

EXPRESSING SOLIDARITY WITH ISRAEL IN ITS FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM

SPEECH OF

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 2, 2002

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, this legislation could not have come at a worse time in the ongoing Middle East crisis. Just when we have seen some positive signs that the two sides may return to negotiations toward a peaceful settlement, Congress has jumped into the fray on one side of the conflict. I do not believe that this body wishes to de-rail the slight progress that seems to have come from the Administration's more even-handed approach over the past several days. So why is it that we are here today ready to pass legislation that clearly and openly favors one side in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

There are many troubling aspects to this legislation. The legislation says that "the number of Israelis killed during that time [since September 2000] by suicide terrorist attacks alone, on a basis proportional to the United States population, is approximately 9,000, three times the number killed in the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington on September 11, 2001." This kind of numbers game with the innocent dead strikes me as terribly disrespectful and completely unhelpful.

It is, when speaking of the dead, the one-sidedness of this bill that is so unfortunate. How is it that the side that loses seven people to every one on the other side is portrayed as the sole aggressor and condemned as terrorist? This is only made worse by the fact that Palestinian deaths are seen in the Arab world as being American-inspired, as it is our weapons that are being used against them. This bill just reinforces negative perceptions of the United States in that part of the world. What might be the consequences of this? I think we need to stop and think about that for a while. We in this body have a Constitutional responsibility to protect the national security of the United States. This one-sided intervention in a far-off war has the potential to do great harm to our national security.

Perhaps this is why the Administration views this legislation as "not a very helpful approach" to the situation in the Middle East. In my view, it is bad enough that we are intervening at all in this conflict, but this legislation strips any lingering notion that the United States intends to be an honest broker. It states clearly that the leadership of one side—the Palestinians—is bad and supports terrorism just at a time when this Administration negotiates with both sides in an attempt to bring peace to the region. Talk about undermining the difficult efforts of the president and the State Department. What incentive does Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat or his organization have to return to the negotiating table if we as "honest broker" make it clear that in Congress's eyes, the Palestinians are illegitimate terrorists? Must we become so involved in this far-off conflict that we are forced to choose between Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon? The United States Congress should not, Constitutionally, be in the business of choosing who gets to lead which foreign people.

Many people of various religious backgrounds seem determined to portray what is happening in the Middle East as some kind of historic/religious struggle, where one side is pre-ordained to triumph and destroy the other. Even some in this body have embraced this notion. Surely the religious component that some interject into the conflict rouses emotions and adds fuel to the fire. But this is dangerous thinking. Far from a great holy war, the Middle East conflict is largely about what most wars are about: a struggle for land and resources in a part of the world where both are scarce. We must think and act rationally, with this fact clearly in mind.

Just as with our interventionism in other similar struggles around the world, our meddling in the Middle East has unforeseen consequences. Our favoritism of one side has led to the hatred of America and Americans by the other side. We are placing our country in harm's way with this approach. It is time to step back and look at our policy in the Middle East. After 24 years of the "peace process" and some 300 million of our dollars, we are no closer to peace than when President Carter concluded the Camp David talks.

Mr. Speaker, any other policy that had so utterly failed over such a long period of time would likely come under close scrutiny here. Why is it that when it comes to interventionism in the Middle East conflict we continue down this unproductive and very expensive road?

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES

SPEECH OF

HON. CORRINE BROWN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 2, 2002

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, due to unforeseen circumstances, I was unable to cast a vote on H. Res. 404, rollcall vote No. 126, "Expressing Solidarity with Israel against the fight against terrorism." Had I been present, I would have voted "yes" on the measure.

I am hopeful that President Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell will continue their push to bring an end to the violence and renew a viable diplomatic process between the two sides. I am also extremely glad to see that the administration is planning a Mideast Peace Conference among the regional leaders to discuss the various plans for peace that have been put forward. I am hopeful that the Arab Nations accept this offer, and are ready to sit down at the table to seriously discuss a cessation to the violence.

As a strong proponent of continued U.S. support and friendship to Israel, I am a proud cosponsor of H.R. 1795, the Middle East Peace Commitment Act. In all my years in Washington, I have been a strong supporter of Israel, and was fortunate to travel to Israel during my first year in office with members of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. I remember this trip with pleasure, and was more than impressed with the free and democratic society that the citizens of Israel have built in their short, fifty four year history.

However, for the United States to continue its sponsorship of the Middle East peace proc-

ess, we need a commitment from Yasser Arafat to refrain from terrorism. The basis for U.S. support for peace, including the acceptance of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Palestinian Authority (PA) as diplomatic partners for peace, requires Yasser Arafat's PA to renounce in words and actions, all forms of violence to achieve their national aspirations. Chairman Arafat needs to rein in radical elements in the territories, as it is completely impossible for the Israelis to negotiate with groups that support or commit acts of random terror.

On the other hand, I strongly believe that Israel must make concessions as well to obtain a lasting peace. For instance, Israel needs to continue negotiating with the Palestinian Authority, as well as the surrounding Arab states, if necessary. The United States, as a broker and overseer of the peace process, must encourage communication between the Israelis with the Palestinians, as well as promote a cessation of military incursions in the territories. These incursions I believe, are not productive for the peace process, and will in the end only produce more violence and radicalism among the already uncontrollable Palestinian factions.

Again, I am hopeful that both sides are able to reach an agreement in the very near future to put an end to this seemingly endless cycle of violence, and that the United States will continue to support negotiations and compromise between the two sides.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO MARY ELLEN EPPS

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 7, 2002

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Mary Ellen Epps and thank her for her extraordinary contributions in the Colorado General Assembly. Her dedication to both her job and the people of Colorado deserves the recognition of this body of Congress and this nation. She will be remembered as a State Senator and Representative with the utmost dedication to her constituents and as she moves on in her career, I would like to thank her for her hard work in the Colorado General Assembly.

Mary Ellen was elected to the Colorado State Senate in 1998 after being elected to the Colorado State House of Representatives in 1986, and has served on a number of committees during her tenure. She served as chairwoman of HEWI, and the Medically Indigent Committees, and has been a member of the Judiciary, Transportation, Legislative Legal Services, Adult Criminal Justice, Juvenile Offenders, House Services and Health Care Committees, among others. As an elected official, Mary Ellen has long been an advocate of criminal justice and healthcare. She has effectively implemented a number of programs and legislation to help aid the citizens of Colorado in these areas, including mandatory immunizations for children and automobile insurance penalties for the uninsured.

Not only has Mary Ellen served the community effectively as a member of the Colorado General Assembly, she has also done her part as an active humanitarian. She is a charter

member of the Security Lioness Club, a lifetime VFW member, and a member of the School District #3 Advisory Board long-range task force. She is also an active member of the Optimists Club and has served on the El Paso County Planning Commission. In addition to her humanitarian endeavors, Mary Ellen is the proud mother of three daughters, Marsha Epps, Kelly Hromas and Heather Segura.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that Mary Ellen Epps is a woman of dedication and commitment to her state and its citizens. I am honored to be able to bring her hard work and dedication to the attention of this body of Congress, and to this nation. Thank you, Mary Ellen, for all of your hard work, and I wish you all the best in the future.

HONORING THE GENESEE VALLEY ROTARY CLUB

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 7, 2002

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to join me in congratulating the Genesee Valley Rotary Club on celebrating its 25th anniversary. The Rotary Club will celebrate its anniversary with a special event on May 14.

The Genesee Valley Rotary Club began as a provisional club in March of 1977, through the support of Jack Hamady, Ray Kelley and Jerry Wittemore. The Genesee Valley Rotary Club grew so rapidly through community support that by May of 1977 the Rotary was given a charter at the district conference that was held in Port Huron. Over the past 25 years the Rotary Club has conducted one major fundraiser a year giving the proceeds to local or international projects that they believe give back to the community. In addition to this the members conduct various community projects throughout the year. Many of them work for the Salvation Army Christmas bell ringing campaign, others answer phones for telethons, and some work during the Big Brothers/Big Sisters bowling challenge.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to join me in congratulating the Genesee Valley Rotary Club on celebrating its 25th anniversary. As a Rotary Club scholarship beneficiary I can attest to the unwavering support they give to the community. I applaud their involvement in the Flint area for the past quarter century.

HONORING THE DEDICATION OF THE ALVIRDA HYMAN LEARNING CENTER IN FREMONT, CA

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 7, 2002

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce the grand opening of the Alvirda Hyman Learning Center, an innovative new alternative learning facility donated by the Fremont Bank to the Fremont Unified School District in honor of Alvirda Hyman's dedication to continuing education.

Alvirda Hyman is a living testimony to the power of lifelong learning and a role model for her commitment to community service. Throughout her adult life, Mrs. Hyman has been a strong supporter of education for students from preschool through adulthood.

It was her support of her husband, Morris, in continuing his education that sewed the seeds of a career change that led to the founding of Fremont Bank in the early 1960s. Now one of the most successful family-owned businesses in the Bay Area, the Fremont Bank's 21 branches are a tribute to continuing education's ability to transform individual lives and improve communities.

Likewise, the Alvirda Hyman Learning Center, which represents one of the most generous corporate contributions in the history of the Fremont Unified School District, is the ideal tribute to Mrs. Hyman's dedication to education. When Fremont Bank consolidated its support facilities, a 12,000 square-foot modular building became vacated and available for donation. The bank donated the building to the school district for use as instructional space.

The new facility allows the Fremont Unified School District to provide tremendously improved space for several alternative education programs. It provides the Circle of Independent Learning Charter School a permanent home; it provides the Adult School Parent Education Program space designed specifically for its unique needs; and it gives the State Pre-School Program a permanent classroom within the district.

As part of a full community effort, the building was moved in 20 sections to the Mowry Adult School site. Re-construction began in August 2001, and has resulted in a beautiful new facility designed especially to serve the individual needs of the alternative learning programs housed there. The commercial structure was re-designed into an attractive and functional learning environment, complete with a playground and activity areas. The 20 separate modular units were recombined into a structurally coherent and aesthetically stunning building.

I am honored to congratulate Alvirda Hyman for her remarkable belief in the power and importance of lifelong learning. Her dedication to improving education has assured every citizen of Fremont the opportunity for a bright future, filled with ongoing education.

H.R. 4231—SMALL BUSINESS ADVOCACY IMPROVEMENT ACT

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 7, 2002

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in strong support of H.R. 4231, the Small Business Advocacy Improvement Act. Created in 1976 by Congress, the Small Business Administration's (SBA) Office of Advocacy's primary mission is to protect, strengthen and effectively represent small businesses within the Federal government's legislative and rule-making process. The Office of Advocacy works to reduce the burdens that Federal government policies impose on small business and encourage policies that support the development and growth of American small business.

However, the Office of Advocacy is forced each year to negotiate with OMB and the Administration on the provisions in its budget. In order for the Office of Advocacy to strengthen its voice and credibility for small businesses, it must be independent of any undue interference or influence that might hinder its ability to speak out objectively on behalf of small businesses.

To that end, H.R. 4231 requires that Advocacy's budget request be included in the President's budget submission to Congress each fiscal year without being changed. This will give the Office of Advocacy greatly increased fiscal independence from the Administration and will allow Advocacy to stay true to its core mission of providing support to small businesses and entrepreneurs.

In addition, continuation of service for the SBA Chief Counsel for Advocacy, unlimited authorization for the Office of Advocacy, and replacing the "minority enterprises" terminology to include women owned businesses and veteran businesses in the primary functions of the Office of Advocacy are also important provisions included in H.R. 4231.

I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this important legislation and help improve the support provided to our nation's small businesses by the SBA's Office of Advocacy. Vote "yes" on H.R. 4231.

THE SOCIAL SECURITY WIDOW'S BENEFIT GUARANTEE ACT OF 2002

HON. ROBERT T. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 7, 2002

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, today I am offering a bill to make long overdue improvements in Social Security benefits. My bill would provide higher benefits for an estimated 5 million widows and other elderly beneficiaries. At the same time, it maintains fiscal responsibility by assuring that the bill does not affect the financial solvency of the Social Security system.

Elderly non-married women, including widows, rely heavily on Social Security benefits. Three out of four depend on it for at least half of their total income. And four in 10 depend on it for 90 percent or more of their income.

At the same time, widows are among the poorest of all Social Security beneficiaries. Over the last 30 years, poverty rates among the elderly have fallen from 29 percent in 1966 to 8.5 percent in 2000. But among widows, the poverty rate remains high—at 15 percent in 2000. The incomes of elderly women are very modest. The median income for non-married elderly women, including widows, was about \$12,000 a year in 2000.

The time to address this situation is now. Republicans want to spend trillions of dollars to privatize Social Security, and they want to wait until after the election to do it. Democrats are proposing to invest less than one-twentieth of that amount to improve benefits for the neediest beneficiaries, and we want to do it now, without delay. Democrats want to improve Social Security and help its neediest beneficiaries, rather than destroy it by risky privatization schemes that require trillions of new dollars and deep benefit cuts.

BILL SUMMARY

The bill would create a new "widow's guarantee" for Social Security beneficiaries. Widows and widowers would be guaranteed a