”.

(b) EXTENSION OF LOAN GUARANTEES TO ISRAEL.—Chapter 5 of title I of the Emergency Wartime Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2003 (Public Law 108-11; 117 Stat. 576) is amended under the heading “LOAN GUARANTEES TO ISRAEL”.—

(1) in the matter preceding the first proviso, by striking “September 30, 2011” and inserting “September 30, 2015”; and

(2) in the second proviso, by striking “September 30, 2011” and inserting “September 30, 2015”.

SEC. 6. REPORTS REQUIRED.

(a) REPORT ON ISRAEL’S QUALITATIVE MILITARY EDGE (QME).—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall submit to the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the status of Israel’s qualitative military edge in light of current trends and instability in the region.

(2) SUBSTITUTION FOR QUADRENNIAL REPORT.—If submitted within one year of the date that the first quadrennial report required by section 201(c)(2) of the Naval Vessel Transfer Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-429; 22 U.S.C. 2776 note) is due to be submitted, the report required by paragraph (1) may substitute for such quadrennial report.

(b) REPORTS ON OTHER MATTERS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on each of the following matters:

(1) Taking into account the Government of Israel’s urgent requirement for F-35 aircraft, actions to improve the process relating to its purchase of F-35 aircraft, particularly with respect to cost efficiency and timely delivery.

(2) Efforts to expand cooperation between the United States and Israel in homeland security, counter-terrorism, maritime security, energy, cyber-security, and other related areas.

(3) Actions to integrate Israel into the defense of the Eastern Mediterranean.

SEC. 7. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(A) the Committee on Appropriations, the Committee on Armed Services, the Committee on Foreign Relations, and the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Appropriations, the Committee on Armed Services, the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives.

(2) QUALITATIVE MILITARY EDGE.—The term “qualitative military edge” has the meaning given the term in section 36(h)(2) of the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2776(h)(2)).

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

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I ask unanimous consent, Mr. Speaker, that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on Senate bill 2165.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the United States-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act of 2012.

I would like to thank the distinguished majority leader and the minority whip, Mr. CANTOR and Mr. HOYER, for sponsoring the House version of this legislation, as well as Senators BOXER and ISAKSON, who sponsored the Senate version that this House is considering today.

□ 1720

For over 64 years, since the United States recognized Israel just 11 minutes after its creation, the democratic, Jewish State of Israel has been one of our closest allies.

Our shared commitment to peace and to freedom have been the foundation of a special bond that has reinforced the safety and the security of both of our countries. We have forged a defense partnership that has yielded advanced technologies and policies that have benefited both of our nations and helped to keep our citizens secure. Our fates are tied together. A threat to one of our countries is a threat to both.

And so, as the Iranian regime continues to race toward nuclear weapons and sponsor violent extremists like Hamas and Hezbollah, we must work together to counter this growing threat, Mr. Speaker.

And while the United States and Israel are targeted by many of the same threats, Israel's proximity to the Iran-Syria-Hamas-Hezbollah nexus leaves us no room for error. Our goal, with this legislation, is to ensure that Israel has the ability to protect its citizens against the dangers that touch their lives every day, against the rockets, against the bombs, against the

missiles that their enemies stockpile while making well-publicized threats every day against the Jewish state.

How do we achieve this goal, Mr. Speaker? By increasing the totality of our bilateral security relations. That means increasing joint missile defense systems, joint military exercises, and intelligence cooperation. We get to learn from them, and they get to learn from us, and we all sleep a little more soundly knowing that we have done all we can to help our citizens.

It also means providing increased excess defense articles and munitions to Israel. With a host of entities stirring the pot of hostility against the Jewish state, it is critical that the United States stand foursquare with Israel.

This legislation also extends authority to provide loan guarantees to the Israeli government that provide the Jewish state with a cushion of support in times of need, and at no cost to the American taxpayer.

Mr. Speaker, our ally, Israel, needs our help, and we are situated to lend a friend this hand while strengthening our own security in the process. Let us stand together today and say that we support a strong and secure Israel, not only because Israel is our friend and ally, but also because a strong and secure Israel means a strong and secure America.

Now is a particularly important time to send that message, as we face the looming specter of this sequester that we're all talking about and working hard to prevent.

Mr. Speaker, if nothing is done to avert this crisis, we will face an almost \$450 million cut to security assistance to Israel. This would include over \$100 million in cuts to cooperative missile defense programs. These cuts would damage the security of our Nation and our ally, Israel, and they must be averted.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to yield such time as he may consume to the coauthor of this legislation, our leader, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CANTOR).

Mr. CANTOR. I thank the gentlelady from Florida for her leadership on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the U.S.-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act. As the gentlelady just said, Mr. Speaker, I, together with my counterpart, STENY HOYER, Chairman ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, and the gentleman from California, Ranking Member HOWARD BERMAN, in May introduced this bill, and the House passed it with nearly unanimous support.

At a time when we are facing huge fiscal challenges, this bill makes it clear that no matter what, the United States always stands strong in our support for Israel, with whom we share a commitment to freedom, a respect for human life, and a commitment to security.

Among other things, this bill allows for the continuation of longstanding

loan guarantees to Israel, we restate the importance of maintaining Israel's qualitative military edge, and we improve military and intelligence cooperation, particularly with respect to joint missile defense.

We also reiterate our commitment to stand with Israel in international forums like the United Nations, where Israel often finds itself in an unfriendly environment. And, Mr. Speaker, we encourage NATO to welcome an expanded role for Israel. Our investment in Israel's security is an investment in American security.

Beyond this bipartisan expression of America's support for Israel, there is much the United States can do to protect our interests and the interests of our closest allies in the Middle East. But we cannot do so as a spectator.

The U.S. must lead. We cannot rely on Vladimir Putin and Kofi Annan to broker the peace in Syria, or stand idly by as Iran and Russia protect Bashar Assad, one of the world's most active state sponsors of terrorism. And we cannot and must not allow Iran to acquire nuclear weapons capability.

Mr. Speaker, we must meet the existential threat Iran poses to Israel, its neighbors, and the world with strength and engagement. We cannot allow situations in the region to unfold without our leadership. In fact, during my recent trips to the region, I have found there is more agreement on the need for U.S. leadership than anything else.

Today, Mr. Speaker, the House will send this bipartisan bill to the President and deliver the message that, during this pivotal and dangerous period in the Middle East, the United States stands tall for our ally, Israel.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I thank the gentleman for his remarks, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of S. 2165, the United States-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act of 2012, and I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

I want to thank, first of all, my friends, Majority Leader CANTOR and Minority Whip HOYER, for bringing this important bill back to the floor of the House so that we can accept the Senate's constructive additions and send it to the President's desk.

I'd also like to thank, as did my chairman, Senators BOXER and ISAKSON, and Senator COLLINS, for their leadership on this resolution in the Senate.

And finally, I want to thank my friend and chairman, the gentlelady from Florida, for her continued leadership on the issue of the U.S.-Israel relationship.

Members should recall that in May we passed the House version of this bill, H.R. 4133, by a near-unanimous vote. We will be taking another vote today because the Senate has added an important extension of military stockpile reserve authorities. I strongly support this addition and thank the Senate for its contribution.

Mr. Speaker, since its founding, Israel has faced innumerable challenges to its survival, but the serious threats it faces today are unprecedented. Deadly cross-border attacks from the Sinai Peninsula have taken both Israeli Arab and Israeli Jewish lives.

Terrorism still penetrates Israel from Gaza in the form of rocket and mortar attacks. But unlike in years past, the Iron Dome Anti-Missile System, funded in part by the United States, has changed the rules of the game. In fact, Iron Dome has been successful in intercepting a remarkable 90 percent of incoming rockets aimed at once defenseless population centers.

Currently, there are only a handful of Iron Dome batteries operational in Israel. More are needed in order to protect all of Israel's 8 million citizens.

I'm pleased to say that S. 2165 retains language from the Iron Dome Support Act, bipartisan legislation I introduced which now has nearly 110 cosponsors expressing support for providing Israel assistance to produce additional Iron Dome batteries.

This bill also pledges to assist Israel with its ongoing effort to forge a peaceful, negotiated settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that results in two states living side by side in peace and in security. Despite all the obstacles to achieving this goal, we cannot give up trying, as peace is profoundly in Israel's strategic interest.

I applaud Prime Minister Netanyahu's willingness to negotiate anywhere, anytime. The Palestinians should take him up on that offer, instead of pursuing a campaign to delegitimize Israel at the U.N. and elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps the greatest threat to both American and Israeli security today is that posed by Iran's nuclear weapons program. I hope this problem can be solved diplomatically, but as we all know, only massive pressure from the United States and our allies has any chance of persuading Iran to give up its quest for nuclear arms.

□ 1730

In fact, we are currently negotiating a sanctions bill with the Senate, the Iran Threat Reduction Act, which Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN and I introduced and which the House passed late last year. That bill will dramatically increase the economic pressure on Iran. Meanwhile, the bill before us today makes clear that the U.S. Congress will continue to help Israel meet the Iranian threat.

Gaza-based terrorism, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the Iranian nuclear program are not the only threats faced by Israel. Recent events in Egypt and Syria, along with the presence of Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon, require Israeli vigilance against danger from all directions.

To that end, this bill, once again, reaffirms our determination to support Israel's qualitative military edge

against any possible combination of regional threats. In reinforcing that commitment to Israel's security, this bill extends for 4 years a loan guarantee program for Israel that was initiated in 2003. The extension is based on legislation that Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN and I introduced in March.

Mr. Speaker, our relationship with our ally Israel is one of the most important and closest that we have with any nation in the world. The United States and Israel face many of the same threats, and we share the same values. Israel's defense minister, Ehud Barak, recently said that he can hardly remember a better period of U.S. "support and cooperation" and common U.S.-Israel strategic understanding than the current one.

The passage of this bill will help ensure that this cooperation continues into the future. I encourage all of my colleagues to support this legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I am so pleased to yield 4 minutes to my good friend, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), who is the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Human Rights.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentlelady, the chairwoman of our committee, for her great leadership in the defense of Israel. I thank as well my good friend and colleague, the ranking member, Mr. BERMAN. These two individuals work hard every day for the peace and security of our friend and ally Israel.

This is a "must pass" bill, Mr. Speaker, as we must reiterate our support for the nation of Israel. Our friend and ally Israel lives under the daily threat of indiscriminate rocket attacks on their homes and businesses, terrorism on public transit, and the unapologetic, undeterred, and unacceptable existential threat of a nuclear Iran. Despite Iran's signature of the Genocide Convention of 1956, Iran's anti-Semitic leader, Ahmadinejad, has repeatedly threatened to wipe Israel off the face of the Earth. Iran has ignored its commitments not to pursue nuclear weapons under the IAEA, refusing inspections and failing the ones they do allow.

The U.N. has failed to be resolute in its response to Iran or to protect Israel, leaving Israel to fend for itself at best but, more often, attacking and undermining it at every opportunity. Most recently and amazingly, the United Nations allowed Iran to be elected to the 15-member general committee of the U.N. Arms Trade Treaty Conference, which is allegedly developing a treaty regulating the international sale of conventional arms. Iran does, after all, have considerable experience in this area. Iran has been arming Israel's neighbors for decades.

Freedom House's annual report on the world, which assesses the political and civil liberties of nearly every nation on Earth, shows that Israel is sur-

rounded by nations that profoundly disrespect the political and civil liberties of their own citizens. These nations actively foment hate against Israel and have human rights records that are among the worst in the world. Syria has now shown its true colors. We cannot sit by and wait for Iran to have the opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, superior deterrence remains among the best guarantors of peace, and that has certainly been the case in the Middle East. S. 2165 enhances Israel's ability to defend itself. When Israel's military superiority was unclear in the eyes of its enemies soon after it was created, soon after Israel became a state, Israel was tested repeatedly with war, yet they won again and again. In response to Israel's clear military superiority, Israel's enemies have relied on cowardly acts of terrorism. They have attacked with Gaza rockets, with the intifada, with the flotilla, and Israel's task has been to overcome those deadly aggressions. Mr. Speaker, S. 2165 provides assistance for several programs that are effective in deterring attacks and in defending Israel, including for the Iron Dome, Israel's successful means of defending itself against missiles and rockets targeting Israeli homes and businesses.

With this bill, Israel will be better equipped for any scenario as it fulfills its solemn duty to protect its own people. With this bill, we also reassert our country's moral obligation and unshakable commitment to give Israel every assistance. The U.S. reaffirms, in word and in deed, our dedication to the defense of the Jewish state. S. 2165 expands U.S. military, intelligence, and civilian cooperation with Israel, including an offer to the Israeli air force for additional training opportunities in the U.S. in order to compensate for Israel's limited airspace and other enhanced cooperation on intelligence sharing.

Israel has shown itself to be a great friend of the United States, not only in setting the standard for democracy and human rights in the region but by being trustworthy with loans—always repaying loans on time and in full. This bill recognizes Israel's dependability with an extension of the longstanding loan guarantee program for Israel.

Finally, this bill reaffirms that the only viable option for peace and security in the region is an Israeli state and a Palestinian state existing side by side. Again, I ask for Members to support this important bill.

Mr. BERMAN. I am very pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman representing American Samoa and the ranking Democrat on the Asia and the Pacific Subcommittee of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Mr. FALCOMA-VAEGA.

(Mr. FALCOMA-VAEGA asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FALCOMA-VAEGA. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I want to associate myself especially with the remarks made by the gentlelady from Florida, who is our distinguished chairwoman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and with the remarks of my senior ranking member, the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN). I thank them both for their leadership in bringing this legislation forward for consideration and approval before the Members of this body.

I think there is absolutely no question in terms of the provisions provided in this bill. We want to be absolutely certain that our government is making every effort to ensure the security of the State of Israel.

I want to again commend the gentlelady from Florida and also my good friend from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) for their comments in assuring and in giving every absolute notice to other countries of the world so as to know where the United States stands in its defense of Israel.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I am so pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT), who is the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia. He deals with these issues every day.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I really do appreciate the great leadership Chairwoman ROS-LEHTINEN has shown on this issue and on so many issues around the world. I appreciate as well the great leadership of Mr. BERMAN, the ranking member. Together, in a bipartisan manner, both have really done a great job for our country, and we appreciate that.

Despite the tremendous progress that has been made toward ensuring Israel's continued security, critical challenges still remain. Now, perhaps more than at any time since the 1973 Yom Kippur War, Israel faces real and direct threats to its very homeland. Although the so-called Arab Spring has raised hopes that with time and hard work democracy may take hold in Arab lands, it has also ushered in what will, no doubt, be a period of profound and prolonged instability.

□ 1740

And while we most certainly should be working with Arab countries in this time of transition, we must not forget Israel, the Middle East's only established democracy and our friend and ally, which faces unprecedented threats to its security. Some of these are threats that Israel has not had to deal with in a very long time.

To the west, Israel faces new and untested Egyptian leadership, which has sent some troubling messages about its intentions for Egyptian-Israeli bilateral relations. To the north, fighting in Syria is continuing to intensify, and all signs suggest that the country may collapse into full-scale civil war. Other threats are sadly perennial. To Israel's north and west, terrorists remain

poised to attack and otherwise disrupt normal life for millions of Israeli citizens. To the east, the Iranian threat looms large on the horizon, and they threaten Israel and the entire region with the prospect of a nuclear weapon's capable radical regime right next door.

There is no question that the illicit Iranian nuclear program must remain at the very top of our priority list. It's certainly at the top of Israel's priority list. The nuclear program is, however, a symptom of the disease rather than the disease itself. The nuclear program is a paramount challenge to U.S. core national security interests, as well as those of our allies, and it must be addressed. As long as this regime is in power and the region continues to experience the kind of instability we're now witnessing, we must commit ourselves fully to doing everything we can to help aid Israel in securing itself.

I urge the adoption of this very important resolution.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, may I ask how much time is remaining on each side.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CHAFETZ). The gentleman from California has 13½ minutes, and the gentlewoman from Florida has 5½ minutes.

Mr. BERMAN. With that, Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 5 minutes to our distinguished whip, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Again, as I do repeatedly when I rise to speak on issues related to our closest ally in the Middle East, Israel, and the relationship between our two countries, I congratulate the chairwoman of the committee, the gentlelady from Florida, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, for her leadership on this issue and focus on the importance of not only the relationship, but on the importance of making sure that Israel is strong and able to defend herself.

I also congratulate the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN). I don't know anybody who, for a longer period of time, has focused on the issue of keeping the relationship between Israel and the United States strong, vibrant, and open, and who has, on this floor, in committee, in our caucus, and around this country, educated people any more than he has to the necessity to keep this relationship strong and to keep Israel strong.

So I rise to thank both of them for bringing this issue to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I was proud to cosponsor this legislation with my friend, the majority leader, Mr. CANTOR. That piece of legislation, which Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN and Mr. BERMAN brought to the floor some months ago, passed here with a vote of 411-2, showing the overwhelming bipartisan support this issue has. This is clearly an issue, unlike so many that we deal with, that enjoys not only bipartisan support between the two parties, but support of philosophical perspectives from all over this caucus and this country. We don't al-

ways see eye to eye on matters of policy, but we always find common ground when it comes to strengthening the U.S.-Israel relationship.

This is the case for two very important reasons. The first is because the United States and Israel are linked by history and by the common glue of shared values: democracy, free enterprise, respect for human rights, and the rule of law. Secondly, because a strong Israel is in America's national security interest.

We make that point almost every time we speak because it's important for all of our constituents, our fellow Americans to understand that the investment that we make in Israel, the investment in terms of time, in terms of support, in terms of finances, and in terms of military assistance, are all in the interest of the United States of America and its citizens. Yes, it is to Israel's benefit as well, but primarily the United States acts because it sees as critical to its own interests the safety, security, and sovereignty of Israel.

Military and security ties with Israel help the Pentagon and our intelligence agencies track threats to Americans at home and abroad, and they enable us to partner on the development of technologies that help keep our people safe.

The number one regional threat of course, as all of us know, is the prospect of a nuclear Iran. That is of great concern to every nation in the world. The nonproliferation of nuclear weapons is a principal tenet of the nations of the world, adopted by the United Nations and adopted in treaties.

Iran must not be allowed to obtain nuclear weapons, as it would dramatically destabilize the region, and Iran's leaders have already threatened American targets in that part of the world. Again, it is important to note that are some 250,000 Americans within the range of Iranian missiles.

Of course, there are untold economic interests of the United States and of the international community. Enhanced security cooperation with Israel is one of the many tools we have to help prevent Iran from achieving nuclear weaponization and to protect American assets in the region.

This bill strengthens that cooperation in several ways:

It authorizes aid for the joint U.S.-Israel Iron Dome missile defense, a critical investment.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. BERMAN. I yield the gentleman an additional 2 minutes.

Mr. HOYER. It also increases U.S. strategic stockpiles in Israel and provides Israel with additional weaponry as a first line of defense for the United States, as well as for Israel.

Furthermore, this bill extends loan guarantees for Israel and encourages an expanded Israeli role in NATO.

Mr. Speaker, it is so encouraging to see that even while we may divide on other matters, this House will pass the legislation before us with strong, overwhelming bipartisan support. That

sends a message that hopefully cannot be missed, a clarity of purpose expressed by this Congress, the policy-making body of this Nation, that speaks for all the people of our Nation. Hopefully, those who would pose a threat and risk to us and to our allies would take note of that unanimity of purpose. Let us continue to ensure that close U.S.-Israel ties are an issue that unites us as Americans.

As I said, the House overwhelmingly passed this measure earlier this year, 411-2. Now the Senate has sent it back to us for final consideration. I congratulate my friend, Senator BOXER, and the Republican leadership of the Senate, as well.

I hope we can pass it again today. I know we will, and I hope it's with even greater support. I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on this bill—for America, for Israel, and for international security.

□ 1750

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I only have some closing remarks and have no further requests for time, so I will wait for my colleague from California to yield back.

Mr. BERMAN. After what we just heard, I would not suggest any further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The United States-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act of 2012 states, and it makes it very clear, that U.S. policy is to: reaffirm the commitment to Israel's security as a Jewish state; also to provide Israel with the military capabilities to defend herself and help preserve its qualitative military edge; also to expand military and civilian cooperation; to assist in a negotiated settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that results in two states living side by side in peace and security, which is all of our goals; and also encourage Israel's neighbors to recognize Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state.

This bill expresses the sense of Congress that the United States should take specified actions to assist in the defense of Israel; it amends the 2005 Department of Defense Appropriations Act to extend authority to transfer certain Department of Defense items to Israel; it amends the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to extend authority to make additions to foreign-based defense stockpiles; and, lastly, it amends the Emergency Wartime Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2003 to extend specified loan guarantee authority to Israel.

This is in the U.S. national security interest, and I hope that the House overwhelmingly passes this important bill.

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

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of "S. 2165; U.S.-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act of 2012."

Since 1948 the U.S. and Israel have shared a special bond.

Israel is our greatest ally in a region defined by conflict.

Today, there are significant events in the Middle East that present unique security challenges.

From the upheaval in neighboring states to the defiance of the IAEA by the Iranian regime, Israel is under constant threat.

The Israelis should not be forced to live under duress from a nation that denies the holocaust and Israel's right to exist.

As a nation we must never waiver in our support of Israel's inherent right to self-defense against these threats.

Congress must provide the technology and weapons systems that provide a military advantage over aggressors.

This enhanced cooperation between the U.S. and Israel will provide stability in an increasingly unstable region.

Israel must have the capability and consent to defend themselves or the region will fall deeper into chaos.

I urge my colleagues to support this responsible legislation.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this legislation.

The House passed its version of this legislation in May 2012, with my strong support. The Senate has elected to improve the loan guarantee and stock-pile authorities in its version, which I am also pleased to support.

United States and Israel have built a strong, unique and special relationship, and passage of this legislation will only strengthen those bonds. The political changes that are sweeping through North Africa and the Middle East are creating new uncertainties for the United States and Israel. The revolutions that are underway may not produce the much-hoped for democratic "Arab Spring". Indeed, the ascension of Muslim Brotherhood member Mohamad Morsi to the Egyptian presidency is a development whose consequences cannot be predicted with certainty at the moment. During such times of uncertainty, it is important that America send a clear message to the region that we will continue to stand by our ally, Israel. This bill helps us do exactly that, which is why I am pleased to support it.

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 4133, now S. 2165, the U.S.-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act of 2012. I am proud to be a cosponsor of this legislation and I urge all of my colleagues to join me in voting for this bill.

Israel continues to face unprecedented and unpredictable challenges from many of its neighbors. American support for Israel must remain unequivocally solid. This legislation is the latest important effort to continue and expand our deep mutual relationship. I am pleased that the House of Representatives is considering H.R. 4133 today, as it is of the utmost importance.

In addition to reaffirming our continued commitment to Israel, this legislation will provide Israel with many new military capabilities needed to defend itself against any threats. It is important for those who may wish to do Israel harm to know that they will not be successful. Specifically, this bill will provide Israel with new missile defense capabilities, mid-air refueling tankers, and specialized munitions. Each of these are key components for ensuring Israel's continued sovereign right to exist.

In addition to these items this bill thoughtfully provides Israel with certain defense equipment that is being left behind by the withdrawal of American forces from Iraq.

In addition to the conveyance of equipment, this bill greatly increases our intelligence sharing operations and offers the Israeli Air Force additional training resources in the United States. This is very important given the severely limited training grounds for the Israeli Air Force in its own country. I am especially pleased with the agreement for increased intelligence cooperation. This new level of intelligence collaboration will substantially assist our own intelligence services in keeping Americans safe. This legislation greatly benefits both countries; it is truly a remarkable partnership.

These efforts are paramount, but we must not rest. When we pass this legislation today, we must know that this is only the next step, and is not the final step in ensuring Israel's freedoms and right to exist. I remain committed to work with my colleagues for helping expand the US-Israeli partnership.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, as a cosponsor and strong supporter of the United States-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act of 2012, I rise in support of the bill.

The House originally passed this measure by a vote of 411 to 2 in May. The Senate then passed the measure by unanimous consent on June 29. The purpose of the bill is to extend to Israel a U.S. Government loan guarantee and U.S. defense stockpile transfer authority.

Israel is an essential American ally in the Middle East. The rapid change that region is undergoing will have a significant impact on the national security of both our countries. In light of this, S. 2165 helps to reinforce our support for the security of Israel by extending until Sept. 30, 2015, the U.S. Government loan guarantees. The measure also expresses the sense of Congress that the United States should take a number of actions to strengthen the defense of Israel, including: providing support for its "Iron Dome" air defense system; providing Israel with air refueling tankers and specialized munitions; and expanding intelligence cooperation between our two countries.

By passing this bill today, we reaffirm our support for the right of Israel to defend itself and demonstrate our ongoing commitment to Israel as an ally of the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 2165.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

INSULAR AREAS ACT OF 2011

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 2009) to improve the administration of programs in the insular areas, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows: