holidays. There was a synagogue that was blown up right after morning prayers on a Saturday morning.

What is it that we should learn from this about going forward what our strategy should be? Well, for one thing, this tiny tract of land is where the weapons are coming through. They are not coming through Israel or through the Mediterranean Sea; although, there were one or two cases in years past where boats were intercepted, but we have a pretty sophisticated understanding what goes on here. It is coming through tunnels from Egypt.

So we should be saying to Egypt, for a country that gets $3.5 billion in aid every year, we should say to them, enough is enough. Until you show the ability to get control of this border, we are not going to provide any of our aid in the form of military. You want humanitarian assistance, that's fine.

Secondly, the last thing we want to have is for these to be tipped with laser-guided systems like the ones being proposed to that part of the world. We can't let that technology seep into the region so these now have precision guidance.

Finally, we have to say to the United Nations and to the international community: What more do you want the Israelis to do? They have left. They have left that part of the world. What is it that you are demanding they do?

I would say to the people who sponsor these resolutions in the United Nations condemning Israel, okay, picture yourself as being the chief administrative officer of a government who is getting attacked by thousands of rockets; what do you propose they do? A giant net in the sky? They tried building a wall and a fence here, and they were criticized for that.

From a policy perspective, and ''restraint'' is a nice and vague term, what we should be doing is saying to the Israelis, you need to protect yourselves, and we should be leading the charge at the United Nations to consider this international acts of war. They are a democracy. They are a free-standing government. These are acts of war. I think that the Israelis would be well within their rights to respond however they would like.

The final thing we have to do, and if some of my southern colleagues were here, they would come up with an interesting colloquialism on how to say this.

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But I hate to be a fly in the ointment about this whole idea of propping up Mahmoud Abbas. If Mahmoud Abbas has any ability to stop these rockets from launching from Gaza into Sderot, let him start to do something about it today. We keep hearing about this international conference and coming up with agreements and giving him money. I don't understand what possible good it's going to do when Fatah has no authority and no control over this part of the world.

Ms. BERKLEY. As I said earlier, Hamas is walking around the streets indiscriminately shooting anybody that had anything to do with Fatah. They're consolidating their power, power to do what I haven't got the slightest idea.

But I wanted to tell my colleague, who we had a pleasure of sharing this experience that I think he will remember when we all got back on the bus, there were a lot of people that were misty-eyed. I think it was a shock to most of us to see what these people are going through on a daily basis.

And I looked around at our colleagues, and these are pretty sophisticated politicians. They've been in office for quite a while in different capacities, but I think everybody was taken aback and shocked and very touched by the families that we met and felt the pain that they go through on a daily basis. It was an important message for us to see.

Mr. ALTMIRE. That's right. We were touched by the pain, but we were also touched by the courage that they endure daily these attacks, and they stay and they don't have to do that, but they make the decision to be there. And when you see the story and you see the children firsthand, and again, when they point across in the Gaza and say I used to live in that house right there, that used to be my house.

Ms. BERKLEY. And we could see the house. I mean, they didn't have to go it's over there behind the mountain, no, no, there it was.

And I have to tell you something else. One of the ministers that we met with said this about the conferences, and again, the Israelis are pushing any type of peace and support that they can get with the Palestinians. But they said, they want us to meet, so we'll meet, but if they refuse to recognize Israel's right to exist, what are we meeting about? Will they allow us to exist? What compromise do you make with people that don't recognize your right to exist? Do you compromise that you could exist for 20 more years, 30 more years, 50 more years? There's no compromise to be made with people that don't recognize that you are a person with a right to exist.

Mr. WEINER. Well, in conclusion, our time is expired, but I want to thank the gentlewoman from Nevada and the gentleman from Pennsylvania for joining us here today, and I just would close with this.

There are big, complicated conflicts that are going on in that part of that world. They're not going to be easy to resolve. For years, we've been watching with some level of success but a great deal of failure, but just imagine the circumstances if tomorrow, when you dropped off your kids at school, a couple of times during the day they'd have to look like this rather than studying their school books. Imagine if an 8, 9, 10-year-old child had to be on tranquilizers in order to get through the day.

There are some things that just are without any political nuance, without any varnish, and are just wrong. What's going on in Sderot is just wrong.

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in great concern over the ongoing Qassam attacks on the southern city of Sderot, Israel. Sderot is a community that has been plagued with frequent and intense firing on its inhabitants and infrastructure since Hamas's takeover of Gaza. These Palestinian militants are attempting to destroy an entire population and bring everyday life there to a halt.

Even today, two Qassam rockets landed in the vicinity of Sderot. One of these rockets was aimed at and landed near a kindergarten, on the first week of the new school year. Imagine the dilemma parents in this region face—they don't know if their children on any given day are safer at school, or at home given the continued rocket firings.

These homemade rockets cannot aim solely at military targets because they do not have any degree of precision. They are primitive, short-range, home-made rockets that do not have the technical capability to be guided, and consequently, strike innocent civilians. They have indiscriminately destroyed the economy and physically and psychologically devastated family life.

The current situation is unacceptable—the terror organization Hamas is clearly violating Israel's sovereignty and overriding Israel's right over its land and people.

A city of no more than 24,000, Sderot is less than a mile from the border with Gaza, where Israel withdrew its troops in the summer of 2005. Since then, thousands of these rockets pummeled this city and terrorized men, women and children on a daily basis. Sderot citizens are unable to go about their normal lives and should not be expected to live under this permanent threat.

Israel has shown considerable restraint and patience in dealing with those terrorist firing, despite the severity of the situation and the casualties and injuries they have taken. However, Israel has the complete right to defend itself against these intolerable attacks. No belief, however misguided, can justify the victimization of innocent people.

I would like to express my solidarity not only with the citizens of Sderot, but with victims of terrorism around the world. We need to do everything we can to bring an end to this unjust situation and help create a lasting peace so that the citizens of Sderot can go about their lives.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Ms. MATSUI (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today until 12:30 p.m. on account of attending a funeral.