

wormhole, a hypothetical tunnel in space-time. Dr. Wheeler was willing to passionately consider seemingly incomprehensible phenomena. In 1999, he wrote that the black hole “teaches us that space can be crumpled like a piece of paper into an infinitesimal dot, that time can be extinguished like a blown-out flame, and that the laws of physics that we regard as sacred, as immutable, are anything but.” His work in the 1960s revived and transformed this field.

In the last years of his career, Dr. Wheeler considered the mysterious and sometimes bizarre world of quantum mechanics, seeking connections between science and philosophy to explain fundamental questions of existence.

Despite these high achievements, Dr. Wheeler remained committed to the nurturing of the next generation of scientists. He continued to teach introductory classes to undergraduates throughout his career, and he mentored some of the century’s most noted theoretical physicists. Any physicist with the amount and color of the hair that I possess will also have indelible memories of “MTW,” the big black book called *Gravitation* authored by Misner, Thorne, and John Archibald Wheeler that describes in intuitive terms what is really going on in Einstein’s general theory of relativity.

So at a time when the primacy of our Nation’s science programs are in peril, John Wheeler’s example should remind us of our own commitment to the next generation of American scientists and innovators.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to introduce this resolution, and I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring the life and achievements of John Wheeler. The power of his intellectual accomplishments and the memorable color of his phrases will grace physics textbooks forever.

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

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Dr. FOSTER for introducing this resolution, and for his eloquent description of an individual to whom we owe such a great debt in this country.

A recent survey asked citizens of the United States if they could name a single living United States scientist, and, sadly, many, many weren’t. In this body it is not at all uncommon for us to bring up suspension bills honoring sports teams who may have won an NCAA championship or the Super Bowl or something like that. It is thoroughly appropriate that we do more to recognize outstanding scientists who did not just win a single sporting event, but changed the face of the Earth through their intellect, through their diligence, and through their discoveries. And I very much commend Dr. Foster for raising this, and I thank him. And, I hope it is not the last that he will enlighten us with his knowledge as a physicist. I know it won’t be. But I would urge this body to see what we

could do more through our actions here on the House Floor and in our districts to do more to honor and elevate the status of U.S. scientists so that we could provide role models for young people and rise above the gathering storm.

Our science committee, chaired by BART GORDON, has helped lead the effort in that. We are proud to have passed The America COMPETES Act. The America COMPETES Act is designed to produce many, many more John Wheelers. I want to express our thanks on behalf of the Congress to his family and our condolences for their loss.

I yield back the balance of my time and urge a “yes” vote on this outstanding resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1118.

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.

□ 1600

RECOGNIZING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE MODERN STATE OF ISRAEL

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 322) recognizing the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel and reaffirming the bonds of close friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 322

Whereas on November 29, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly voted to partition the British Mandate of Palestine and create a Jewish state;

Whereas on May 14, 1948, the people of Israel proclaimed the establishment of the sovereign and independent State of Israel, and the United States Government established full diplomatic relations with Israel;

Whereas the desire of the Jewish people to establish an independent modern State of Israel is an outgrowth of the existence of the historic kingdom of Israel established in the Land of Israel 3,000 years ago, with the city of Jerusalem as its capital;

Whereas for over 2,000 years, there has been continuous Jewish presence and residence in the land comprising the modern State of Israel;

Whereas the establishment of the modern State of Israel as a homeland for the Jewish people followed the slaughter of more than 6,000,000 European Jews during the Holocaust;

Whereas since its establishment 60 years ago, the modern State of Israel has rebuilt a nation, forged a new and dynamic democratic society, and created a thriving economic, political, cultural, and intellectual

life despite the heavy costs of war, terrorism, and unjustified diplomatic and economic boycotts against the people of Israel;

Whereas the people of Israel have established a vibrant, pluralistic, democratic political system, including freedom of speech, association, and religion; a vigorously free press; free, fair and open elections; the rule of law; a fully independent judiciary; and other democratic principles and practices;

Whereas Israel has developed some of the leading universities in the world, and 8 Israeli citizens have been awarded the Nobel Prize;

Whereas Israel has developed an advanced, entrepreneurial economy, is among the world’s leaders in the high-tech industry, and is at the forefront of research and development in the field of renewable energy sources;

Whereas Israel regularly sends humanitarian aid, search-and-rescue teams, mobile hospitals, and other emergency supplies, to help victims of disasters around the world, including the 1994 Rwandan civil war, the 1998 bombing of the United States Embassy in Kenya, the 1999 earthquakes in Turkey, the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the 2005 hurricanes along the southern coast of the United States, and the 2007 fires in Greece;

Whereas Israel has absorbed millions of Jews from countries throughout the world and fully integrated them into Israeli society;

Whereas Israel has bravely defended itself from repeated terrorist and military attacks since its independence;

Whereas successive leaders of Israel have sought to achieve peace with Israel’s Arab neighbors;

Whereas Israel has established peaceful bilateral relations with neighboring Egypt and Jordan and has made its desire to establish peaceful relations with all Arab states abundantly clear;

Whereas for 6 decades, the United States and Israel have maintained a special relationship based on mutually shared democratic values, common strategic interests, and moral bonds of friendship and mutual respect;

Whereas the American people feel a strong affinity for the Israeli people based on common values and shared cultural heritage; and

Whereas the United States continues to regard Israel as a strong and trusted ally and an important strategic partner: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) recognizes the historic significance of the 60th anniversary of the reestablishment of the sovereign and independent State of Israel as a homeland for the Jewish people;

(2) reaffirms its enduring support for Israel as Israel pursues peace with its neighbors;

(3) reaffirms its support for Israel’s right to defend itself against threats to its security and existence;

(4) commends the people of Israel for their remarkable achievements in building a new state and a pluralistic, democratic society in the face of terrorism, as well as hostility, ostracism, and belligerence from many of their neighbors;

(5) reaffirms the bonds of friendship and cooperation which have existed between the United States and Israel for the past 60 years, and commits to strengthening those bonds; and

(6) extends the warmest congratulations and best wishes to the State of Israel and the Israeli people for a peaceful, prosperous, and successful future.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROSLEHTINEN) 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 may 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 yield myself 15 seconds. I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 322 which recognizes the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel and reaffirms the bonds of close friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to join with this House today in commemorating a milestone that few would have once thought possible, and in celebrating one of America's most special bilateral relationships.

When the State of Israel was declared on May 14, 1948, some worried whether it would survive for even 6 months in the face of ruthless and relentless war from much of the Arab world. Naysayers worldwide fought against the establishment of a state for the Jewish people, and urged the United States not to recognize any such Jewish state. To our Nation's credit, the United States recognized Israel 11 minutes after it declared independence, leading the way for other responsible nations to follow.

And despite predictions of gloom and doom, and the strongest efforts of its enemies, Israel did not perish. Indeed, Israel has flourished. Israel won three wars of self-defense on multiple fronts. It has survived not merely for 6 months but for 60 extraordinary years. Through it all, Israel has endured. And as the only democracy in the region, Israel continues to be a beacon of hope and a model for her neighbors.

It has been said that the strength of a nation is determined by the caliber of its people. There is perhaps no better example of this truth than the State of Israel and the Israeli people, vivid examples of conviction, of courage, of faith. Indeed, through the blood and the toil and the creativity of its citizens, Israel has grown accustomed to dispelling established wisdom and exceeding expectations.

Israel has proven that democracy, liberty, prosperity and innovation can indeed thrive in the Middle East. Today, Israel is a vibrant democracy where unfettered free speech fills the airwaves, and where Arabs serve in government, and have excelled in business and science.

Israel has demonstrated that desolate areas of the Holy Land can be re-

deemed, and that the "land of milk and honey" can once again bloom and bear fruit.

Israel has given the world a first-rate high-tech industry that pioneered wi-fi and instant messaging, and a medical industry that pioneered microscopic cameras that can be swallowed in a pill. And Israel has shown that a 2,000-year-old dream, the creation of a state for the Jewish people in their historic homeland, can indeed come true.

Time and time again, Mr. Speaker, Israel has made the impossible a reality. Yet today, Israel once again finds itself besieged in every direction by dangerous regimes like Iran and Syria and by the rapidly arming and violent Islamic groups that those regimes sponsor like Hamas and Hezbollah.

Today, Israelis live in fear, fear of the threat of their very existence represented by the pariah states of Iran and Syria. Innocent blood in Tel Aviv, in Jerusalem, and in other communities is shed regularly as a result of the jihadists from Hezbollah, from Hamas, and other such militant organizations.

Palestinian suicide bombers have struck at crowded bus stops, at hotels and cafes and other civilian targets. And in a little town called Sderot, children play indoors because of Palestinian rockets, and ordinary people face the draining pressure that at any moment a rocket could be launched at them, killing or maiming them or their loved ones.

Mr. Speaker, Israel's existence is indispensable to advancing America's most basic interests and values. For decades, our two nations have successfully collaborated on everything from science and business to defense and homeland security. As America goes forward, fighting for a free and prosperous world and against violent extremist groups who seek our ruin, Israel once again stands with us. And America will and must continue to stand with Israel for the next 60 years and beyond.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this important resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, in the 60 years since the founding of our ally Israel, the United States has had no greater friend in the Middle East. U.S.-Israeli friendship is based first and foremost on shared democratic values and our mutual pursuit of peace and stability in the Middle East, and it is buttressed by our Nation's unshakable commitment to Israel's security.

The remarkable story to Israel's foundation and survival is inspiring. Shortly after the decision by the United Nations to partition the British Mandate of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states, Israel declared its independence on May 14, 1948, in Tel Aviv. In response, Israel's Arab neighbors in-

vaded the new and tiny Jewish state. And to the surprise of the so-called experts and pundits everywhere, the nascent Israel Defense Forces prevailed, defending the people of Israel and soundly defeating the Arab coalition.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy called the emergence of the State of Israel "a miracle of the 20th century." However, Golda Meier once remarked that there had been "too much self-sacrifice and too many lives lost for Israel's emergence to be considered a miracle."

But the establishment and the evolution of the State of Israel can be considered, without doubt, one of the dazzling human achievements of our times.

Hundreds of thousands of Jews and their descendants escaped oppression, or worse, because Israel exists. Spurning the authoritarian model that dominates its region, and persevering in a sea of enmity, Israel has built a world-class civilization, a vibrant democracy, a thriving economy, and a culturally and academically rich society.

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

But Israel's triumphant story is also tinged with tragedy. Each year just before its independence day, Israel honors soldiers who have fallen in its defense. A siren sounds all over the nation, and Israelis everywhere stop to remember. This minute of silence is a poignant memory for all who have witnessed it. But it is also, unfortunately, symbolic of Israel's wider regional reality for Israel has lived under the Damoclesian threat since its birth.

For years the Arab world sought to drive Israel into the sea. But eventually, after much death and destruction, the visionary Egyptian president, Anwar Sadat, and the wise Jordanian, King Hussein, recognized the value of peace and coexistence with Israel. And although much of the Arab world's economic, cultural and political boycott of Israel remains intact and terrorism has never ceased, the prospect of a collective military attack on Israel fortunately has faded in recent years.

Nevertheless, Israel today lives under potentially greater threats to its well-being and existence than ever before. The daily rocket assaults from Gaza, controlled by fundamentalist Hamas, have reaped vast physical and psychological damage on the people of Sderot, not to mention the fact that they have killed more than a dozen Israelis. And increasingly, sophisticated rockets are being used. They are more deadly accurate by the day, and they have greater range. In Israel's north, Hezbollah's replenished missile supply poses an even greater threat.

On the other end of the military spectrum, a theologically based state, the Islamic Republic of Iran whose president says Israel should be wiped off the map, is developing nuclear

weapons and long-range missiles. Now is not the time to go into details about these threats. This body has spoken specifically to each of these dangers in the relatively recent past, and will do so again.

Now it is time to reaffirm our Nation's pledge to Israel that we will stand in solidarity with Israel against all violent assaults on its security and well-being. And most of all, it is time to say to our friend and ally, Israel, congratulations on your incredible social, political, economic, and technological achievements in the face of the most stupefying odds. We in the United States could not be prouder of our special relationship with you.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time and would be glad to allow Mr. BERMAN to recognize the Speaker.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to recognize the chief sponsor of this resolution, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, a stalwart supporter of the State of Israel for all of her political life that I have known her, for 1 minute.

Ms. PELOSI. I thank the gentleman for his kind words. I am pleased to join Mr. BOEHNER and other cosponsors of this legislation, and thank Chairman BERMAN and Ranking Member ROS-LEHTINEN for their leadership in bringing this resolution to the floor, and for leading us in our strong friendship with the State of Israel.

I thank Mr. BERMAN for following so ably in the footsteps of Mr. Lantos as he follows the tradition of Chairman Lantos whose loss we feel every day.

Mr. Speaker, this weekend, families around the world, including my own grandchildren, gathered around the Seder table to retell the Biblical story of freedom and hope that is Passover.

The closing words of the Passover haggadah evoke the age-old yearning of the Jewish people to return to Zion. Today, in Congress, we mark the fulfillment of those aspirations in observing the founding of the modern State of Israel. By recognizing the 60th anniversary of Israel, we reaffirm the bonds of close friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel.

Again I thank Chairman BERMAN and Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN for their leadership in giving us this opportunity today. I am pleased to join Republican Leader BOEHNER as lead cosponsors of this legislation, as I am pleased to join him in leading a delegation to Israel in a few weeks to be part of the 60th anniversary observance.

Mr. Speaker, the creation of the State of Israel, as Mr. BERMAN said so eloquently, stands out as one of the greatest achievements of the 20th century and as a beacon of hope to the world. President Truman's role in recognizing the new state just 11 minutes after its proclamation is a source of pride for all Americans. It is also a symbol of the strength of the friendship between our two countries.

I note that this congressional recognition is a little earlier than a month before Israel's independence day, but this allows us to get ready and to have a few weeks of festivities to bring in the May celebration.

In this body we sometimes have political differences, but today and every day we speak with one voice united with Israel. As we support Israel, we recognize that the national security of Israel is in our national interest.

□ 1615

A week ago, Noam Shalit, father of Gilad Shalit, came to my office. Gilad was captured from his army base in Israel near the Gaza border on June 25, 2006. For almost 2 years, Gilad has been held in captivity. Our thoughts are with him and his family, as well as with all of the other missing Israeli soldiers, such as Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev. We will continue to work for their release from captivity.

Mr. Speaker, every leader from the region who comes into my office, or just other people that I find worthy of knowing about this, I show the dog tags of Eldad, Ehud and Gilad as a constant reminder in the Speaker's Office of our commitment to them and to their freedom.

In America's partnership with Israel, we have both given support and we have drawn strength. We share a common history, nations founded to be beacons of democracy, forged by pioneers, and fulfilled by immigrants in search of a better tomorrow. We also share a common cause, a safe and secure Israel, living in peace with her neighbors.

Mr. Speaker, I urge our colleagues to speak with one voice and support this resolution recognizing the 60th anniversary of the State of Israel. In doing so, we not only commend Israel, we also bring luster to this House by associating ourselves with that great State of Israel.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlelady from Florida for her generosity in allowing me, the Speaker, to speak out of turn.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, at this point I would like to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE), an esteemed member of our Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the Nation of Israel has fought for 60 years for the right to exist, and I'm proud to be a cosponsor of H. Con. Res. 322, a measure before the House today. It recognizes the 60th anniversary of Israel's statehood, and reaffirms United States support for Israel as Israel continues to pursue peace with its neighbors and defend itself against constant threats to its security and its existence.

Sixty years ago, on May 14, in the aftermath of World War II, the people of Israel declared independence and claimed sovereignty of about 8,000 square miles of land that was between the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, the area about the size of New Jer-

sey. That day was just the beginning of another chapter in Israel's long history of defending its right to exist.

Almost immediately after Israel announced independence in 1948, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan and Saudi Arabia all declared war on Israel, launching Israel's long fight for the mere right to exist. In that war, the newly created State of Israel defeated the Arab armies that invaded it, and even expanded some of its territory.

Then again, in 1967, Israel acted once more to defend itself against hostile invasion by its neighbors during the Six Day War. Once again, in 1972, Israel was targeted by Arab armies during the Yom Kippur war.

And recently Israel has been attacked in the north by terrorist hate groups Hezbollah, and in the south by Hamas terrorist group.

Also, Israel has been forced to defend itself against Palestinian aggression. And since January 1 of this year, Palestinians have fired more than 450 mortar shells into Israel. This rocket fire has intentionally targeted civilian communities in Israel, and made life for these people a nightmare. But Israel is resilient and continues to fly the flag of freedom.

I proudly join my colleagues in commending the people of Israel for building this democratic state in the face of terrorism, hostility, hate and war from their neighbors.

Israel and the United States are like family. Sometimes we disagree on things, but when someone attacks part of the family, it's an attack on the whole family. Let there be no mistake about it. The United States stand side by side with its friend, Israel, and with the concept of freedom.

And that's just the way it is.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I'm privileged to recognize for 1 minute a gentleman who has probably done as much as anyone in this House to promote the U.S.-Israeli relationship, including his own personal missions that he leads there, the majority leader, Mr. HOYER of Maryland.

Mr. HOYER. I thank my friend of some 45 years for his observations. There are a lot of my very dear friends for a long time in this chamber.

Israel is America's friend for a very long time.

Mr. Speaker, it is fitting today that Members of both sides of the aisle, almost in unanimity, join to recognize the founding of our Nation's steadfast friend and ally, the State of Israel, to reconfirm the special bond that exists between our two Nations, and to reiterate that the support for Israel in this Congress is bipartisan, overwhelming, stronger than ever, and continuing to grow.

On May 14, 1948, the day on which the British mandate for Palestine expired, the people of Israel proclaimed the sovereign and independent State of Israel. And 11 minutes later the United States, at the direction of President Harry S. Truman, recognized the establishment of this new state.

President Truman observed, at that time, and I quote, "I had faith in Israel before it was established, I have faith in it now. I believe that it has a glorious future before it, not just another sovereign nation, but an embodiment of the great ideals of our civilization."

So said President Harry Truman, May 14, 1948, 11 minutes after the declaration of sovereignty of the State of Israel. An embodiment of the great ideals of our civilization. I believe that to be the fact, and because I believe that to be the fact, I believe it is absolutely essential that those who uphold those ideals pledge their support and defense of Israel against those who would undermine, not only the nation, but the idea of the civilization that Truman said it represents.

Mr. Speaker, over the ensuing 6 decades, it has become increasingly clear that Israel's success is not only a strategic imperative for the United States, but a moral imperative as well. Ours is a relationship of principle and conscience, of shared values and common aspirations, of peace and opportunity and a mutual commitment to freedom and democracy.

The United States and Israel are nations of immigrants. We are safe havens for the oppressed. The Statue of Liberty lifts her lamp beside the golden door, "Send these, the poor, the homeless, tempest tossed to me," it says. That is what Israel has said to millions of Jews, and others as well, black and white.

We are partners with Israel for peace, and we are united in fighting against terrorism. Few people on Earth have been subjected to more bigotry, violence and discrimination than have the Jewish people, and no people are more in need, in my view, of a sovereign, secure homeland to provide safe haven and to protect identity.

That is why the Balfour Resolution was passed in 1918. That is why, in 1948, the world looked on the creation of Israel as an imperative.

David Ben-Gurion once remarked: "The security of Israel is," he said, and I quote, "a question of the survival, not only of the people of Israel, but of the Jewish people the world over."

History has taught us that is true. Throughout the last 60 years, Israel has been an island of freedom in a sea of despair and an absence of democracy. It has been vilified, threatened and attacked. My colleagues have set forth those facts.

And yet, it has prevailed, indeed, prospered, just as it will prevail and prosper today and tomorrow and every day thereafter.

When we talk of Israel, we inevitably acknowledge her courage in the face of those who seek her destruction. But let us also acknowledge that over the last 60 years, the Israeli people have established a vibrant, pluralistic, democratic political system that includes freedom of speech, association, religion, a vigorous free press, free, fair and open elections, the rule of law, and an independent judiciary.

Furthermore, Israel has developed an advanced entrepreneurial economy, and is among the world's leaders in the high tech industry.

Mr. Speaker, as Mr. BERMAN observed, over the last 5 years I've had the opportunity to take a tenth of the Congress, actually more than a tenth of the Congress to Israel, congressional delegations, which have gone to see where we invest our money and where we have committed our security pledge. And what the Members saw was a reflection, really, in many respects, of America and themselves, people who love their country, people who want to live in peace and freedom, and people who want their children to have even greater opportunities and safety.

As our allies in Israel celebrate their 60th anniversary in just a few weeks, let us honor their determination to fulfill the vision of Zionism's founding father, Theodore Herzl. Through courage and will, Israel was born and the dream of generations was made real, and it will endure. It will endure with our support, with our encouragement, and with our commitment.

I want to congratulate the citizens of Israel and the entire Jewish community, not only in the United States, but throughout the world, who have enabled Israel to survive. Congratulations. Happy birthday.

We remain a loyal, steadfast and unswerving ally in your quest for a better life, not just for your people, but, as Truman observed, for civilization as well.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE).

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I'm so pleased to rise today to congratulate the State of Israel on its 60th anniversary as an independent and sovereign Nation. Our friends have realized this historic milestone in the face of innumerable challenges to their very existence.

Constant threats of terrorism and attacks have not defeated the hopes and dreams of the Israeli people. And with remarkable restraint, and despite great odds, the State of Israel proudly stands and has secured the creation of a new and enduring Jewish society in their ancestral homeland.

As a vibrant and strong democracy in the Middle East, Israel is a model for the region. A lack of natural resources has not prevented Israel from becoming home to one of the world's most dynamic economies. Its achievements in agriculture, solar energy, medical electronics and telecommunications have gained worldwide recognition. Each of these accomplishments can be directly attributed to Israel's greatest asset, her people.

Mr. Speaker, as we continue to promote peace and stability for the people of Israel and all in the region, let us congratulate Israel on the occasion of her 60th anniversary and reaffirm our steadfast support for one of America's greatest allies.

□ 1630

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 2 minutes to the majority whip for the House of Representatives, Representative CLYBURN of South Carolina.

Mr. CLYBURN. I thank my friend, Mr. BERMAN, for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 322, recognizing the 60th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel. On May 14, 1948, when the world was still struggling with the aftermath of the Holocaust, Israel declared itself a Nation. Eleven minutes later, President Harry Truman made the bold decision to make the United States of America the first country in the world to recognize Israel as a sovereign state. That was the start of a strong allegiance between the United States and Israel, a close friendship that has grown and strengthened over the years, one that will never be broken.

As the only true democracy in the Middle East, we recognize Israel's struggle to protect its people, maintain peace with its neighbors, and defend the freedoms of a democratic society. As we join our friend and partner in celebration of this important milestone, we reaffirm the bonds of close friendship and cooperation that have been forged between our nations over these six decades.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) who is the ranking member of our Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia.

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

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, 60 years ago next month, the State of Israel, under the leadership of a small band of courageous Zionists declared independence in its ancient homeland. It was promptly recognized by the United States, as the majority leader just eloquently described, and it was promptly attacked by its Arab neighbors. The more things change, the more they seem to stay the same.

Well, Israel has prevailed against long odds, and we celebrate 60 years of that on the floor today and around the United States and around the world next month. It was against those extraordinarily long odds. It was forced again in 1967, 1973, and on countless other times since.

It is important that we note through these trials and travails, Israel remains the only fully functioning democracy in the Middle East. It was founded by Holocaust survivors resolved to overcome the horrors of the mid-20th century Europe's atrocities.

Today, Israel's boasts a vibrant economy with a well-educated populace. Israel's GDP exceeded most major economies in 2007 and it's reached Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development candidate status.

Israel's 60 years on from that historic day next month is an extraordinary

success. But Israel is still in the neighborhood of sworn enemies. In its 60th year of history, all of two Arab countries have seen fit to recognize Israel. And today's leader of Iran threatens with regularity to wipe Israel off the map.

That's why I rise today, Mr. Speaker, to say two things: Number one, I join my colleagues in both parties who rise to congratulate this historic accomplishment of 60 years hence. But I also say that as we commend Israel, we in this body in both parties should look for opportunities to recommit ourselves to her defense. We cannot stand idly by while a gathering menace grows in the region. We cannot stand quiet while some Americans travel overseas and associate themselves with the blood-soaked enemies of Israel.

So today we celebrate, and we celebrate in a spirit of bipartisanship. But I hope as this historic 60th anniversary approaches, we in this body in both parties will look for those opportunities upon which we can come together to rededicate ourselves to the preservation and the protection of Israel as a Jewish state and to Jerusalem as her eternal capital.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN).

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I thank the gentleman and the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee and congratulate him on his leadership along with the ranking member.

Mr. Speaker, this year on May 14 we will mark the 60th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel. We will also celebrate the strong bonds of friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel. Our country, under the leadership of President Harry Truman, was the first country to recognize the State of Israel. And he later said, "I had faith in Israel before it was established. I have faith in it now. I believe it has a glorious future before it, not just as another sovereign nation but as the embodiment of the great ideals of our civilization." We need to maintain the special relationship we have with Israel based on shared values, common strategic interests, and moral bonds of friendship. Today, we honor not only that country's independence but the significance of what Israel stands for.

It represents the centuries-long yearnings of the Jewish people for a homeland of their own in the land of their forebears. The pogroms in tsarist Russia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and the Holocaust under the Nazi regime in the 1930s and 1940s made the idea of a Jewish people having a State of their own where they could feel secure and never again be subjected to such horrors and brutality even more compelling and necessary.

After many years of struggle, Israel emerged as an independent state. It gave refuge to tens of thousands of Holocaust survivors, many of whom had

been languishing in temporary resettlement camps in Europe. The new State of Israel also became the home for Jews from scores of countries around the world. In a very short period of time, Israel developed a strong economy, became one of the leading countries within the world in terms of development, of scientific technology, and academic learning.

Since its creation, Israel has continually confronted hostile forces that threaten its existence, and the United States must remain steadfast in ensuring the security of Israel.

With the assistance of the United States, Israel was able to achieve peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan in the 1970s and 1990s, respectively. These agreements made Israel more secure and greatly lessened the chances for another Arab-Israeli war with those two countries. However, peace negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians, and friendly relations with its other neighbors, have proved to be more difficult.

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

Mr. Speaker, I hope that all Americans will join me in congratulating the citizens of Israel and the entire Jewish community on the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey, a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Mr. SIREN.

Mr. SIREN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 322, to recognize the 60th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel and the bond of friendship between the United States and Israel. Like the United States, the State of Israel has stood as a beacon of democracy and hope for Jewish immigrants all over the world. As an immigrant myself, I understand the importance of the democratic freedoms and values that our Nation holds dear. The United States and Israel share and embrace those values as the cornerstones of a vibrant, democratic society.

Last August, I was fortunate enough to visit Israel for the first time, and I witnessed the importance of friendship that the United States and Israel share. We share the common goals of peace, freedom, security, and prosperity for our citizens and for the region.

I am pleased to help honor the State of Israel on its 60th birthday, and I would urge all of my colleagues to vote in favor of this resolution.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am now pleased to yield 2 minutes to the vice chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and

South Asia, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KLEIN).

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the State of Israel on its 60th birthday. Since its inception in 1948, Israel has shared with the United States and the people of the United States an unbreakable bond of democratic freedom and a hope for security and stability in the Middle East. Sixty years later, in a region where fostering democracy and human rights is a top priority, Israel has continued to be a strategic partner to the United States and a beacon of light throughout the world.

The United States and Israel are natural allies who share democratic governments' belief in the rule of law and a commitment to protect the human rights of all people. My home State of Florida has a particular special relationship with Israel, and I have made bolstering Florida's economic ties with Israel one of my top priorities when I was in the Florida legislature. I worked with others on legislation that opened the State of Florida's Trade Office in Israel, and in my last visit to Israel, I visited our sister city in Israel, Kiryat Bialik, in order to reinforce that bond.

It is with great pleasure that we celebrate today, and coming up, Israel's 60th anniversary, and I join the American people in congratulating Israel on its myriad of accomplishments and achievements. I hope that the next 60 years will bring peace, prosperity, and security to the State of Israel.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the chairwoman of the Homeland Security Subcommittee on Intelligence Information Sharing and Terrorism Risk Assessment, the gentlelady from California (Ms. HARMAN).

Ms. HARMAN. Thank you Mr. Chairman for yielding.

The State of Israel and I are about the same age. And the connection has been deep and constant throughout my life. My late father, a refugee from Nazi Germany, spoke fluent Hebrew and fondly remembered his early visit to Israel, then under British mandate. He returned to Israel many times, though never to his childhood home in Germany.

I, too, make frequent visits to Israel, two in the past year, and am proud of many friendships and recognition as a passionate advocate for the U.S.-Israel security relationship. Many of our joint security programs with Israel, like the Arrow Missile Defense System, continue to be among my highest priorities in Congress. Just a week ago, Mr. Speaker, Congressman MARK KIRK and I urged full sharing of the U.S.-Israel early warning system to protect Israel from the possibility of incoming Iranian missiles.

Sixty years ago, as has been said, President Harry Truman was first to recognize the State of Israel. The United States and Israel have been democratic allies ever since in times of war and fragile peace.

Israel has become a technology and economic powerhouse, a beacon for the Jewish diaspora, a protector of the rights of women and its minority Arab population. And yet, according to an excellent State Department report, anti-Semitism and anti-Israel sentiment are growing. Most of Israel's neighbors do not recognize her right to exist, and Iran's leader actively threatens to destroy her.

Some of Israel's actions are provocative, to be sure. Halting new settlement construction and easing checkpoints could go a long way to ease tensions. Yet as a recent

MiamiHerald.com article points out, a key piece of the Israeli dream remains a mirage. For all their successes, Israelis remain unsure that their country's presence is truly permanent. No other nation on earth faces that fear, and the fear is not unfounded. Israel distributes gas masks and practices bomb shelters drills. This is hardly birthday fare. But 60 years is a milestone and perhaps a miracle.

During Passover week, we retell and celebrate the story of the Jews' exile from Egypt and quest to return to Israel.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CARNAHAN). The gentlewoman's time has expired.

Mr. BERMAN. I yield the gentlelady 2 additional minutes.

Ms. HARMAN. That quest continues. Dayenu. Peace remains illusive, but that for sure is what my father would wish and so do I.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, at this time I am proud to yield 1 minute to the leader on our side of the aisle, Mr. BOEHNER of Ohio.

Mr. BOEHNER. Let me thank my colleague from Florida for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, it's my honor to join Speaker PELOSI in celebrating the 60th anniversary of the State of Israel. This is just the first opportunity for us to honor the foundation of the Jewish State leading up to its anniversary on May 14.

After 60 years, Israel may not be our oldest ally, but there is no doubt that it's among our most treasured. Since its establishment 6 decades ago, Israel has been a pillar of strength, integrity, freedom and, above all else, friendship.

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They're not simply allies by chance. Our friendship has flourished over the last 60 years because we share the same values. First and foremost, we recognize that we would not exist if not for the grace and power of God.

Faith forms our Nation's very foundation and is reflected in everything we do. We value liberty, and recognize how precious it is in a world where it's not only rare, but often under attack. And we recognize the responsibility we have to defend our freedom. That's why we have stood beside our Israeli allies for the past six decades and why we are taking the fight to those committed to destroying the Jewish state and, for that matter, destroying us.

Mr. Speaker, the bonds of trust between Israel and America have never been stronger or more important than they are right now. Our Nation will stand firmly beside our Israeli friends over the next 60 years just as we've done over the last 60. And with a shared faith in God, a respect for liberty, and a commitment to its defense, our friendship will only grow deeper.

May God bless the Jewish State of Israel on this anniversary and all of those that will follow.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time and yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentlelady from New York, the chairman of the Foreign Operations Subcommittee and a very knowledgeable and supportive advocate for the U.S.-Israel relationship, Mrs. LOWEY.

Mrs. LOWEY. I thank the gentleman, the very distinguished, extraordinary Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res 322, which recognizes the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel.

For all of us who gathered around the Passover table this weekend to pledge ourselves, "next year in Jerusalem," the Jewish State of Israel is a commitment of both mind and heart. It is a homeland for the Jewish people persecuted, slaughtered and driven from their land for centuries, and it continues to be a safe haven for refugees from around the world.

One of the most compelling experiences of my life was greeting the Ethiopian Jews as they arrived in Ben Gurion Airport after their dramatic rescue as a part of Operation Solomon in the 1980s. I also will never forget visiting with the children of Yemin Orde in northern Israel. This youth village is home to orphaned, disadvantaged and at-risk children from over 20 countries, and it exemplifies Israel's humanitarian commitment. Israel has offered its technical expertise in search and rescue, medicine, and humanitarian aid in the aftermath of nearly every modern disaster, from Katrina to the tsunami.

Israel is also an intellectual and cultural hub: Eight Israeli citizens have received the Nobel Prize, and Israeli technology has helped countless farmers in dry-weather areas and provided low-cost, life-saving drugs to millions.

Moreover, Israel is a source of stability and a voice of reason in a neighborhood plagued by extremism and violent uprising. Its commitment to democracy and freedom of expression is unshakeable, and it is our most reliable partner in our efforts to combat terrorism, enhance human rights and basic freedoms, and encourage free institutions.

It is simply incredible that all of this has occurred while Israel is under constant threat. That is why I rise today to commend the State of Israel and the

Israeli people on their commitment to democracy, peace and advancement. May the next 60 years bring continued prosperity and the realization of permanent peace for this great nation.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. BERMAN. I yield myself the balance of my time.

As Speaker PELOSI indicated in her own comments, the person that I think all of us in this Chamber miss very much in not being able to manage this resolution because of his own background and his own deep love and commitment for the State of Israel was our late chairman, Tom Lantos. This would have been something that he would have been personally very gratified with, and certainly wanted to join in the trip that the Speaker will be leading to the State of Israel in the next couple of weeks to help celebrate this anniversary. And so I think it's fair to say that everyone in the Chamber wishes that things might have been different, that he might have been here himself to manage this resolution. And we are looking forward to a group that the Speaker will be taking to Israel to actually personally participate in that celebration.

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 322, which celebrates the 60th anniversary of the Jewish State of Israel's independence and reaffirms the friendship between the U.S. and Israel. I want to thank the Speaker and the Minority Leader for sponsoring this legislation, as well as the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee for bringing it to the Floor so quickly.

On May 14, 2008, Israel will celebrate the 60th anniversary of Yom Ha'atzmaut, or the declaration of the State of Israel by David Ben-Gurion in Tel Aviv on May 14, 1948. While this date traditionally celebrates Israel's birth as a pluralistic democracy—the only one in the Middle East—this date also marks 60 years of strong and vibrant U.S.-Israel relations, 60 years of Israel's success as one of the most technologically advanced countries in the world, and 60 years of Israel struggling to find a peaceful solution to the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

The U.S.-Israel relationship that we celebrate today is grounded in centuries-old American regard for Israel as the homeland of the Jewish people. This was so brilliantly discussed in Michael Oren's latest book "Power, Faith, and Fantasy," which describes American support for Israel as the homeland for the Jewish people starting before the American Revolution and being a strong element in U.S. foreign policy ever since.

But while this historic connection is true, Israel's value to the U.S. as a military and economic partner is also incredibly important. For the last 60 years, Israel has been America's number one ally in an extraordinarily strategic region for the United States—she is, in many ways, our "forward battleship of democracy" in a sea of totalitarians, terrorists, and murderous thugs. Just appreciate the fact that the United States spends \$150 billion a year in Iraq in order to have 165,000 U.S. combat troops stationed there. Without Israel—God forbid—the United States might

well need to have 100,000 or more troops stationed permanently in that part of the world to protect U.S. strategic interests.

There are literally hundreds more examples of how Israel has helped the United States since its founding in 1948 in matters of intelligence, improving American military equipment, capturing Soviet and Russian equipment, destroying the Iraqi nuclear reactor, obliterating the Syrian nuclear facility, and a thousand more classified instances where Israel provided literally invaluable assistance to the United States in ways that no other country on the planet could do or has done.

For myriad reasons, the United States could not ask for a better friend and ally in the region than the State of Israel. The Israeli people know they will always be able to count on the U.S. and the American people. Whether or not the Palestinians ever become a true partner for peace to the Israelis—and I certainly hope that they do—the United States will continue to stand by the Jewish State of Israel and make sure it has the qualitative military edge and superior force to defend itself against all enemies.

Once again, I extend my best wishes and congratulations to the people of the State of Israel on their 60th Independence Day and urge my colleagues to join with me in strong support of H. Con. Res. 322.

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be able to speak in support of House Resolution 322, to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the founding of the state of Israel.

For the past six decades, Israel has persevered in its quest to establish a free, open and democratic society—a society that reveres the same values that we do here in the United States. It is for that reason that we have been a stalwart ally of Israel. And it also for that reason that we will be allies for the next 60 years to come.

For as long as it has existed, Israel has been a beacon for the Jewish Diaspora and a lone democracy in the Middle East. It has given refuge to those in search of a homeland and provided a safe haven for people around the world who have fled from persecution.

While it has struggled with its neighbors to find a workable peace, Israel and its people have never ended its pursuit for a permanent solution. Over the years we have witnessed too much bloodshed and considerable sorrow, but we have also seen the enduring faith that peace will reign.

Israel has proven itself capable of monumental achievement and I see no reason to despair that peace with its neighbors will not be yet another of Israel's achievement.

I commend Israel on its 60th anniversary and believe its future is bright. And I continue to hope that its future will be free of the violence of much of its past.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a proud cosponsor of H. Con. Res. 322, recognizing the 60th anniversary of the State of Israel. Israel established itself as a sovereign nation on May 14, 1948. Since that time, it has been a close friend and ally to the United States.

Throughout the beginning of the 20th Century and in the aftermath of the Nazi Holocaust, millions of Jews from around the world found a home in Israel. Serving as the representative for Michigan's 15th Congressional District, my father, John D. Dingell, Sr., was an outspoken proponent for the establishment

of a Jewish homeland and subsequent U.S. recognition of Israel's sovereignty. In my tenure in the House, I proudly followed his lead, encouraging close diplomatic, economic, and strategic ties with our fellow democratic nation.

Since its independence, Israel, the "keystone in the arch of peace" in the Middle East, as my father put it, has dealt with its share of crisis and wars. The United States stood by as its partner and friend and has served over the years as the chief broker in negotiations between Israel and its neighbors. It is imperative the United States continue in these efforts and continue to foster a close friendship with Israel, as a nation that shares our ideals and values. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution today, and honor the 60th anniversary of Israel's independence.

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 322, honoring the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the modern State of Israel's independence.

After the horrible actions of the Holocaust, Israel was established as an independent nation. She has since blossomed into a successful, democratic, and booming nation.

In times of uncertainty over the last 60 years, Israel has been a friend and a strong ally to the United States. I stand here with my colleagues and reaffirm this bond of friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel.

We support Israel and commend the progress made as she continues to work towards peace with her Arab neighbors.

I also commend all our Jewish friends in the United States whose tireless efforts contribute to Israel's success.

I urge my colleagues to support H. Con. Res. 322, reaffirm our friendship, and congratulate Israel on this memorable occasion.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Concurrent Resolution 322, recognizing the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel and reaffirming the bonds of close friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel.

Israel sets the example for the nations of the Middle East, as the only true democracy in that region. For the past 60 years, Israel has been a sanctuary of democracy and pluralism in a region dominated by authoritarian regimes. Israel is the only country in the Middle East with free elections, a free press, freedom of religion, protection for minority rights and other safeguards typical of a free society.

Like the United States, Israel is a country founded by immigrants. Since its founding, the tiny state has absorbed more than three million immigrants from more than 100 countries, including Jews from the former Soviet Union and those forced to flee from Arab countries. A haven for Jewish refugees from around the world, Israel has also reached out to assist Jews wherever they suffer from persecution and has made the successful absorption of new immigrants in society a top priority.

The United States and Israel have formed a unique strategic partnership to meet the growing dangers in one of the world's most volatile regions. To support the U.S. war on terror since September 11, 2001, the U.S. and Israel share vital intelligence on terrorism, weapons proliferation and other threats, at a level of sensitivity almost unparalleled among American allies. Thousands of U.S. armed forces personnel have utilized Israeli training facilities, and Israeli officials have shared "lessons

learned" from their extensive combat experience with their counter-parts at the Department of Defense.

With U.S. help, Israel is able to maintain its qualitative military edge for deterring aggression by its potential enemies. By collaborating with Israel, the U.S. has a reliable, democratic and technologically advanced partner in securing American strategic interests. This partnership includes: bilateral strategic agreements on military planning; ballistic missile defense and counter-terrorism; joint development of weapons and technologies; intelligence sharing; and combined military exercises. The U.S. and Israel have established a cost-effective partnership in the research and development of military technologies and know-how, and in identifying solutions to some of the most challenging technical problems facing both countries' military planners.

Despite its small size, Israel is recognized as a world leader in the quality of its indigenously developed military technology. As such, the U.S. has incorporated Israeli equipment and technology into its armed forces.

It is also important to note that the ties between Israel and the Jewish Community in the Sixteenth Congressional District of Texas remain strong. Through many community based programs, the Jewish Federation of El Paso strives to strengthen this connection through education, through scholarships for trips to Israel, and through financial and spiritual support for their Israeli family. The Federation's upcoming celebration of Israel's independence (Yom Ha'atzmaut) will be a unifying experience that will also help teach our younger generation about the incredible story of Israel.

With my support of House Concurrent Resolution 322, I recognize the historic significance of the 60th anniversary of the reestablishment of the sovereign and independent State of Israel as a homeland for the Jewish people, and I extend my warmest congratulations and best wishes to the State of Israel and the Israeli people for a peaceful, prosperous, and successful future.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 60th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel. On May 14th, 1948, the people of Israel proclaimed the establishment of the sovereign and independent State of Israel.

Over the last 60 years, Israel has built a nation, forged a new and democratic society, and created thriving economic, political, cultural and intellectual life. For six decades now, the United States and Israel have maintained a special relationship and the U.S. continues to regard Israel as a strong and trusted ally and an important strategic partner.

On the House floor today, H. Res. 322, reaffirms Congress's support for Israel and reaffirms the bonds of friendship and cooperation which have existed between the United States and Israel and commits to strengthening those bonds. I too support Israel, its continued stability, democratic principles and its important role in the Middle East by extending the warmest congratulations and best wishes to the State of Israel and the Israeli people for a peaceful, prosperous, and successful future.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel.

Mr. Speaker, just 60 years after its establishment as a modern state, Israel has flourished as a democracy and has proven to be

a close and trusted friend of the United States. I want to associate myself with the remarks of many of my colleagues, especially those of the Honorable Speaker of the House NANCY PELOSI and the Honorable Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs HOWARD BERMAN.

The founding of Israel is a very emotional issue, Mr. Speaker, not just for those who are Jewish by religion and heritage, but for everyone who loves democracy, and who can empathize with the pain of exile, the horror of unfathomable hatred, repression and discrimination, and the yearning for home.

In preparing for this anniversary, I came across a copy of the letter signed by President Harry Truman on May 14, 1948 recognizing the new state of Israel. Its simple words reverberate even today: "This Government has been informed that a Jewish state has been proclaimed in Palestine, and recognition has been requested by the provisional government thereof. The United States recognizes the provisional government as the de facto authority of the new"—and here it scratches out Jewish state and written in by hand are the words—"State of Israel." Signed Harry Truman, Approved, May 14, 1948.

For the past 60 years, Israel has represented democracy in a region dominated by mainly authoritarian regimes. Despite a constant struggle for survival, Israel has flourished as a center of innovation in the fields of agriculture, medicine, technology and alternative energy.

Like the United States, Israel is a nation of immigrants. Since its inception in 1948, Israel's population has grown five-fold. Despite its small size, it has absorbed millions of immigrants from more than 100 countries. A haven for Jewish refugees from around the world, Israel has helped Jews wherever they suffer from persecution and welcomed them into Israeli society. In the 1990s, when the Soviet Union collapsed, Israel absorbed a massive wave of new immigrants. More than one million Jews from the former Soviet Union immigrated to Israel, changing the face of Israeli society.

Currently, Israel's 7.1 million residents represent a mosaic of people with varied ethnic backgrounds, lifestyles, religions, cultures and traditions. As we celebrate Israel's 60th anniversary, Jews now comprise 76 percent of the country's population, while the remainder, mostly Arabs, number about 24 percent. Over 90 percent of the population lives in the urban centers, many of which surround ancient historical sites. Only about 5 percent are members of Israel's unique rural cooperatives—the kibbutz and the moshav.

Mr. Speaker, in 2005, I had the privilege of traveling to Israel with then Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi. It's a visit I will never forget. We were there at Easter. We visited Bethlehem and the holy sites of Jews, Christians, and Muslims. We touched the same stones that had once been touched by David and Solomon. We walked on streets known to Joshua. We were able to walk freely, to talk to people of all stations and professions. We read a free press and heard a range of views, freely spoken, without fear of reprisal.

Mr. Speaker, I have been and always will be a friend of Israel. I celebrate this 60th anniversary of her founding. And I pledge to work with my colleagues to bring peace and security to this very special and unique nation.

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 322, a resolution recognizing the 60th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel.

Mr. Speaker, beyond just being an influential world leader, the State of Israel has been a staunch and ardently loyal ally of the United States over the last several decades. This great nation's commitment to protecting its citizens and securing its homeland are simply unmatched.

Since the founding of the modern State of Israel in 1948, the bond between the United States and our Middle East partner has grown and remained strong. It is incumbent that we as Members of Congress do all we can to make sure that this relationship continue to flourish.

Mr. Speaker, the United States must make every effort possible to safeguard our relationship with the Middle East's only democracy, Israel. Now more than ever, we must diligently advance our shared interests and goals as it pertains to promoting peace and combating terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I would like to congratulate the State of Israel, the Israeli citizens, and the Jewish community on reaching this milestone. This great nation has much to celebrate and be proud of on its 60th birthday.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, today I join my colleagues in Congress in celebrating Israel's accomplishments over the past 60 years. I am happy to be co-sponsor of this congratulatory resolution. However, like many Israelis and Palestinians, I have concerns about Israel's future, its stability, its security and the prospect for peaceful coexistence for both Palestinians and Israelis. One of those concerns relates to the ongoing lack of resolution on the dispossession of Palestinian property and the dislocation of Palestinians after Independence. It must be remembered that about 700,000 Palestinians became exiled. Much Arab property was appropriated. And about 500 Arab villages were destroyed. On December 11, 1948, the United Nations passed Resolution 194, affording Palestinian refugees the right to return to their homes in Israel, or to compensation for their property should they choose not to return. To this day, the mandate of U.N. Resolution 194 has not been fulfilled. Unfortunately, this failure remains as one of the most significant barriers to the realization of a two-state negotiated solution.

I am also concerned for those Palestinians who did not flee and who became Israeli citizens after Independence. According to the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, today there exist 20 Israeli laws which explicitly discriminate against the Palestinian minority in Israel, who constitute 20 percent of its population. In its 2005 Annual Report, the U.S. State Department said that "[There is] institutionalized legal and societal discrimination against Israel's [Arab] Christian, Muslim and Druze citizens. The government does not provide Israeli Arabs with the same quality of education, housing, employment and social services as Jews."

Finally, Israel has a right to security and a right to defend itself. Accordingly, I am concerned that the 40 year military occupation of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem has been and continues to be brutal and unjust and undermines the security of Israel. It is a fact that the government of Israel continues to support the construction of settle-

ments on Palestinian land, perpetuating the consequences of dispossession and exile. Additionally, I am concerned that the government of Israel has increased the number of checkpoints which destroy a viable Palestinian economy and a vibrant civil society. I am concerned that the Israeli government has erected a wall, often on Palestinian land, that divides Palestinians from Palestinians, rather than divide Israel from the West Bank. As stated by Judge Elaraby of the International Court of Justice in his 2004 Advisory Opinion on the legality of Israel's separation barrier, "The fact that occupation is met by armed resistance cannot be used as a pretext to disregard fundamental human rights in the occupied territory." This conundrum of dialectic of conflict further separates Israelis and Palestinians alike from hopes for peace.

H. Con. Res. 322 eloquently states the many reasons why I celebrate Israel's accomplishments and I sincerely wish it a bright future. I only wish to add that, in my opinion, and in the opinion of many Israelis and Palestinians as well, Israel's future will be bright only if it includes an open dialogue with Palestinians, a respect for human rights and international law, and a society built on coexistence and tolerance. Israelis and Palestinians deserve to live in peace with justice and I encourage the United States government to help Israel achieve that so the joy of future anniversaries will be unalloyed.

I support the resolution in the spirit of reconciliation to which we must all inevitably turn, to achieve peace and justice with our brothers and sisters from whom we may be estranged.

Ms. TSONGAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the bipartisan House Concurrent Resolution 322, celebrating Israel's 60th anniversary. In the winter of 1982-83, I traveled to Israel with my husband Paul when he served on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I had heard the passionate concern about Israel's tenuous geographic position from many in the Jewish community who were close to Paul and me—from my two brothers-in-law as well as from Paul's closest confidantes in his Senate office, his Chief of Staff and Legislative Director, among others. But hearing and empathizing are very different from seeing and experiencing. On the trip to Israel, I saw and experienced.

When one stands on the Golan Heights and looks out as I did at the slender strip of land that Israel occupies between her adversaries and the Mediterranean, the primacy of security as the overriding factor in Israel's relations with its neighbors is brought vividly home. The other impression I came away with from that trip was how diverse and democratic Israel is and how important it is for the United States to support this vital democracy, both for Israel's sake and our own. Israel is a model of the values we seek to promote around the world, including her recognition of her female citizens as full participants in all aspects of society. Beyond that, she is a critical ally and strategic partner. We must continue our commitment to the unique relationship we have with Israel in the years ahead.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, let me take this opportunity to share my strong support for Israel upon its 60th anniversary and to remind the House of Missouri's unique connection to the creation of Israel—a critical democratic ally of the United States.

President Harry S. Truman, Missouri's favorite son and the 33rd President of the United

States, was a long-time supporter of establishing a Jewish homeland and worked as President to ensure Israel's creation.

A supporter of the Balfour Declaration, a British statement issued in 1917 that endorsed the establishment of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine, when Harry S. Truman became President of the United States in 1945, he made clear his sympathy for the Jewish people and his concern for the sufferings they had endured during the Nazi Holocaust.

In 1946, President Truman urged British Prime Minister Clement Attlee to allow a reasonable number of European Jews to immigrate to British-controlled Palestine. The governments of the United States and Great Britain created the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry to study the situation. The Committee recommended that the United Nations establish a trusteeship over Palestine, with the goal of reconciling Jewish and Arab interests in the region. The Committee also agreed that 100,000 Jewish displaced persons should be admitted to Palestine. On the eve of Yom Kippur in 1946, President Truman issued a statement supporting these recommendations.

In response to a British request, the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine was created in May 1947. This Committee recommended that the British mandate over Palestine be terminated and that the area be partitioned into separate Jewish and Arab states. President Truman forced a reluctant U.S. State Department to support this plan. On November 29, 1947, the partition plan was approved by the U.N. General Assembly, thanks in large measure to vigorous American support. Palestinian Arabs and Arab governments remained strongly opposed to partition, and efforts to find a peaceful settlement disintegrated.

In February 1948, President Truman's close friend and former business partner, Eddie Jacobson, himself a Jewish person, sent Truman a telegram asking him to meet with Chaim Weizmann, the president of the Jewish Agency for Palestine and the World Zionist Organization. Angered by criticism from some American Jewish leaders, President Truman refused to meet with Mr. Weizmann. In March 1948, Mr. Jacobson walked into the White House without an appointment and pleaded with his old friend to meet with Weizmann. The President relented, and when Weizmann came to the White House a few days later, Truman assured him that the United States would continue to support the partition of Palestine and the creation of a Jewish state.

At midnight on May 14, 1948, the British mandate over Palestine expired and the new State of Israel was proclaimed. Eleven minutes later, by order of President Harry S. Truman, the United States granted diplomatic recognition to the new Provisional Government of Israel. Following Israel's declaration of independence, Arab armies invaded the new nation, and a long and continuing struggle for security began for Israel.

Mr. Speaker, throughout the time I have been privileged to serve in Congress, I have worked to foster a strong alliance between the United States and Israel. I am proud that Missouri's favorite son, Harry S. Truman, was first to recognize Israel and that our Nation has stood shoulder-to-shoulder with that country for these 60 years.

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations and best

wishes to the State of Israel and to her people on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel.

Last August, I had the honor of going on an enlightening and humbling visit to Israel.

As a child, I had heard the stories of Israel from my mother. I pictured busy markets and crowded streets, and men with yarmulkes in synagogues. Visiting the Holy Land was the experience of a lifetime, and I was entranced by the sheer beauty of the living history that surrounded me.

However, as I made my way through the striking juxtaposition of modern and ancient architecture, I worried that I might find a grim reminder of what this cherished place might become after years of fighting.

One mother with whom I spoke told me a sobering story. While driving in Israel with her family, as we do here everyday, a rocket exploded next to her family's car. Without thinking, she jumped over the front seat to cover her children from the shrapnel and smoke that filled the air around them. Protecting her children was all she could think to do—in Israel this is a conditioned response, a learned reflex.

Israelis want to live in peace. Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni told me that Israel is willing to make changes in the West Bank, release prisoners, or give up land if that means peace. Many Israeli leaders share Livni's optimism, as do I, that peace will come to the region.

We must begin to find ways to look beyond comfort zones to stem the tides that divide and find ties that bind. If we can take substantive steps to stop the violence and move towards peace and justice we will have moved mountains.

On May 14, 1948, Israel rose from the ashes of the Holocaust. Over these last 60 years, the American people have formed a profound and unshakable friendship with our democratic ally.

The United States must continue its commitment to Israeli sovereignty, security, and democracy. We face common threats, share common values and we must continue to work together to achieve our common goals.

I praise the miracle of Israel. The history of Israel and of her people is a story of freedom and rebirth that gives hope to oppressed peoples across the world and that will for millennia to come.

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, next month the State of Israel will celebrate its 60th anniversary. Indeed there are many reasons to be proud.

Despite a backdrop of conflicts, boycotts, and constant regional turmoil, Israel has managed to generate a vigorous economy, a vibrant democracy, and a robust military. It has emerged as the closest and strongest ally the United States has in the Middle East and perhaps in the entire world.

Some say Israel's success is a miracle. Maybe that comes as an easy explanation for a land steeped in Biblical history. The reality of course is that the Israeli people don't sit around waiting for miracles—they create them.

From the battlefield of hard-fought wars to the produce fields of flowering kibbutzim, Israelis have accomplished feats many deemed impossible. They built up strong democratic institutions in a region hostile to their values. They turned a chaotic influx of Jews from Europe, Africa, the Americas and the Middle East into a prospering Jewish

homeland that reflects the most varied traditions and trajectories of Jewish history. Time and time again, with the support of the United States, Israelis have taken great risks to seek peaceful coexistence with their Arab neighbors.

One of the issues closest to my heart is Israeli ingenuity in environmental conservation. While Israel's commitment to the environment has moral and economic dimensions, it has also been a security imperative.

For much of its existence, Israel has been subjected to Arab oil embargoes. Today, soaring oil prices are enriching adversaries like Iran that are bent on its destruction. With the price of oil now reaching \$100 a barrel, Iran is reaping more than \$90 billion in revenue a year. Those profits are being passed on to a dangerous nuclear program and terrorist cells in Lebanon, Syria, Gaza and beyond.

The United States and Israel have built strong security ties to address these threats. But we need to explore energy-oriented solutions to help us overcome an addiction to oil that is driving prices even higher. I think Americans can learn a lot from Israel about water and energy conservation, and the use of solar power and other energy alternatives. Working together we can do even more to reduce carbon emissions and reverse climate changes that threaten our national interests.

For many, including my own parents and relatives, the idea of a Jewish state was a dream. Its creation was indeed a miracle. Since then, the U.S.-Israel alliance has only grown stronger. Today, we can look forward to many more decades of peaceful and prosperous partnership.

Congratulations to the Israeli government and the Israeli people on the 60th anniversary.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the people of the State of Israel and the greater Jewish community on the 60th anniversary of their independence.

The United States supported the establishment of the Jewish State in 1948, and our two countries have been the closest of friends and strong allies ever since.

Our friendship is rooted in some deeply shared beliefs. We believe in freedom of religion, in freedom of the press, and in freedom of speech. We believe in free and fair elections. And we believe that extremism and terrorism have no place in the global community.

Since its Independence, Israel has endured unstable and troubling conditions in the Middle East. They have been subject to violence and unwarranted attacks. They have been asked to compromise their borders. They have had missile strikes threatening the lives of innocent citizens on an almost daily basis. Yet, the Israeli people remain united and strong—continuing to stand up for their beliefs and for their country.

Israel is a modern success story. It is the only Democracy in the Middle East. It is the only Middle Eastern country where Arabs have the right to vote for their elected officials and their political leaders. And, it is one of the only Middle Eastern nations without oil wealth that has transformed itself from an agrarian based economy to a high tech economic powerhouse.

Israel's detractors, and those who hide their anti-Semitism behind anti-Zionism, must not and will not denigrate the success of Israel. That is why I stand here today.

I believe the survival of the Jewish state is paramount. I believe her existence, while

small in geographic size, is the one of largest symbols of humankind's continued faith in God, enduring spirit to survive, and belief in freedom and democracy.

And, I believe the United States must continue to stand with Israel and support her efforts to defend her citizens. I am proud to be one of Israel's strongest friends in Congress. And today, I want to join my colleagues in Congress in wishing Israel a hearty *Mazel Tov* on 60 years of Independence.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 322, a resolution to recognize the 60th anniversary of one of our most steadfast and vital allies: Israel.

Although it was created at a time of great international uncertainty, from its inception Israel has been a determined ally of the United States. Its history is a prime example of the strength that a commitment to political liberalism and equality of opportunity can afford even the smallest and most vulnerable state.

Israel is a nation that has weathered constant threats from outside its borders, indeed, that was born out of war and conflict. But despite its harsh beginnings, this inspirational country along the River Jordan has, for over half a century, fended off threats to its sovereignty and to its survival. And it has done so even as it has built a pluralistic society grounded in the highest ideals of equality, representative government, and democratic principles.

Mr. Speaker, a nation as threatened as Israel could certainly be excused for turning inward on itself, focusing on defending its territory and citizens against terrorism, and withdrawing from an international community that has increasingly targeted it with unfair sanctions and biased political statements. It is a testament to the character and inner strength of the Israeli people that they have not allowed their country to do so.

Instead, Israel has repeatedly volunteered its resources, manpower, and experience to help victims of disasters around the world. It has sent humanitarian aid and emergency medical supplies to war zones in Rwanda; disaster areas in Turkey, the Indian Ocean, and along the Gulf Coast; and, to fire-scorched areas in Greece. Israel's national mission is a higher calling than mere survival or self-perpetuation. It is an example to the world of the power of a determined national spirit, a citizenry dedicated to justice, and a set of founding principles that cannot be corrupted even by the constant threat of terrorism.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, terrorism is a serious and ever-present threat to Israel's sovereignty and menaces innocent Israeli citizens on a daily basis. As the number of rockets aimed at Israel by Hamas and other terrorist organizations has increased in recent days, the world has been reminded of the ugly intentions of those who refuse to discuss peace with the only democracy in the Middle East.

By contrast, Israel has demonstrated time and again that it is willing to make concessions to other countries in the name of peace. As a result, it now lives beside its Jordanian and Egyptian neighbors in relative calm.

However, organizations like Hamas and Hezbollah, along with countries like Syria and Iran, have refused to take meaningful steps to forge similar agreements that could begin to heal the regional divisions that restrict the Middle East from reaching its full potential. For

the past six decades, Israel has been strengthening its ties to the land upon which the Jewish people have lived for over 2,000 years. It is the security and identity of this land which Israel has the inalienable right to defend against existential and tactical threats.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that H. Con. Res. 322 recognizes the many similarities between Israeli and American values, ideals, and interests. Our two peoples maintain an equal respect for the rule of law, democratic principles, and progressive ideals that have provided the foundations of our two societies for decades.

I join with many of my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives in highlighting my admiration for all that the nation of Israel has accomplished in the last 60 years. May this resolution before us today serve as the impetus for many more years of Israeli and American friendship, cooperation, and prosperity.

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to join my colleagues in marking Israel's 60th anniversary. I want to express my strong support for House Concurrent Resolution 322, which recognizes the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel, and reaffirms the bonds of close friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel.

On this historic day for Israelis and Jewish communities around the globe, it is imperative that Congress recognizes this important event and once again reaffirms America's ironclad commitment to and friendship with the State of Israel. Given the difficulties facing Israelis in their efforts to secure lasting peace and security, it is essential that the United States and the American people stand shoulder to shoulder with Israel.

Since 1948, Israelis have created a thriving Jewish homeland, overcoming numerous obstacles and challenges. They have also displayed enormous courage and fortitude in the face of unconscionable terrorism, violence and threats to their very existence. In six decades, a democratic and free state, Israel, has risen from the ashes of the Holocaust and developed into one of the most technologically advanced and innovative nations on Earth.

Through all of the hardships, Israel has persevered and joined the United States and our democratic allies by creating a nation based on freedom, justice and human rights. To that end, I join my colleagues in praising the Israeli people, whose nation has become a shining bastion of democracy in a region rife with dictators, extremists and hate.

While Israelis celebrate 60 years of independence, their freedom and security continues to be challenged by terrorist groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah as well as by the leading state sponsors of terrorism Syria and Iran. Unfortunately, Israelis know intimately the challenges that come with protecting their people, understanding that terrorism knows no borders and cannot be justified, qualified or ignored.

As a Member of Congress deeply concerned about the threats posed to Israelis by terrorist attacks, I believe it is critical that the United States support Israel's right to self defense. In that vein, I cosponsored House Resolution 951, declaring America's solidarity with Israelis as they face continuous rocket attacks from Hamas in Gaza. These rocket attacks are a daily reminder to Israelis and their

friends in America of the struggles Israel continues to face.

Mr. Speaker, there is no greater threat to the well-being of Israel and the United States than a nuclear Iran, and America must use every tool at its disposal to prevent Tehran from developing and acquiring these weapons. To that end, I will continue to be a staunch advocate for Congressional initiatives that enhance American-Israeli cooperation and strengthen Israel's defensive capabilities.

In the post-9/11 world, Americans and Israelis are forever linked by the common threats we face from terrorism and in our effort to confront extremists. More importantly, our two nations share a deep commitment to human rights, civil society, freedom and democracy.

These shared values have created an unbreakable bond of friendship, and I urge my colleagues to join me in pledging their commitment to further enhance American-Israeli relations for generations to come.

It is my most sincere wish that the vision of hope embodied in Israel's national anthem, *Hatikva*, may come to fruition and that Israel may soon find a genuine peace that will last *l'dor v'dor*, from one generation to the next. To that end, I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing the 60th anniversary of Israel.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the bipartisan House Leadership Resolution, H. Con. Res. 322, of which I am a cosponsor, to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the State of Israel.

In 1947, the year I was born, the area now known as Israel was about to go through a birth of its own. In 1948, with the founding of the only Jewish state to ever exist in history, Jews found that their new homeland was filled with sand and little water, but it was also filled with great hope and resolve. Following the murder of 6 million Jews in the Holocaust, this small country would soon become a homeland for another 6 million Jews, free to practice Judaism, but still targeted for their faith.

While Israel was formed, Jews all over the Middle East were facing a crisis of their own; Jewish refugees in Arab lands were expelled systematically, under an official regime policy which included anti-Jewish decrees, pogroms, murders and hangings, anti-Semitic incitement and ethnic cleansing. The Arab League's 1947 decree provided a formula for state-sanctioned discriminatory measures, replicated in many Arab countries, in a deliberate campaign to expel the Jewish refugees from their home countries. Unlike the Palestinians, the Jewish refugees were absorbed into their new host countries, mostly by Israel. About 600,000 stayed in Israel and the remaining 300,000 fled to other countries, such as France, Canada, Italy, and the United States. In Israel today, the Jewish refugees from Arab countries and their children comprise the majority of the Jewish population.

This House recently adopted my resolution, H. Res. 185, urging that the rights of Jewish refugees be recognized in any future comprehensive Middle East settlement. We are continually working to ensure that any Middle East peace agreement is just, fully just to all parties.

This is a continual process. From its first day, Israel has fought for its right to exist when it was attacked by its Arab neighbors. Since then, continuous wars have been waged, all aiming to destroy the Jewish state

and its people. At times, mothers and fathers have had to buy gas masks for their children; young children have had to celebrate their birthdays in bomb shelters. Despite this, families have shared laughter on the beaches of the Mediterranean; young couples have danced on the rooftops of Jerusalem. That all of these times have been simultaneous is a testament to the strength and determination for not only the State of Israel, but for humanity.

Following their independence, Israel's people, driven to immigrate for fear of persecution and for their ideological dreams, struggled with basic life, rationing food and living in makeshift shelters. The early immigrants began building the land, irrigating, planting, and educating their children. Working in the sun, Israel's wrinkles began to show the stress, but the outcome can be seen today; flowers and olive trees on the hillsides and universities at full capacity. In cooperation with the United States and other countries, innovations by Israelis in science, energy, agriculture, technology, and medicine have been felt around the world.

Today, the country is flowing with milk and honey, as a nation of immigrants and a home for the persecuted. But it is also facing much hardship. Like the United States, Israel was founded by immigrants escaping persecution and wanting to live in peace. But while Israel remains a sanctuary for Judaism, it remains a dangerous place to be a Jew.

In its 60th year, Israel faces some of its greatest challenges and needs its allies and friends more than ever. The Middle East is still a very dangerous place, and scapegoating Israel is still a very convenient means of holding power for some very dangerous autocrats. Such tactics are deplorable, and we must do everything we can to stop them.

While some Arab states have been working with us to respond to Iran's vicious lies and rhetoric, we must also continue to demand that Israel, our democratic ally, be recognized by these very states. And we must call for the immediate and unconditional release of Israeli soldiers kidnapped and held captive by Hamas and Hezbollah, which is called for by H. Res. 107, a bill I cosponsored.

Indeed, Israel is now at a critical crossroads. We hope for the best, but we remain mindful that peace cannot be achieved unless sincere and substantive acts are forthcoming from the Palestinians. Terror must come to an end, as must incitement. At middle age, and I speak of personal experience, as I am also marking my 60th year, one must take stock of their past and look forward to the future. The Israeli State and its people continue to work to preserve its foundation as a Jewish state with Jewish values, while they live in a region where the very idea of the existence of a Jewish state continues to be challenged. As Israel looks toward the future, integrating its immigrants, expanding its economy, preserving its heritage, and providing foreign assistance and refuge to Jews throughout the world, the United States will stand alongside her in her quest for peace and prosperity.

We hope to learn from each other; Israel continues to fight terror alongside the United States and stands as an example of how to balance civil liberties and security, religious freedom and the expression of religious values in its economic and political structure. Like the United States, the Jewish democratic State has a robust freedom of press that serves to

teach the public and government how to better itself, and an independent judiciary which seeks to preserve the liberties for which it has fought.

The relationship the United States has with Israel is special; we have more in common than we do apart, and we continue to work in cooperation to achieve the broader goals of a peaceful future for our children and grandchildren. As we grow together as democratic nations facing challenging times, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution acknowledging the special bonds of friendship the United States shares with our only democratic ally in the Middle East, Israel. I thank our leadership for sponsoring this resolution and I strongly urge its passage.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in very strong support of H. Con. Res. 322 and to offer my warmest congratulations on the 60th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel.

On May 14, 1948, the people of Israel proclaimed the establishment of the sovereign and independent State of Israel. Since this proud and historic day, Israel has proven itself to be a vibrant democracy and a true friend of freedom. Throughout, the United States and Israel have had a special friendship; an unbreakable bond between nations whose relationship is much deeper than mere allies of convenience.

During its six decades of existence, the Israeli people have faced the most grave threats from hostile neighbors and have bravely defended themselves against repeated terrorist and military attacks. Yet, despite the years of war, terrorism, and diplomatic and economic isolation by enemies far and near, the Israeli people have never turned away from their vibrant, pluralistic democracy that guarantees freedom of speech, association and religion.

Indeed, the modern State of Israel has built a new and dynamic democratic society and created a thriving economic, political, cultural and intellectual life. It is a nation of immigrants, as is the United States, which has benefited from the diversity of its population.

Throughout my career in Congress, I have consistently made a strong and close relationship between the United States and Israel among my highest priorities. As the only true democracy in the Middle East and our closest ally in the region, I firmly believe that we must support Israel as it faces the many serious threats to its very existence. We must stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Israel when it is under attack and support its right of self-defense even when the rest of the world turns away.

As we approach the 60th anniversary of Israel's founding, I am reminded not only of the close strategic ties between our countries, but of how much our two nations have in common. Through Democratic and Republican Administrations, alike, the bonds between us have only grown stronger. As Israel enters its seventh decade, let us resolve ourselves to make security and prosperity of the State of Israel a key priority here in the House of Representatives while we continue to promote a warm and unshakable friendship between the U.S. and Israel.

Once again, I urge my colleagues to support H. Con. Res. 322 and offer my warmest congratulations to the Israeli people on the 60th anniversary of their independence.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, today the House of Representatives voted on H. Con. Res. 322, recognizing the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel and reaffirming the bonds of close friendship and cooperation between the people of the United States and the people of Israel. I am proud to be a cosponsor and strong supporter of this legislation because it pays appropriate honor and respect to our trust partner and defender of freedom and democracy in the Middle East, Israel.

Since its establishment 60 years ago, the people of Israel have turned a desert into a new nation, forged a new and dynamic society, and created a unique and vital economic, political, cultural, and intellectual life despite the heavy costs of seven wars, unrelenting terrorism, frequent international ostracism, and economic boycotts. Through it all, the people of Israel and the people of the United States have shared a special bond. Forged originally in Israel's fight for survival, for freedom and for democracy in a region dominated by authoritarian and military regimes; today that relationship encompasses broad, social, cultural and economic ties as well.

For 60 years, the United States and Israel have maintained a special relationship based on mutually shared democratic values, common strategic interests, and moral bonds of friendship and mutual respect; most importantly, the people of the United States have a special affinity for the people of Israel, and regard Israel as a strong and trusted ally and an important strategic partner. To our ally, our partner, and our friend, I offer my prayers for peace and my congratulations on your 60th birthday.

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Nation of Israel on its 60th anniversary and add my support for H. Con. Res. 322.

The Nation of Israel holds a unique position in the history of Western Civilization, and is supported the world over by millions of Christians, Jews and people of other faiths.

I have had the pleasure to serve as the co-chair of the Israel Allies Caucus in the House and it has been my pleasure to work with members of the Knesset on important issues of concern to both United States and Israel.

During my years in Congress I have come to know and befriend numerous Israelis, and I am always moved by their sincere desire for peace. The vast majority of people in Israel hope for a day when their hostile neighbors recognize and embrace their presence in the Middle East. I am proud that America was by Israel's side in 1948, and I am proud today to highlight this relationship between our countries that is now 60 years strong.

Only two short years ago, the Jewish population in Israel surpassed the Jewish population in the United States, and soon there will be more Jewish people in Israel than perished in the Holocaust. While we will always remember the atrocities of the 20th century against the Jewish people, today we recognize and affirm this moment in history as a triumphant realization of the dream for a Jewish homeland.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 322, recognizing the 60th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel. And I would like to commend Speaker PELOSI for introducing this resolution and for bringing it to the floor.

This is a truly bipartisan resolution, introduced with the support of the leadership of

both parties in the House. This bipartisanship is entirely appropriate, because Americans agree that the State of Israel is a great friend of the United States, and we all celebrate the anniversary of its founding today.

A century ago, Theodore Herzl dreamed of a Jewish homeland, and envisioned Israel as a "light unto the nations." Since 1948, Israel has been that light. I am pleased to join with my colleagues in supporting Israel as it continues to shine brilliantly as a force for progress and hope, not only in the Middle East, but throughout the entire world.

Prime Minister Golda Meir believed that one day there would be peace in Israel, because there are mothers and grandmothers—and let me add fathers and grandfathers—in Egypt, in Jordan, in Syria and the Palestinian territories who also want their children and grandchildren to live in peace. Today is an opportunity to be hopeful about the future of Israel and the prospects for peace—hopeful that we will soon reach the day when children will have to turn to the history books to learn that there ever was conflict in the Middle East.

Today, as we celebrate the founding of the State of Israel, our great ally and friend, we also know that independence is not enough without security. The Jewish homeland must be secure and must be surrounded by neighbors who respect its right to exist in peace and security. Through struggle and sacrifice, ingenuity and innovation, Israel has managed 60 years in a dangerous and unstable region of the world. Let us hope that the conflicts that have marked Israel's first 60 years will subside in the years to come.

Sixty years ago, Israel's pioneers began to revitalize an ancient land. Today, Israelis remain pioneers at heart—pioneers for peace, prosperity and progress. They are once again facing challenges in their homeland with determination and a vision for a better future for their children and for their country.

I congratulate the State of Israel on its 60th anniversary, and I urge adoption of this resolution.

Mr. MAHONEY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel and reaffirm the friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel.

Since its establishment 60 years ago, the State of Israel has rebuilt a nation and developed a new and dynamic democratic society. The Israeli government and its people have created a thriving economic, political, cultural and intellectual life despite the heavy costs of war, terrorism, and unjustified diplomatic and economic boycotts against the country.

The Israeli people have established a nation of diverse cultures with a deep connection to their historical past while at the same time forging their place in today's global economy. Israel has proven its commitment to creating a better global community by becoming a world leader in technology.

On Israel's 60th anniversary it is important to recognize the achievements of the Israeli people and of the Jewish community whose faith and commitment to democracy is a beacon of hope for peace and stability. America's commitment to Israel reflects our support for those nations that share our values of liberty and equality.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 322, recognizing the 60th anniversary of the found-

ing of the modern State of Israel and reaffirming the bonds of close friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel.

First and foremost, I want to commend Chairman HOWARD BERMAN of the Foreign Affairs Committee for his support and commitment to this important resolution. I also want to acknowledge the leadership of my good friend, Ranking Member ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN for her spirit of cooperation on this bipartisan legislation. I especially want to thank Speaker PELOSI and the original cosponsors of this historical resolution.

I also want to congratulate the government and the people of Israel who will be celebrating the 60th anniversary of their great country. We must acknowledge the importance of the actions made by the United Nations during the 1940s to create the Jewish state soon after the horrific atrocities committed by the Nazis during World War II. During the Holocaust, the Nazis murdered some 6 million Jews and imprisoned many more in concentration camps.

Mr. Speaker, Israel has continued to thrive despite constant military attacks, threats of terrorism, and international boycotts that have been placed on such a young government. Being the only democracy in the Middle East, we must applaud their efforts in sustaining a democratic political system. Israel has continued to emphasize the importance of inalienable rights that are much like the U.S. Their protection of individual rights, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, fair and open elections and rule of law are examples of their unwavering commitment to democracy and they remain a model for neighboring countries in the region.

Israel is at the forefront of modern technology and they have taken the lead in research and development from everyday electronics to renewable energy resources. This is important given the global dependence on oil and the perpetual rise in the cost of fuel. Earlier this year, I visited Israel with Ambassadors of the Pacific Islands to the United Nations and we personally witnessed Israel's devotion to research and development for improving the lives of all. Their technological advancements in wind, water, and solar energy as well as desalination and diabetes research are the tip of the iceberg for what Israel has contributed to the global community.

This resolution reaffirms the U.S. support for Israel as an ally and a strong partner in the region. Israel has a unique role to play in the Middle East and has a historical importance to Christians and Muslims throughout the world. We must continue to strengthen U.S.-Israel relations and support their efforts for peace in the Middle East.

Again, I want to take this opportunity to extend my personal congratulations to the people of Israel and their government for their 60th anniversary celebration. May they continue to succeed, and may their future be prosperous. I strongly urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mrs. BACHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support H. Con. Res. 322.

As Israel celebrates the 60th anniversary of the founding of its modern state, I rise to recognize the bonds of close friendship and cooperation forged over the years between the United States and Israel.

Since declaring its independence on May 14, 1948, Israel has been the shining symbol

of freedom and democracy in an area historically rampant with violence and oppression. In just 60 short years, Israel has become the economic leader of the Middle East by proving to its people the rewards of capitalism, while also leading the region in other facets of a free society, including human rights and freedom of the press.

Israel has worked hard to develop friendly working relationships with its neighbors, Egypt and Jordan, setting an example of leadership and peace while other countries around them spread hatred and terror. As the Middle East comes to embrace the liberties and freedoms of democratic societies, the United States will stand steadfast in its commitment to a free Israel.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to recognize and congratulate the success of Israel on its 60th anniversary. It is vital the United States continue to develop its strong relationship with Israel so that many other countries around the world still oppressed and ruled by terror can see the true value of a free and democratic society.

Mrs. CAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 322 and join my colleagues in congratulating the people of the State of Israel on the 60th anniversary of their independence.

In its short 60 years as an independent nation, Israel has made remarkable achievements in all sectors of society.

Despite its tumultuous experiences, Israel is a vibrant democracy that embraces a free press and political dissent.

Israel has also contributed remarkably through miraculous breakthroughs in medicine, revolutionary technological advancements, cultural icons and an agricultural system that is a model for the entire world.

But the one thing Israel has yet been unable to achieve is a lasting peace with its neighbors.

Wouldn't the best way to celebrate Israel's 60th anniversary be a renewed commitment to peace?

We know that peace will only be achieved through a two-state solution.

The Palestinian people's legitimate political aspirations must be realized in order for the people of Israel to live safely and securely.

I have spent time with Israelis and Palestinians and the message they convey is universal.

They just want to live in peace knowing that the future for their children is brighter than the past they have experienced.

It is time for us to focus on our common goals rather than our differences.

It is time to foster the people-to-people programs that connect Israelis and Palestinians on more human levels.

Peace for Palestinians and Israelis is in the best interest of everyone in the region and also the United States.

The U.S. must be active participants in the peace process and direct more resources towards this goal.

Again, the best way to celebrate Israel's anniversary is to secure a safer future for her citizens.

I remain committed to this goal and urge my colleagues to do the same.

I wish Israel and all Israelis a "Yom Huledet Sameach" and look forward to the continued friendship enjoyed by the people of Israel and the United States.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel.

Israel has been a constant friend of the American people and a strong proponent for the spread of democracy.

In my travels, I saw the future for Israel and for the region: The children. It is our moral obligation to current and future generations to support a true path to peace and reconciliation. We must work towards a time free from conflict. The children of Israel and the region deserve the right to hope and dream of a world that is secure and stable.

Today, I join my colleagues in recognition of this important anniversary and look forward to a peaceful role for the U.S. throughout the region.

Mr. PATRICK J. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 322, celebrating the 60th anniversary of the State of Israel.

Last summer, I was fortunate enough to visit Israel for the first time. For me as a practicing Catholic, it was a humbling experience to walk the same streets that Jesus walked over 2,000 years ago. Israel is a Jewish state, but Jerusalem is at the center of three world religions and when I was there, I felt like I was among friends.

I know first hand how badly America needs allies and friends in the Middle East. Having served in Iraq, I understand how important the Israeli-American relationship is. They are our most important ally and one of our great friends. They are our partners in peace and in war. And while we do not shrink from the fight against terrorism, we also recognize that this global battle is one that cannot be won without diplomacy.

The 60th anniversary of Israel's founding is a landmark moment. In her brief history, great soldiers, noble statesmen and women and inspiring leaders have made history by refusing to back down in the face of great adversity.

As we celebrate this historic day, we must also take time to remember those that have fallen in her defense. Brave men like my fellow paratrooper and fellow Pennsylvanian Michael Levin. Michael's story serves as an inspiration to me as he embodied and personified the values that America and Israel hold in common: Loyalty, honor and sacrifice. He left the comforts of America to serve in the Israeli Defense Force—and he died protecting the country and the people he loved. Americans and Israelis alike will always remember his courage and keep his memory in our hearts.

Today is also a day where we must pray for those Israeli soldiers being held captive by Israel's enemies. As a former soldier myself, my thoughts and prayers are with Gilad Shalit, Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev and their families. We pray for their safety and hope for their swift return.

Mr. Speaker, this significant moment is a time where we should also pray for peace and understanding around the world—but especially in the Middle East. We pray that in the near future, Israel and her neighbors will live side-by-side in peace and that no more lives will be lost in this needless cycle of violence and hate.

I am proud to stand with my colleagues in Congress and all of the families in my district as we pledge to always support efforts to maintain Israel's identity as a Jewish state with secure borders. We also commit ourselves to work diligently towards the creation of a viable and independent Palestinian state, living in peace alongside of Israel.

Mr. Speaker, Israel is truly one of our greatest allies and most trusted friends. She stands as a beacon of democratic values in a region of the world where those values are largely absent. Today, we celebrate the friendship that exists between our two Nations and look forward to strengthening and expanding our bond in the future.

Mr. McNULTY. Mr. Speaker, I join today with many of my colleagues in supporting this Resolution celebrating the 60th anniversary of the State of Israel.

On May 14, 1948, the Jewish people proudly stood up and, for the first time in 2000 years, renewed for themselves a Jewish homeland. Today, Israel is the only real and stable democracy in the Middle East, and a true friend to the United States.

In the past 60 years, Israel has built a vibrant and pluralistic society, become a leader in the high tech and renewable energy sectors, produced 8 Nobel Prize laureates, freed and welcomed oppressed Jews from across the globe, and has continued to be a champion of humanitarian causes throughout the world.

Despite war and terrorism, Israel remains dedicated to a lasting peace with its neighbors. I pray for *hatikva*, the hope of the Jewish people, to continue to flourish in Israel, and I am honored to congratulate our friend, the State of Israel, on reaching this occasion. I join you in wishing for many more years of continued prosperity, friendship, and success.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 322, recognizing the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel and reaffirming the bonds of close friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel.

Since its founding, Israel has been one of America's staunchest allies. As the only democracy in the Middle East, a close relationship between the United States and Israel helps ensure stability in that region.

The ongoing Palestinian/Israeli conflict is of great concern to me. The loss of innocent lives on both sides is troubling and tragic. The ultimate solution must come in the form of a true peace between these neighbors so they may live side-by-side. I support policies that promote a peaceful solution to the conflict. I have visited the region a half dozen times and met with leaders in several of the key countries. I am convinced that a path to peace is the only way to provide true security and prosperity for every nation.

Since Israel is our strongest ally in the Middle East, peace in this troubled area is of direct interest to our Nation. Our Nations' strong alliance will help create a lasting peace between the Palestinians and the Israelis and will diminish much of the tension and violence throughout the Middle East.

Born out of the tragedy of World War II and the Holocaust, Israel provides a safe and secure homeland for Jewish people from the entire world. I thank Israel for its friendship with the United States, and look forward to another 60 years of close cooperation between our Nations.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the 60th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel and to reaffirm the bonds of close friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel. The birth of the State of Israel gave the Jewish people a land to call their own and serves as a symbol of hope and

freedom for all groups who have been oppressed.

The creation of the State of Israel followed the attempted extermination of the Jewish people in the Holocaust. Neighborhoods and Jewish communities were divided and families were shattered, but the identity of the Jewish people as a whole remained strong. The faith, hope, and belief in each other and their heritage kept the eternal flame of the Jewish people burning, even in those grave times of despair.

Following World War II, the Jewish people, having lost six million of their own, had nowhere to go—no land to call their own. On November 29, 1947, the United Nations general assembly voted to partition the British Mandate of Palestine and create a Jewish State. On May 14, 1948, the people of Israel proclaimed the establishment of the sovereign and independent State of Israel, and the United States Government established full diplomatic relations with Israel.

Not only has Israel provided so much to the Jewish people, absorbing millions of Jews from countries throughout the world and integrating them into Israeli society, it has also done much to assist other nations facing natural and manmade crises around the world. Israel regularly sends humanitarian aid, search-and-rescue teams, mobile hospitals, and other emergency supplies, to help victims of disasters around the world.

Just as our brave men and women fight to protect democratic values, Israel, too, fights for its right to exist and to protect its citizens. Every day, Israel bravely defends itself from repeated terrorist and military attacks. In addition, it has established peaceful bilateral relations with neighboring Egypt and Jordan and has made its desire to establish peaceful relations with all Arab states abundantly clear.

The American people feel a strong affinity for the Israeli people based on common values and shared cultural heritage and the United States continues to regard Israel as a strong and trusted ally and an important strategic partner. For 6 decades, the United States and Israel have maintained a special relationship based on mutually shared democratic values, common strategic interests, and the bonds of friendship and mutual respect.

At this time, I wish to congratulate the State of Israel on its 60th anniversary and reaffirm my commitment to maintaining the close friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, 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 concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 322.

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. BERMAN. 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.