

Israel's southern border, families have become unacceptably accustomed to running for shelter to avoid rocket attacks from the Gaza Strip. But nothing could provide preparation or justification for the onslaught of missile fire raining down on Israeli towns and cities over the past few months, nor the escalated barrage of the last few days.

Since the beginning of 2012, Hamas has launched more than 900 rockets at the State of Israel; 340 of these were in the past few days alone. In the face of this brutality, Israel, like any nation, has the right and the duty to protect her citizens from unwarranted violence and destruction.

Two days ago, Israel launched Operation Pillar of Defense, a legal, proportionate, and surgical strike aimed exclusively at Hamas' missile stockpile and terrorist leadership.

We watch with deep concern for the people of Israel as these events continue to unfold, and we remain united in our support of Israel's sovereign right to self-defense.

I am proud that the Iron Dome missile defense system has provided a bulwark of support in this tragic and frightening time.

We mourn the loss of life and send our deepest condolences to the families of victims. We reject Hamas' call to violence, pray for the most minimal of casualties, and remain ever hopeful for a return to common peace.

FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN

(Mr. PAULSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend a Minnesota service organization that has, for 25 years, fought against childhood malnutrition in every corner of the globe and in communities across our Nation.

Since its inception, Feed My Starving Children has tirelessly worked to provide lifesaving meals for millions of children, shipping an astounding 600 million meals to individuals in nearly 70 countries around the world and here in the United States. The true effect of the work they do for severely malnourished children is immeasurable.

Several times I have volunteered personally with my staff and packed meals which Save My Starving Children sends to malnourished children in places like Haiti and Sudan. But we're not alone, as nearly 670,000 volunteers have joined Feed My Starving Children in fulfilling their vital mission.

Feed My Starving Children's commitment to fighting childhood hunger for the past quarter century has been steadfast and has positively impacted the lives of millions in Minnesota and around the world. I would like to commend all of those involved in Feed My Starving Children for their hard work, and I look forward to another successful 25 years.

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ADDRESSING CHILDHOOD OBESITY

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, Members of Congress, as Congress goes into the Thanksgiving holiday, we are going to be deliberating what we can do to help our Nation avoid the perilous financial condition we're headed towards. I have a suggestion that in a small way can make a contribution towards saving billions of dollars.

Everyone here knows the problem we have with childhood obesity in America. Childhood obesity is at an epidemic level. We all know young people who have consumed various types of food that has left them in a condition that is unhealthy. And yet did you know that we are actually giving tax deductions out to big companies that go ahead and advertise and market products that contribute to childhood obesity? So what I'm doing is introducing a bill right now that would protect children's health by denying any deduction for advertising and marketing that's directed at children to promote the consumption of food at fast-food restaurants or of any kind of food that's of poor nutritional quality.

In this way, if this bill becomes law, or if it is adopted in the negotiations to try to avoid the fiscal cliff, we can find a way to not only reduce childhood obesity by blocking these deductions for the advertising, but we can also enable our children's health to be put on a better path and our country's health to be put on a better path.

SUPPORTING ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO DEFEND ITSELF

(Mr. HOYER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues today from both sides of the aisle to stand with the people of Israel in support of their sovereign right to defend themselves against Hamas terror. Over the past year alone, Hamas has launched approximately 900 rockets and artillery shells from Gaza into Israeli civilian neighborhoods. My colleagues, think for just a minute: if rockets were coming from Mexico or from Canada, we would not stand for it for one minute.

This week, we saw Hamas fire rockets that struck as far north as Tel Aviv. And today, we have disturbing reports that at least one rocket hit near Jerusalem—the seat of Israel's government and a city holy to Jews, Muslims, and Christians alike. That Hamas would specifically target Israel's Parliament building, as reports indicate, shows the great disregard Hamas has for the very idea of democracy, which does not exist in Gaza.

By strengthening the United States relationship with Israel, this Congress

will send a powerful message to Hamas and all in the region who would cause Israel harm. The right of self-defense cannot be allowed to go unexercised by a government dedicated to the protection of its people. We will stand with Israel. And we also, Mr. Speaker, lament the loss of life of Palestinians. Every life is important, so it is not that we stand insensitive to the lives of Palestinians, but they need to stop the violence and the attacks. Israel has the right to defend itself, and we will stand with them.

REMEMBERING STEVE VERMILLION

(Mr. RIVERA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RIVERA. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I take to the floor of the House of Representatives today to inform my colleagues and the entire Capitol Hill family of staff of the passing of my dear friend and chief of staff, Steve Vermillion. For nearly 25 years, I have known Steve as a friend, family man, and committed public servant. My service in Congress has been greatly enhanced by Steve's invaluable advice and knowledge regarding all aspects of the legislative process. As a 17-year veteran of Capitol Hill, Steve will be dearly missed by the Capitol family for his warmth and his sense of service to this institution and our Nation.

Steve began his service in the House of Representatives in 1986, serving as communications director for then-Congressman Bob Livingston. He subsequently served as a legislative assistant for Congressman James Sensenbrenner, as chief of staff to former Congressman Lincoln Diaz-Balart, and most recently as my chief of staff. An avid and champion rower who also received a degree from the U.S. Naval War College, Steve was recognized for his work throughout his years in Congress with such distinctions as the Congressional Staff Leadership Award from the Congressional Hispanic Leadership Institute.

Steve demonstrated his commitment to service with great dignity these past two years as he simultaneously battled health problems while dutifully fulfilling his professional obligations with excellence and distinction. His family can take great pride in the manner in which Steve honored us all with his unwavering strength of character, his dedication to the work of the American people, and his civic virtue.

His wife, Jennifer; his daughter, Sarah; his son, Joe, and his entire family should know that Steve made great contributions to the United States Congress and to our Nation.

Steve was indeed a man of the House. Those who worked and served with him over the years are blessed to have had the opportunity to share in his life, a life that has left a lasting impact on so many. Today our country has indeed