

CONGRESS COMMEMORATES ISRAEL'S 60TH ANNIVERSARY

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Rep. Tom Allen (D-ME)

April 23, 2008

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, on this occasion, I would like to speak in celebration of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel. Israel is our most important and strongest ally in the Middle East, and all Americans should congratulate the Israeli people on this important milestone.

From technological advances in the fields of agriculture and medicine to the acceptance of women as equals, Israel has managed to establish a modern democracy full of innovation. This achievement is only magnified by the fact that at 60, Israel is still a relatively young nation.

I support a two-state solution that provides for the existence of a self-governing Palestinian state with a separate national identity. However, Israel has the right to defend itself against attacks, and we must insist that the Palestinian Government recognize the State of Israel and act and speak out against suicide bombings and other acts of terror.

I believe that the United States should devote significant resources to promoting peace in the Middle East. History has shown that active and consistent U.S. diplomatic engagement can promote progress, while a passive U.S. role can lead to the opposite.

The pursuit of diplomacy with leaders in Israel, the Palestinian territories, and regional partner countries who recognize the inevitability and importance of coexistence and economic integration must continue to be a top U.S. foreign policy goal.

The active engagement of Congress in diplomacy with Israel and other countries in the Middle East is a welcome development. The international community must focus its energy on advancing prospects for a lasting, secure peace in the Middle East.

I congratulate the Israeli people on this important achievement. I am pleased to support this resolution and urge my colleagues to do so as well.

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Sen. John Barrasso (R-WY)

May 14, 2008

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I rise today to acknowledge the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel.

On May 14, 1948, the people of Israel proclaimed the establishment of the sovereign and independent State of Israel, and the Government established full diplomatic relations.

The United States and Israel share a deep friendship and alliance. Our alliance is based on the belief of the United States in Israel's right to exist and our countries' shared values of democracy.

Both Israel and the United States understand the values of life, liberty, opportunity, security, and freedom. Additionally, we both seek to address the common threat of terrorism. We recognize that terrorist organizations have denounced the values of freedom, and we are dedicated to ensuring that terrorism does not prevail.

Throughout Israel's history, the country has strived to build a democratic nation despite severe obstacles. Yet the people of Israel continue to show great strength and perseverance as they seek peace with their neighbors.

I extend my congratulations to our friends, the people of Israel, and I join them in celebrating this occasion.

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Rep. Howard Berman (D-CA)

April 22, 2008

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 invaded 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.

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.

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Rep. Michele Bachmann (R-MN)

April 23, 2008

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.

Rep. Michele Bachmann (R-MN)

May 14, 2008

Mrs. BACHMANN. Mr. Speaker, it was 60 years ago today that nothing short of a miracle occurred. A nation arose in a day seemingly in fulfillment of the words of the Prophet Isaiah. That nation is the State of Israel.

In 70 A.D., Rome sacked Jerusalem, and the diaspora of the Jews occurred. History teaches that when a people are five generations removed from their homeland, the nation ceases. Yet after 2,000 years, Israel was reborn and today has reclaimed its language, people, and has once again become a land flowing with milk and honey.

May God bless Israel. Happy 60th birthday to the State of Israel and many, many more.

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Rep. Shelley Berkley (D-NV)

April 23, 2008

Ms. BERKLEY. Earlier today, this House passed the concurrent resolution 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.

I was not yet born in 1948 when the State of Israel declared its independence, but I grew up and was born into a family where the fact that Israel had been created meant everything to us, and I want to share with you why that is.

I am the granddaughter of immigrants to this country that couldn't speak English. My mother's side of the family comes from Salonica, Greece. Prior to World War II, there was a vibrant Jewish community in Salonica. Over half the population, 80,000 people, were Jewish. By the time the Nazis finished with the Jews of Salonica, there were only 1,000 out of the 80,000 Jews left.

On my father's side of the family, we who come from the Russian-Poland border, the entire culture, a vibrant culture that had existed for over 1,000 years, was exterminated along with most of the Jewish population of Poland.

I grew up hearing stories from my grandmothers about what it was like in the countries that they came from and how happy they were to be Americans, to be Jewish Americans. My family had a profound sense of patriotism and pride in being Americans, but they also, and we also, are Jewish.

And the fact that there is a country uniquely belonging to the Jewish people said something to us about the ability of surviving so that anything like what happened in World War II never happened again.

A couple of years ago, I had the privilege of attending the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. I had never wanted to go to Auschwitz before because of all of the horrors that took place there during World War II: People systematically slaughtered for the very mere fact they were Jewish; starved, killed, exterminated, gassed.

But I did go to this commemoration. And I was told by the late Tom Lantos, my dear friend, a story while we were sitting there. Two weeks before this commemoration of the liberation of Auschwitz, the Israel Defense Force had their own commemoration. And the head of the Israel Defense Force got up at Auschwitz, and he said the following words. He said to the members of the Israel Defense Force who were there participating in this ceremony, We are 60 years too late, but we are here now; and with that, four Israeli jets buzzed over Auschwitz.

That symbolism was not lost on anybody sitting there. If Israel had existed 60 years ago, perhaps hundreds of thousands of Jews could have been saved and kept from the gas chambers.

If I wasn't Jewish and Israel didn't mean so much to me in a highly personal way, as an American, I would celebrate the birth of Israel and its existence. The modern State of Israel has rebuilt a nation, forged a new and dynamic democratic society, created a thriving economic, political, cultural, and intellectual life despite the pain of war and almost constant terrorist attacks, attacked in 1948, 1956, 1967 and 1973, and all the time moving forward and expanding their economy, expanding their way of life, living in a thriving and vibrant democracy.

Our strongest ally, America's strongest ally on the planet is that little State of Israel ; votes with us all the time in the United Nations, supports us, and we, in turn, support it because it is mutually beneficial to both the United States and to the State of Israel . It would be my fervent dream that before the next anniversary of Israel, that there would be a Jewish State of Israel living side by side in peace with a Palestinian state that was also democratic, with a free press, free speech, and a vibrant economy and a way of life where people could reach across those divides and live a better life together. And with that, I yield back the balance of my time with great pride in the 60th anniversary of the creation of the State of Israel.

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Rep. Joe Baca (D-CA)

April 23, 2008

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.

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Sen. Joseph Biden (D-DE)

May 8, 2008

Sixty years after the establishment of the State of Israel, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee **Joseph R. Biden, Jr. (D-DE)** issued the following statement in honor of Israel's Independence Day:

“Israel's 60th Anniversary is a significant milestone that provides a great opportunity for friends of Israel to celebrate its hard-fought achievements and history. Theodor Herzl, the father of the Zionist movement, said, ‘If you will it, it is no dream.’ Despite six decades of often violent assaults against its very existence, Israel's accomplishments are nothing short of extraordinary. From its precarious origins in the aftermath of the Holocaust, Israel has matured into an economically and culturally thriving society, with vibrant democratic institutions, and remarkable achievements in science, technology and the arts. While Israel continues to be the victim of terrorist attacks – be they Kassam rockets or a suicide bomber walking into a holy seminary – Israelis are not deterred from celebrating each day the realization of the ancient dream of a Jewish return to Zion.

“Today, both Israel and the United States share the common ideals of liberty, human rights and human dignity. For the past 60 years, Israel has been our democratic ally and friend. Keeping Israel safe, strong and prosperous has been – and will continue to be – a fundamental moral and strategic commitment. The United States will continue to support Israel's security and right to defend herself.

“As Israel begins its seventh decade, it continues to face serious threats – from Iran, from Hamas and Hezbollah, from rising radicalism in the Middle East. I am confident that Israel, with its friends and allies, will thwart the designs of its enemies as it has since its founding. I am confident that Israel will achieve the peace it has consistently sought with its Arab neighbors. And I remain hopeful that Israelis and Palestinians will find a way forward to a future that includes a Palestinian state and security for Israel. With sustained American leadership, we can help Israel achieve peace and lasting security. Israel's astonishing history tells us that its best days lie ahead.”

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Rep. Judy Biggert (R-IL)

May 20, 2008

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the anniversary of America's staunchest ally in the Middle East, Israel. After 60 years, Israel has proved that a nation that embraces liberty and democracy can flourish in the face of even the strongest adversity. Despite decades of violence and terrorist attacks, the Israeli people have achieved an outstanding level of economic, intellectual, and cultural success.

Among its most notable achievements has been its well-earned reputation as a free sanctuary for millions of refugees from around the world. No other nation in the Middle East has embraced a diverse array of oppressed people like Israel. Over the last 60 years, individuals from more than 100 countries have traveled there and found a welcome home. And, as in America, this great diversity has created a vibrant culture, one that I have enjoyed on several occasions.

In Israel, I have seen firsthand the impressive contributions Israelis have made to the world in areas from scholarship and engineering to cooking and music.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the people of Israel on this historic achievement. Their efforts have created for America a powerful ally and a dynamic trading partner, and I'm confident that our close relationship will remain strong for many years to come.

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Republican Leader John Boehner (R-OH)

April 24, 2008

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.

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.

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Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA)

April 17, 2008

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, it is a privilege to be able to offer my most sincere congratulations to the State of Israel as it celebrates its 60th anniversary of independence. I am so proud that Israel has not only survived, but has become one of the most prosperous and successful democracies anywhere in the world.

The Israeli National Anthem, Hatikvah, means, "The Hope." That is really what the modern State of Israel has been about over these 60 years. Founded after the horrors of the Holocaust, the Jewish people created a place where their faith and history could be secured and passed from generation to generation. In this place, never again would dictators or fanatics be able to systematically persecute, terrorize, and murder entire communities or an entire people.

Hope sustained the Jewish people through 3,000 years of persecution that culminated in the evils of the Holocaust. And for the last 60 years, that same sense of hope for the future has allowed the people of Israel to persevere in the face of continual assaults on its very existence, whether they are in the form of war, terrorism, or assassination.

As Israel celebrates this milestone, I am proud to say that the United States has been by its side, offering support and assistance, and watching it grow into an unparalleled partner in promoting the ideals of democracy, personal freedom, and human rights.

The United States has also tirelessly supported Israel as it continues to seek lasting peaceful coexistence with its neighbors to bring a permanent end to years of suffering and senseless violence. And we will continue to be there to support them in that effort.

When Yitzhak Rabin went before the Knesset in October 1995 to discuss the ratification of the Israeli-Palestinian interim agreement, he said the following:

"Here, in the land of Israel, we returned and built a nation. Here, in the land of Israel, we established a state. The land of the prophets, which bequeathed to the world the values of morality, law and justice, was, after two thousand years, restored to its lawful owners-- the members of the Jewish people. On its land, we have built an exceptional national home and state."

Israel is indeed an exceptional nation state, and this milestone is a great testament to the hope, faith, and perseverance of the Jewish people. I offer my congratulations to Israel on the 60th anniversary of its founding.

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Rep. Dan Burton (R-IN)

April 22, 2008

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 truest 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.

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Rep. John Campbell (R-CA)

May 20, 2008

Mr. CAMPBELL of California. Mr. Speaker, in 1948, the United Nations established the Nation of Israel so that a dispossessed and tyrannized people might have the opportunity to return to their historic homeland.

Now, 60 years later, what does Israel stand for in our world community of nations? It stands proudly as the first democracy in the Middle East and the first multiethnic society in the region to proclaim the rights of fundamental liberty for all of its inhabitants.

Israel's commitment to freedom is evidenced by the fact that over 20 percent of its citizens are Arab, but freedom of worship and freedom of speech is granted to all.

Congratulations to Israel and all Israelis on the first 60 years of the modern era. May Israelis enjoy at least another 600.

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Rep. Lois Capps (D-CA)

April 24, 2008

Mrs. CAPPs. 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.

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Rep. Russ Carnahan (D-MO)

April 24, 2008

Mr. CARNAHAN. Madam Speaker, today I rise to join in those sponsoring H. Con. Res. 322, celebrating the 60th anniversary of Israel's independence.

On May 14, 1948, the people of Israel proclaimed the establishment of the sovereign and independent State of Israel; and just minutes later in the White House, President Harry Truman signed the order so the U.S. would also recognize this new Jewish State of Israel. Since then, the U.S. has had a close and special relationship with the State of Israel, shared democratic values and common strategic interests with the people of Israel and the United States.

The people of Israel have fought costs of war, have fought terrorism, and diplomatic and economic boycotts, and still they remain committed to peace and security in their country and the region.

I have had the privilege to visit the country twice and witness the strength and resilience of the people of Israel. They are committed to freedom of speech and freedom of religion. In this thriving democracy, we need to continue that support and the commitment to the peace process, and I congratulate Israel on the 60th anniversary of their independence.

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Rep. Eric Cantor (R-VA)

April 10, 2008

Mr. CANTOR. Madam Speaker, 60 years ago, outnumbered and under-equipped, the Jews of Palestine beat back five invading Arab armies to win a miraculous victory. Thus, the 2,000-year-old dream of reestablishing a state in the Jewish ancestral homeland was realized.

Since then, Israel has wrought out of barren desert and swamp a vibrant and flourishing state. It has harnessed its ingenuity to join the world's ranks of leaders in science, technology and cancer research. Israel remains a vital ally in the globe's most dangerous region.

And in a post-9/11 world, it is an encouraging reminder that a Democrat state can maintain its humane principles in the face of unrelenting terrorism.

So today, as Hamas rockets continue to rain on Israeli communities, and former U.S. Presidents are used by Hamas as props in their propaganda war, we, in this Congress, stand to reaffirm the enduring 60-year friendship we have had with Israel .

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Sen. Thomas Carper (D-DE)

May 8, 2008

Sixty years ago on May 8th – or May 14th in our Western calendar – Israel declared independence. On this special day, when Jews and Christians, heads of state and others around the world celebrate the founding of the state of Israel, I want to reaffirm our commitment to Israel's security and to the pursuit of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

This is why I cosponsored the Senate resolution recognizing Israel's 60th birthday and reaffirming the close ties between the United States and Israel, a nation I've been privileged to visit as a congressman, a governor, a U.S. Senator and a father with his teenage son.

Current events threaten to overshadow the importance of this Independence Day: Prime Minister Olmert is being investigated, again. Another round of peace talks appear to have stalled, again. Hamas continues to launch Qassam rockets at Sderot and other towns near Gaza. Suicide bombings continue. Hezbollah has increased its military capability, with support from Syria and Iran.

And the leaders of Iran, the most active state sponsor of terrorism in the world, continue to call for Israel's destruction, while denying that the Holocaust ever occurred. These are enormous, complex challenges.

But, after seven wars in only 60 years, Israel has achieved remarkable, some would say miraculous, success, all the while having to fight for its existence everyday. Today is the day to express our fundamental pride in some of these successes.

For example, Israel's population today is 7.3 million, more than nine times the 800,000 who lived there in 1948.

While Israel is the world capital of Torah-learning, it is also among the world's leaders in high-tech, medical and scientific advances. In 1948, there were only two universities; today there are eight. Democratic institutions flourish. Both Jews and Arabs are serving in Parliament. Additionally, Israel has an independent, effective judiciary and a free press.

Today, I rise to join many of my colleagues in reaffirming the United States' commitment to Israel's security.

To the citizens of Israel, our message is simple and clear: We will continue to stand in solidarity with you. We are proud of what you have become.

Let me close with the words of Israeli President Shimon Peres, spoken only a few days ago: "Over the last 60 years, we have something that previous generations of Jews, those who were trampled in the pogroms and who were burned in the crematoria, did *not* have.

The soldiers who fell created a miracle unparalleled in history: The miracle of the state of Israel. For 60 years, they fought in seven wars that were forced upon us, and that we won. They enabled us to establish an exemplary society, to be trailblazers in the world in agriculture, medicine and defense, to be a peace-seeking people, a democratic state and a state that seeks justice."

To that I would add, may it be so for a millennia or more.

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Rep. Andre Carson (D-IN)

April 24, 2008

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.

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Majority Whip James Clyburn (D-SC)

April 22, 2008

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.

[\[TOP\]](#)

Rep. Steve Cohen (D-TN)

May 6, 2008

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, as the State of Israel commemorates its 60th anniversary, I take this opportunity to recognize the longstanding friendship between the State of Israel and the Republic of Turkey.

Turkey was the first country with a predominantly Muslim population to step forward and recognize the Jewish State in 1949. Moreover, for three decades the Republic of Turkey remained the only Muslim country to have full diplomatic representation in Israel. This historical fact alone speaks well for the solid, special, and valuable relationship between Turkey and Israel. It is no wonder this relationship stands on its uniquely own merits--unmatched in the entire Middle East. Historical facts and recollections in the collective memories of both Turkish and Israeli peoples testify this sense of togetherness, standing shoulder to shoulder in testing times.

In recent years, more than 60 agreements have been enacted between the State of Israel and the Republic of Turkey in the economic and military fields. These have not only bolstered the bilateral relationship between the United States and these two close friends and allies, but have also created a legal framework that serves to institutionalize the bonds we have collectively developed. Since Turkey and Israel are the only two countries in the region that have embraced the principles of democracy and liberal market economy, it is easier to develop both the content and the depth of the bilateral relations in a multitude of different fronts.

Also, through a large volume of tourism and cultural sharing, countless citizens of Turkey and Israel, not just the two governments, have developed strong bonds of benevolence, a sense of togetherness, collaboration, and mutual respect.

At a time when dialogue between the parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict is needed, Turkey is once again in the unique position of maintaining positive relations with all the parties to the conflict. This is undoubtedly an asset for the region, and a great contribution to the security of Israel. The Israeli President Shimon Peres and President of the Palestinian Authority Mahmoud Abbas have addressed the Turkish Parliament last year in November and praised Turkey as an important ally in the peace process. President Peres's speech was the first to a parliament by an Israeli head of state anywhere in a predominantly Muslim country.

We also remember too well through what is known as The Ankara Forum, that Turkey has recently sustained Israeli and Palestinian joint efforts to provide support for economic development in the West Bank. Recent reports indicate that Turkey, investing on this ground of mutually earned respect, trust and confidence and taking steps at the request of both parties, has now embarked on facilitating dialogue between Syria and Israel.

Most members of the international community share the goal of a peaceful and prosperous Middle East. The security of all the countries in the region, including Israel, is

dependent on this. Turkey believes that dialogue and cooperation are essential tools in working to make this dream a reality, and it is well equipped to chart its course for the benefit of Israel and her Arab neighbors, all for a peaceful and prosperous neighborhood.

On this note, the 60th anniversary of the State of Israel, I commend and encourage the strong relationship between our two allies, Turkey and Israel, which in fact stands stronger and more robust by each day offering hope for peace in the future.

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Sen. John Cornyn (R-TX)

May 14, 2008

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I want to join others of my colleagues in helping the nation of Israel celebrate its 60th anniversary.

The nation of Israel was founded, of course, on May 14, 1948. I think it is appropriate that we honor this ally of the United States and reaffirm the bonds of close friendship and cooperation between our two countries. This alliance, this friendship, has never been more important to the mutual security and safety of our people than it is today. This friendship, of course, spans oceans and is based on shared values.

I was pleased when Congress recently reaffirmed our commitment to preserving and strengthening that alliance by passing a concurrent resolution honoring Israel and recognizing its important mission and its history.

In the face of common threats, our relationship with Israel today is as important as ever. We have mutual goals in defeating radical Islamic terrorism, fostering Middle East stability, and promoting freedom.

Israel has shown an unwavering conviction in democracy, justice, security, and peace. The nation of Israel and its people deserve not only our friendship and our support but our admiration as well. I extend my warmest congratulations to the State of Israel and the Israeli people for this important anniversary.

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Rep. Jim Costa (D-CA)

May 6, 2008

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, today we have an opportunity to signify an important milestone in Israel's history. We celebrate its 60th anniversary, a truly important time in Jewish history.

My district in the San Joaquin Valley is the bread basket of the Nation, but we have a unique relationship between California State University at Fresno and Ben Gurion University of the Negev. My constituents for years have been partnering with their counterparts in Israel to research water, irrigation technologies and agricultural solutions to problems that face our world.

Fresno State has a long history in working with many leading drip and micro-irrigation equipment manufacturers in Israel, and the university has a long history of exchange of information with the Agricultural Research Organization's Volcani Center in Israel, including exchange programs that have brought research scientists to work on water and salinity issues.

Fresno State continues today to have discussions with Israeli researchers and industry on how to extend a beneficial use of the world's ever shrinking supply of water for the important purpose of feeding our world.

For this and many other reasons, we recognize and celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Nation of Israel.

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Rep. Jerry Costello (D-IL)

April 4, 2008

Mr. COSTELLO. Madam Speaker, I am pleased today to honor the 60th anniversary of the state of Israel and to honor the people and accomplishments of this great nation.

From its inception in 1948, Israel has had a long and painful struggle to sustain itself. On May 14, 1948, the United States was the first Nation to extend its formal recognition of Israel as a state, and our two states have since maintained a strong relationship through shared values and interests. Israel has a great deal to be proud of. It has built itself into a strong democracy with an advanced industrial, market economy in one of the most volatile regions of the world. While facing many challenges, it places a great emphasis on quality of life and leads the region in regards to education, democratic participation, and having a free press. The United States and Israel have had a strong relationship throughout their history, sharing these values. Our own country has benefited from Israel's prosperous economy, and in 1985, Israel and the United States concluded a free trade agreement. Israel's Silicon Wadi, an area comparable to the U.S.'s Silicon Valley, is one of the most robust telecommunications and technology industry areas in the world. As testament to this fact, important American companies have research and development facilities located there.

As we honor Israel's accomplishments, we also recognize the continued security threats the country faces from terrorist organizations and aggressive neighbors. Innocent Israelis are attacked with rockets and suicide bombings while belligerent leaders of other nations call for nothing short of Israel's destruction. The American people and Congress have consistently condemned these attacks on our friends. In the most recent example--rocket attacks from Gaza--the House passed a resolution strongly condemning these attacks, as well as the organizations and states supporting them. We have also provided aid for Israel's defense and for the security of the Middle East and will continue to support Israel's right to defend itself. While the challenges remain, the Israeli people have endured and persevered throughout history, and they will continue to do so, and the United States will remain a stalwart ally.

Madam Speaker, I again congratulate the people of Israel on this historic anniversary and wish them a peaceful and prosperous future.

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Rep. Joseph Crowley (D-NY)

April 22, 2008

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.

[\[TOP\]](#)

Rep. Susan Davis (D-CA)

April 22, 2008

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the contribution of the State of Israel as it celebrates its 60th anniversary as a vibrant and open democratic society.

Madam Speaker, my colleagues have already gone into detail about the accomplishments of the State of Israel, and how Israel has gone through an astonishing evolution since 1948. I echo many of their remarks.

I had the great privilege to live and work in Israel in the mid-1960s and celebrated Israel's 22nd anniversary by taking part in a 3-day walk from the shores of Tel Aviv to the hills of Jerusalem. Now I marvel with every visit at the extraordinary changes that have taken place.

With every visit to Israel and each article I read about events on the ground, I am reminded of the enormous complexities and challenges Israel faces--internal as well as external. So we must ask ourselves, what will the future bring for Israel? How can Israel reconcile the great contradictions that its victories from the 1967 war delivered and address the occupation of Palestinian territories that now threatens Israel's very existence as a democratic state with a Jewish majority?

Israel has sought peace with its neighbors and made some progress toward peace with neighboring Arab states. Today, with Gaza controlled by HAMAS and the West Bank by the Palestinian Authority, Israel still lacks a real partner for peace. However, this does not mean efforts for peace should not continue. and this does not mean that the United States should not play an active leadership role in the region.

We must continue our strong support for Israel's very right to exist while continuing to bring life to the peace process between Israel and its neighbors. Our assistance must be a sustained diplomatic effort, on the ground in both Israel and the territories, so we can maximize every effort for dialogue and concrete negotiations.

Addressing these concerns will not be easy, but I remain hopeful that Israel, her neighbors, and the U.S. can get the peace process back on track and that Israel will continue to thrive as a vibrant and open democratic society.

I join my colleagues in recognizing Israel's 60th Anniversary.

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Rep. Tom Davis (R-VA)

April 22, 2008

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 322. Following the allied victory in World War II, the United Nations voted to partition the British Mandate of Palestine, leading the way for the people of the region to create, on May 14, 1948, the State of Israel . United States recognition of the State of Israel came within hours of Israel's creation. Since that historic day in 1948, the United States and Israel have remained steadfast allies and friends. On May 11, 1949, the Government of Israel was officially admitted as a member of the United Nations.

Since the creation of the State of Israel , enemies of freedom and peace have persistently attempted to undermine Israel's right to exist. The very day after the creation of Israel , rogue Arab forces from surrounding Middle Eastern countries invaded the land given to Israel based on the U.N. partition. Though less than 24 hours old, the nascent country staved off the invasion, and on June 7, 1949, a cease-fire was called, resulting in Israel acquiring western Galilee, a broad corridor through central Palestine to Jerusalem, and part of modern Jerusalem.

Subsequent attempts to undermine Israel's security have all failed, and Israel has become stronger at each turn. In 1956, 1967, 1973, and 1982, attacks on Israel by her neighbors in the region were met with fierce resistance and resounding defeat for Israel's enemies. In 1988, Yasir Arafat, then leader of the Palestinian Liberation Organization--a group which had for decades fiercely opposed Israel's right to exist--officially acknowledged Israel's sovereign right, and announced his willingness to enter negotiations for peace. Although peace talks have yet to produce a lasting accord, discussions between the relevant parties have met with progress. It is my firm belief that peace can and will be achieved in the region. It is clear that Israel's right to exist is fully established. The United States will continue to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with her friend until and beyond that day when peace is established.

Israel is a shining example of the success that a democracy can produce. Because of the freedom that Israelis enjoy, Israel has been at the forefront of innovation. Israeli scientists have made significant contributions to genetics, medicine, electronics, engineering, and the high-tech world. Indeed, the very cell phones that the world over has become accustomed to using were first invented by Israeli entrepreneurs.

Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to congratulate the State of Israel on her 60th Anniversary. I encourage my colleagues to support H. Con. Res. 322.

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Rep. Charlie Dent (R-PA)

May 14, 2008

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the State of Israel, like my colleague just before me.

The State of Israel has held out the promise of hope for many who have endured centuries of oppression. It was established by those who sought peace, but has had to endure perpetual conflict.

From the date of its inception, Israel's neighbors declared war upon the country and attempted to destroy it. Two major wars erupted after the initial conflict of 1948, and even today it must suffer through terrorist attacks orchestrated by those who continue to deny its right to exist.

And yet Israel endures and it flourishes. It has made its part of the desert bloom. It is a model of democracy that the rest of that region would do well to emulate, and it has been a great partner to us in the war on terror, cooperating with us on homeland security matters so that we can be better prepared to counter the kinds of attacks that the Israelis have had to endure for three generations.

I've had the privilege of visiting Israel on two separate occasions, experiences that I will never forget.

And to Israel I say, "Le Chaim."

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Rep. Lincoln Diaz-Balart (R-FL)

April 22, 2008

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Israel as it celebrates its 60th anniversary. Israel is not only a close military ally and trade partner, it is also a true friend of the United States.

The United States shares Israel's commitment to peace and freedom. We share a commitment to democracy, the Rule of Law and we share a culture that honors life--not that glamorizes death. Perhaps more than any other people, Israel understands the insidiousness of evil and the need for good people to remain vigilant against it. We share a great deal, Madam Speaker. It is no accident that the United States and Israel are such great friends.

Despite frequent and cowardly attacks, this young country has withstood every missile, every grenade, every car bomb, every suicide bomber. Israel has weathered the violence of terrorist groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah, which have vowed Israel's destruction and which receive copious funding from Iran and Syria. Israel must combat these constant and cowardly attacks, but rarely does the world acknowledge the restraint shown by Israel in defending itself, trying always to wage this war of survival with reverence for innocent life.

While rockets rain down on Israel from terrorists operating in Gaza, Israel continues to allow the delivery of food and medicines across the Gaza border. Although Hamas seizes humanitarian aid for its own nefarious uses and exploits humanitarian vehicles to smuggle weapons and explosives, Israel continues to allow aid to flow across its border with Gaza. While Israel's enemies purposely target the innocent, Israel responds with tactical strikes against terrorists, their weapons bases, and their command centers to protect the innocent. While the forces of extremism and terrorism continue to barrage freedom-loving people in Israel and around the globe, I am heartened to see that the forces of evil have failed to destroy the basic goodness of those who struggle against terror so that they may live in peace and freedom.

Mr. Speaker, on the occasion of Israel's 60th anniversary, I am honored to have this opportunity to congratulate Israel for its tremendous contributions to the world and to express my profound gratitude for Israel's unwavering friendship with the United States.

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Rep. John Dingell (D-MI)

April 22, 2008

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.

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Rep. Rahm Emanuel

May 14, 2008

Mr. EMANUEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 322, recognizing the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel. Yom Ha'Atzmaut, Israel's Independence Day, marks a day when Theodor Herzl's prophetic words became reality: "If you will it, it is no dream."

Since its founding on May 14, 1948, the modern State of Israel has established itself as a dynamic and democratic nation with a thriving economy, a pluralistic political system, and a vibrant cultural and intellectual center. The Israeli people have contributed greatly as scholars, innovators, educators, and more, and I am pleased to have this opportunity to recognize their accomplishments as well as those of Israel.

Israel has been a vital ally of the United States since the beginning of its existence, sharing democratic values, friendship, and respect and enjoying a strategic partnership. America and Israel shall remain close friends for years to come, particularly as Israel continues to seek peace with her neighbors. H. Con. Res. 322 reaffirms these bonds of friendship and cooperation and expresses a commitment to strengthen these bonds.

On the Jewish calendar, Israel's Independence Day falls on the 5th of Iyar, corresponding this year with May 8, 2008. This day is a joyous time to reflect with pride on the work of the men and women who knew that one day the dream of the State of Israel would become a reality.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to be a cosponsor of H. Con. Res. 322 and wish to extend warm congratulations and best wishes to the people of Israel as they celebrate this 60th year of Israel's independence. I wish them peace and prosperity in the years to come, keim yehi ratzon.

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Rep. Eliot Engel (D-NY)

April 3, 2008

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I want to join my colleagues in saluting Israel on its 60th anniversary. And I want to also salute the strong bond and ties between the United States and the State of Israel . We have shared values, we have shared concerns, and we have had a wonderful, close ally-to-ally relationship for the past 60 years, and we want it to continue for another 60 and way beyond.

I think it's important, at this time, to reflect the fact that Israel was created in the ashes of the Holocaust, and that the United States and Israel , sharing in common bonds, there is also a moral imperative for us to continue to stand by that beleaguered State.

I think it's also important to say that we must not put pressure on Israel to make unilateral concessions in her quest for peace. It takes two to tango, and we need to have both sides make concessions and work together.

Let's remember that Israel left Gaza. Israel left Southern Lebanon. She was willing to do land for peace, but, instead, got land for war. So we have to be very careful and not put pressure on Israel . Celebrate her 60th anniversary. And long may the close relations between our two countries continue.

Rep. Eliot Engel (D-NY)

April 24, 2008

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.

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Del. Eni Faleomavaega (D-AS)

April 24, 2008

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong 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.

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 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.

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Rep. Sam Farr (D-CA)

April 24, 2008

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.

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Rep. Vito Fossella (R-NY)

April 17, 2008

Mr. FOSSELLA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the State of Israel on the upcoming 60th anniversary of its founding and condemn former President Carter's meetings with the terrorist leaders of Hamas.

It is odd that former President Carter would defend his meeting with this terrorist organization as an opportunity to measure their willingness to accept peace overtures. The founding charter of Hamas calls for the destruction of Israel; this should be answer enough for the former President. By acknowledging these leaders the former President provides legitimacy to the terrorist actions committed against the State of Israel.

For decades Israel and the United States have shared a strategic partnership in developing technologies that save lives both on the battlefield and in our hospitals.

Madam Speaker, for the past 60 years, Israel has been a bastion of democracy in a region dominated by authoritarian regimes. As the only country in the Middle East with free elections, free press, freedom of religion, and the protection of minority rights, Israel continues to uphold the values that make it a true Western-style democracy.

Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate the State of Israel on its upcoming 60th anniversary and I look forward to the continued partnership between our two great nations. I hope our colleagues will join me in offering our best wishes to our ally in the Middle East for 60 more years of prosperity.

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Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC)

April 22, 2008

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, as a proud cosponsor of House Concurrent Resolution 322, which recently passed the House of Representatives, on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the modern State of Israel , I wish to take an opportunity to reflect on this truly monumental event. Since the time of its creation 60 years ago, Israel has served as an example of democracy and equal rights for her neighbors. Israel has also proved to be steadfast ally to the United States in a variety of ways, particularly within our country's diplomatic efforts in the Middle East.

Since its founding in 1948, the modern State of Israel has served as a democratic anchor in the Middle East. Like the United States, the Israeli Declaration of Independence protects freedom of speech, freedom of religion, a free press, free elections, and many other tenets of a free society. Israel established a democracy in the midst of a politically tumultuous region and by guaranteeing the basic rights of her citizens, sets herself apart from her authoritarian neighbors.

Israel prides herself on women's rights and equal pay for women in the workforce. The first female Prime Minister, Golda Meir, was elected in 1969, just 21 years after the formation of modern Israel . Women now serve as the foreign minister, speaker of the Knesset, and chief justice of the Israeli Supreme Court. Furthermore, Israel has recognized the necessity of providing equal rights regardless of gender or race and deserves to be commended.

Not only is Israel an example for her neighbors as a thriving democracy, where citizens' rights are protected through the rule of law, she has also been an avid supporter in the global war on terror. The U.S. and Israel are continually working together to develop sophisticated military technology and improve Israel's defense systems and soldier protection. In the interest of global freedom I hope, and am confident that, this friendship will continue in the future.

It is with great joy that I extend my best wishes for the 60th anniversary of the modern State of Israel and wish them a prosperous future.

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Rep. Scott Garrett (R-NJ)

April 23, 2008

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise now to honor an ally who has stood with us in the global war on terrorism. An ally who knows what it's like to fight for peace and for freedom. An ally that continues to pursue liberty even amid increased threats. That ally is Israel.

A millennia ago the Israelites providentially escaped from captivity in Egypt. That event is remembered this week as Jews around the world celebrate Passover. Yet their struggles, of course, did not end after Moses' leadership.

Less than 10 decades ago, Israel was one of the most violent spots on the planet as various governments sought to destroy the fledgling nation. Today, just 60 years after its establishment, Israel has prospered and contributed to the economic, scientific, medical, and agricultural success of nations both in the Middle East and around the world.

I am a proud cosponsor of House Concurrent Resolution 322, which recognizes the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel, and it reaffirms the bonds of close friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel.

Tonight I also want to recognize Israel's achievement in one particular area as well, and that is agriculture. And maybe it's fitting, with Earth Day here, this topic is especially relevant.

Israel is 60 percent desert, and yet scientists have found innovative farming methods that have allowed the desert there to bloom. Not only has Israel shared its newfound knowledge with the United States, but they have also shared technology and techniques with other nations which contain desert regions.

For example, the world's first surface drip irrigation system was developed in a Kibbutz near Beersheba in the 1960s. It was after an Israeli water engineer noticed a hedge that was noticeably different, healthier and taller. The man, Simcha Blass, used his discovery to create an irrigation device that uses friction and water pressure loss to leak drops of water at regular intervals. So today fruits and vegetable growers in many dry areas around the world use this drip irrigation method thanks to Israel.

In addition, scientists in Israel have developed genetically modified, disease-resistant fruits like bananas and peppers and other crops. These fruits and vegetables help expand the world's supply of food and maintain low prices at grocery stores here and abroad. Since the 1970s Israel has partnered with the U.S. in several joint scientific ventures, including the Bi-national Agricultural Research Development Fund, BARD. This group basically focuses on enhancing agricultural productivity.

Israel has also pioneered advances in desalination. It was in Eilat, an arid city located at the intersection of the desert and the Red Sea, and it used to be a really barren settlement

due to shortages in the water supply. Back then visitors had to bring their own water and wash their laundry in buckets. But today residents own swimming pools, plant flower gardens, and relax in shaded, grassy yards. It is due to desalination, and now the city is self-sufficient in maintaining its own water supply.

Desalination, which turns seawater into freshwater by separating salty compounds from water molecules, is now being considered here in the U.S. in places like Georgia and Texas and Florida. And according to the International Desalination Association, desalination makes up more than half of the freshwater used in the Middle East and North Africa, again thanks to Israel.

Clearly, Israel has demonstrated expertise in agricultural innovation. And as representative of the great State of New Jersey's Fifth District, which is home to many small farms, and New Jersey is called the Garden State, I appreciate Israel's agricultural developments and its willingness to disseminate research and to share that across international boundaries.

So I conclude simply by saying I salute Israel on its anniversary and its many achievements, and I thank that nation for making that nation what it is and for making the United States a better country as well.

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Sen. Charles Grassley (R-IA)

May 14, 2008

Good morning. I'm pleased to have an opportunity to share in the 60th anniversary celebration of the founding of the modern State of Israel. The land and the people of Israel have a special place in my heart and my mind.

I have been privileged to tour Israel twice to evaluate for myself the situation in the Middle East. Seeing the area first-hand is an eye-opening experience and a powerful way to learn more about the history of my faith, current events and the future outlook for peace in the region.

Above and beyond my own religious convictions, which validate, for me, the place of the Jewish people in their ancient ancestral homeland, my concern, of course, is for the well-being of all peoples in the region.

For six decades, Israel has been forced to defend itself from repeated terrorist and military attacks, all the while seeking peace with its Arab neighbors.

It is interesting to note that had the Arab nationals agreed to the 1947 partitioning by the U.N. as the Jewish community had, the proposed Arab state would have been larger than the amount of land being debated today!

Since its establishment sixty years ago, Israel has developed an advanced economy and is a leader in research and development. It has developed leading universities. Its advances in agriculture and food sciences have greatly improved agriculture yields and quality. I know Iowa's farmers have benefited from these developments.

The United States and Israel have maintained a special relationship for 60 years. America and Israel are strong allies because we share identical democratic values and common strategic interests. We share the same freedoms of religion and speech, love of democracy and entrepreneurial enterprise. Israel is America's strongest ally in the United Nations, and as the only democracy in the Middle East, Israel is a key strategic ally. The United States must do all that we can to sustain this important democracy.

The futures of our two countries are linked in many important ways. As we recognize the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the modern State of Israel, we have an opportunity to reaffirm the bonds of friendship between our two countries. I congratulate and send my best wishes to the friends of Israel and the Israeli people as they celebrate this anniversary.

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Rep. Al Green (D-TX)

April 22, 2008

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I support H. Con. Res. 322, a resolution recognizing the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel, which occurred on May 14, 1948. 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 . That date marked the success of a continuous struggle for a homeland for the world's Jewish population and laid the foundation for a free and independent state and a symbol of joy and protection for a people that have been--for too long--on the receiving end of oppression, discrimination, and injustice.

Since its independence, Israel has bravely defended itself from repeated attacks. Over the last 60 years, the modern State of Israel has built a nation, forged a new and dynamic democracy, and created a thriving economic, political, cultural and intellectual society. The people of Israel have established a pluralistic, democratic political system, including freedom of speech, association, and religion; a free press; free and open elections; the rule of law; and a fully independent judiciary. Their efforts and achievements have led the American people to feel a strong affinity for the Israeli people based on common values and shared cultural heritage.

This week, Jewish people around the world are celebrating the Jewish holiday of Passover. Passover commemorates the Exodus from Egypt and the liberation of the Israelites from slavery. It is traditional for a Jewish family to gather on the first night of Passover for a special dinner called a Seder. While many Jewish holidays revolve around the synagogue, the Seder is conducted in the family home. It is customary to invite guests, especially strangers and the needy to share with their fellow human beings the story of struggle, poverty, oppression, and survival. I had the pleasure of attending a Seder in Houston with Pastor Kirby John Caldwell and his wife Suzette.

The story of Passover should have a special meaning this year to those who seek to support individuals around the world who suffer from poverty, slavery, and injustice. Let the celebration of the founding of Israel be a symbol to the world of how a people who have experienced oppression and violence can rise to be strong, free and independent. I am proud to support H. Con. Res. 322, a resolution recognizing the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel.

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Rep. Gene Green (D-TX)

April 03, 2008

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the State of Israel on its 60th anniversary and help kick off a series of weekly bipartisan speeches leading up to Israel's 60th anniversary.

As co-chair of the Democratic Israel Working Group, I want to thank my colleague, Congressman Reynolds, and other members of the Republican Israel Caucus for joining us in this effort to honor and recognize the contributions Israel has made during the last 60 years.

I've been to Israel several times and can personally vouch for Israel's contributions to the global community, particularly to agriculture techniques, solar power generation, seawater desalination, academia, telecommunications, and medical technology. In my home State of Texas, we have an economic cooperative agreement with Israel, which is one of the oldest state-to-state relationships in our country. Israel's success in innovative programs constantly serve as ideas for addressing problems facing citizens in Texas.

In the last 60 years, Israel has faced many struggles, conflicts with its neighbors, terrorism on its borders and in its neighborhoods, and led peace efforts by leaving Gaza and southern Lebanon only to be attacked from these locations.

Despite these struggles, Israel has grown from a state of less than 1 million people in 1948 to a state of over 7 million people committed to promoting human rights, protecting the rule of law, and to open and fair elections.

Israel is truly an inspiration to people around the globe. And I would like to again congratulate the Israeli people and join them in celebrating the 60th anniversary of Israel's independence.

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Rep. Phil Hare (D-IL)

May 14, 2008

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the modern State of Israel. Since its founding in 1948, Israel has flourished as the only true democracy in the Middle East, and established itself as America's greatest ally in the region.

Mr. Speaker, last August I had the pleasure of visiting Israel with several of my colleagues, where I met with top officials and I toured the country. While I have many fond memories of my trip, I was particularly moved by the people's steadfast devotion to their homeland.

In the town of Sderot, a constant target of rocket attacks from neighboring Gaza, I met a woman who simply said to me, "We can't move from here. This is our home." Her resilience and perseverance is indicative of the spirit of the Israeli people.

Amid constant threat from surrounding countries and terrorist groups, it is critical that the United States stand in solidarity with Israel as she fights to protect her people.

Mr. Speaker, my experience in Israel is one that I will never forget, and I look forward to the day when Israel can live in peace with its neighbors.

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Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA)

May 4, 2008

Dear Friends in the Iowa Jewish Community:

I will be with you in spirit as you come together to celebrate a remarkable milestone, the 60th anniversary of David Ben-Gurion's declaration of Israel's independence. President Truman responded by recognizing the State of Israel within minutes of the declaration in Tel Aviv.

I am proud to be a friend and staunch supporter of Israel in the United States Senate. Israel and the United States share a special relationship based on shared democratic values and common strategic interests. We will always stand by Israel's side.

It bears remembering that Israel's existence continues to be threatened in a dangerous region of the world. The United States of America must continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with Israel.

On this 60th anniversary, Israel continues to build an advanced, entrepreneurial economy, and is firmly established as a world leader in high-tech research and development. Moreover, Israel has established peaceful bilateral relations with two of its Arab neighbors, Egypt and Jordan. I am hopeful that Israel's dream of living in peace with *all* of its neighbors will soon be realized.

Sincerely,

Tom Harkin
United States Senator

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Rep. Jane Harman (D-CA)

April 23, 2008

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

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Rep. Jeb Hensarling (R-TX)

May 5, 2008

Mr. HENSARLING. Madam Speaker, May 14th marks the 60th anniversary of the modern State of Israel . For six decades, America has stood by Israel's side as her partner in peace and defended her as a beacon of democracy in a region dominated by war, authoritarian regimes, and religious conflict.

In 1948, the United States became the first country to welcome Israel into the community of nations, and we have stood with and supported her as she has defended herself from those who seek her destruction each and every day.

Israel has been our staunchest ally in the Middle East, as well as a full partner in the global war against radical jihadists--individuals who attack our Nation, our children, our values, and the very existence of Western civilization.

The Old Testament teaches us the foundation of Israel's storied past. For three thousand years, the Jewish people have created a cultural, religious, and national identity, a connection rooted in their unbroken ties to the Holy Land. When the modern State of Israel was created 60 years ago, that Jewish heritage was renewed.

Madam Speaker, Israel has a legal, moral, and historical right to exist in peace with secure and defensible borders.

Make no mistake, Israel's challenges are vast. Each day Israelis face the verbal and physical threat of annihilation looming on the horizon. From Tehran. Damascus, and Hebron come unrelenting calls for the destruction of the State of Israel . Meantime, rockets from Gaza rain down on the homes and schools of Sderot. Ashkelon, and other Israeli cities, all the while the United Nations sits idle and echoes anti-Israel , anti-Semitic proclamations. Israel remains a nation under siege.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, today I come to this floor, our own altar of democracy, to celebrate a nation that has turned adversity into triumph and took a dispersed population and made them whole. Like America, Israel is a country of immigrants and has opened its doors to every Jewish immigrant to become a citizen. This story has now united people from over 70 countries and has turned Israel into a society of multi-ethnic communities living side by side with one another.

As the world's oldest democracy, today we celebrate the success of a democratic relative. Israel exists in a part of the world that knows little democracy, yet Israel has displayed the hope and dignity that accompanies rule by the people and personal freedom. Although blessed with few natural resources, this young nation has seen the fruits of its labor pay off through an incredible amount of economic prosperity and cultural creativity.

Yet as Israel works for peace with security, we must not forget that peace can never be achieved by asking Israel to put at risk its sovereignty and the safety of its people.

We must constantly reaffirm our own ties to this democratic society in a part of the world so desperately in need of democracy. This is vitally important to our own security. And we must all realize this.

Thus, I will continue to support Israel and pray she one day will live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force.

I am honored to come to the floor today to celebrate the 60th anniversary of our ally, the nation of Israel.

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Rep. Brian Higgins (D-NY)

April 23, 2008

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 322, recognizing the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel on May 14th. Since its inception, Israel has been a close friend and ally of the United States, promoting democratic values in the Middle East. As we celebrate this anniversary, let us reflect upon the struggles that have come in the past and that are to come in the future. From them we can glean a sober hope for the continued peace and prosperity of Israel and the United States.

Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, was aware of hostility to the goals of Zionism, but sought that Jews and Palestinians live in peaceful coexistence in his newly formed state. Unfortunately, radicalism and resistance for this peaceful goal only hardened. The many conflicts that ensued, from the Six Day War to the Second Intifada, has made life difficult for all Israelis.

Today, Israel is taking serious steps in hopes of reaching a peace agreement with the Palestinians. In the West Bank, Israel is removing roadblocks and evacuating outposts in order to strengthen Palestinian President Abbas so the Palestinian Authority is capable of implementing a treaty. Unfortunately, in Gaza the militant group Hamas is engaged in the broadest and most significant military buildup in its history with help from Syria and Iran. Hamas is restructuring more hierarchically and using more and more powerful weapons, such as longer-range rockets against Israel's southern communities.

The most serious threats that Israel faces are external. Two weeks ago, Iran announced that they had dramatically increased its capacity to enrich uranium with the installation of 6,000 new centrifuges. In doing so, Iran continued to defy not only the United States but the international community as well. The United States and Israel must continue to provide a united front against this regime, while still reaching out to its people, in order to protect the citizens of both countries and prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

With the Arab population in Israel estimated to outnumber Jewish Israelis in the near future, building a lasting peace has never been more necessary to the continued existence of Israel. Fortunately, Israel's economy is strong and growing and the Israeli government is committed to a peaceful solution based upon political realities.

Our greatest hopes lay in the strength of the alliance between Israel and the United States and in the inherent rightness of the democratic values that both countries promote. That is why I am proud to stand in support of H. Con. Res. 322 and celebrate the 60th Anniversary of Israel, and I look forward to the continued role as an advocate for democracy in the Middle East.

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Rep. Rush Holt (D-NJ)

May 14, 2008

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, as we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the founding of Israel, I am proud that the United States and Israel have built a strong, unique, and special relationship.

It took the United States, under President Harry Truman's leadership, only 11 minutes after Israel had been declared a state to officially welcome her into the community of nations. After, President Truman 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 another sovereign nation, but as an embodiment of the great ideals of our civilization."

The creation of the State of Israel was a bold step in May of 1948. The first prime minister of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, once said that "courage is a special kind of knowledge: the knowledge of how to fear what ought to be feared and how not to fear what ought not to be feared." It is from such courage that the State of Israel was formed and from which Israel continues to maintain its vibrant and strong democracy today. We can all learn examples from the struggles that the citizens have endured and the grief they have overcome to remain a democratic outpost in the Middle East.

The achievements of the Israeli people and their government over the past 60 years are remarkable. For instance, when it comes to education, well over half of Israelis aged 20-24 are enrolled in one of the country's institutions of post-secondary or higher education. Healthcare is guaranteed by law--for all Israelis--from infancy to old age. As for agriculture, the country produces almost 70 percent of its food requirements--from land that was once not remotely capable of sustaining crops or livestock. Finally, despite the growing demand for expansion of farmland and industrial centers, the Israeli government has set aside land for 150 nature reserves and 65 national parks throughout the country, with several hundred additional sites in planning. While these achievements are each remarkable in their own right, they are only a sample of what Israel has accomplished in a mere 60 years.

As a lifelong supporter of our most important ally in the Middle East, I have had the pleasure of traveling to Israel. These visits have only reinforced my strong conviction that Israel, like all states in the world, has the right to respond in self-defense to protect her sovereignty and citizens.

As chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations Special Intelligence Oversight Panel, I know that Israel has been a loyal and cooperative partner in combating terrorism. Our country has a lot to learn from Israel and her experiences with acts of terrorism.

As Israel continues to face threats from her neighbors, America must continue to stand with her. Additionally, a strong American relationship with Israel is essential for regional stability. We have a responsibility to help Israel stand up to and prevent terrorist attacks.

Last year, I supported \$2.4 billion in military assistance for Israel, and will continue to support additional U.S. foreign assistance for Israel.

I also strongly believe that the United States must remain actively engaged in ensuring a peaceful settlement of the current conflict between the two parties.

It is essential that the United States become more involved diplomatically to help diffuse conflicts like the one in Lebanon two summers ago and help move the parties to a broader settlement that will defang the militant and terrorist factions and will result in a peaceful Middle East and a viable two states.

Much work remains unfinished. We are all troubled by the daily rocket attacks by Hamas from Gaza against innocent civilians in Israel. Israel clearly has a right to defend herself against these deadly attacks. This has been yet another unique year for Israel, full of challenges that were admirably met.

I am pleased to join with the Jewish community of New Jersey and all Americans in celebrating 60 years of Israel's existence as a beacon of democracy and hope in the Middle East. I look forward to future anniversaries, and to the day when Israel and her citizens can live in peace without fear.

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Rep. Mike Honda (D-CA)

May 20, 2008

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, it is with tremendous honor that I rise today to celebrate the 60th anniversary of a great democracy and our close friend and important ally, Israel. With its strong technology sector in both renewable energy development and high-tech research, Israel is a natural friend of Silicon Valley, which I proudly represent.

Israel's contribution to the high-tech industry, from computer processors to cell phones, and its development of life-saving medical techniques, benefit people around the world every day.

I have fond memories of my first trip to Israel, whose people, history, and culture have left an everlasting impression upon me.

I have supported Israel throughout my career, and will continue to do so. We must continue our democratic partnership with Israel. Once again, Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Israel.

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Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD)

April 22, 2008

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.

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Rep. Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-TX)

April 3, 2008

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, just a few minutes ago, many of us gathered to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I'm always reminded that even in his death, we celebrate his life.

And as I think of him, I think of the 60th anniversary of Israel , for Dr. King was inspired by a land that sought its freedom. And so it is important that we honor this Nation State; celebrate it for peacefully living in the mid east.

And as I travel to Israel , there are more people that I meet that are peace loving, and look forward to a time when they can live alongside of their brothers and sisters in peace. Let us thank them for the history that they have, and as well, what they give around the world.

It is important to take note that Israel has trained those of us who are seeking a greater understanding of how to fight the war on terror, how to have first responders. They have certainly worked to be able to be a friend to the world.

So, again, let me congratulate Israel on its 60th anniversary, and most importantly, the people of Israel for its peace. I might also acknowledge that we extend our hand of friendship.

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX)

April 22, 2008

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong 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 . I would like to thank my distinguished colleague from California, Speaker of the House, Representative Nancy Pelosi and Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Representative Howard Berman for their leadership on this important issue.

Today, Israel celebrates its 60th birthday, or its Day of Independence. This is a very special day for this country, where citizens live in a constant state of unknown, but are united for their love for the state. In addition to birthday greetings, I want to wish Israel the best of luck in its continued attempts to make peace this upcoming year.

Israel was created in 1948; it took President Truman only 11 minutes to recognize the new Jewish State. Since then, it has come to exist as the only true democracy in the Middle East. Israel and the United States have many of the same foundations of government: Freedom of religion, free speech, basic human rights, the rule of law and being a nation of immigration and diversity. Israel has provided a unique opportunity for Jews from all over the world to reestablish their ancient homeland. In addition, it is a

home to many religious sites which are sacred to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam and attracts visitors every year.

Israel provided a refuge to Jews who survived the horrors of the Holocaust and the evils committed by the Nazis which were unprecedented in human history. The people of Israel have established a unique, pluralistic democracy which includes the freedoms cherished by the people of the United States, including freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of association, freedom of the press, and government by the consent of the governed.

Israel continues to serve as a shining model of democratic values by regularly holding free and fair elections, promoting the free exchange of ideas, and vigorously exercising in its Parliament, the Knesset, a democratic government that is fully representative of its citizens.

I want to applaud the Government of Israel for successfully working with the neighboring Governments of Egypt and Jordan to establish peaceful, bilateral relations. I have had the privilege of visiting Israel, and hearing firsthand how the government is taking great strides to ensure peace for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, this important legislation 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. I am proud to join 201 of my colleagues in cosponsoring this important legislation. For these reasons, I support H. Con. Res. 322 and urge all Members to do the same. The United States and Israel enjoy a strategic partnership based on shared mutual democratic values, friendship, and respect. The people of the United States share affinity with the people of Israel and view Israel as a strong and trusted ally. I hope this friendship continues to grow and blossom for decades to come, as Israel settles itself in a firm place on our global map.

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Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)

April 10, 2008

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, it is a special privilege for me today to honor the nation of Israel on its 60th birthday. As Israelis celebrate their country's 60th anniversary, the international community is celebrating with them 60 years of independence.

In north Texas and in the 30th Congressional District of Texas, the Jewish Federation of Greater Dallas, the Jewish Community Center of Dallas, Dallas Chapter of State of Israel Bonds, Dallas Chapter of Hadassah, Dallas Holocaust Museum, B'nai B'rith International, Congregation Beth El Binah, and other organizations have scheduled a series of events to commemorate this occasion.

As someone with a great interest in Israel , Middle Eastern affairs, and world peace, I believe that the political transformations in this region during the past few years have been dramatic. We have come a long way, despite attempts by extreme factions to harm Israel and the cause of peace in the region.

I would like to quote an excerpt from Israel's ``declaration of independence," published 50 years ago as the British mandate over the area drew to an end:

We extend our hand in peace and neighbourliness to all the neighbouring states and their peoples, and invite them to cooperate with the independent Jewish nation for the common good of all.

[\[TOP\]](#)

Sen. Tim Johnson (D-SD)

May 12, 2008

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the 60th anniversary of the State of Israel, which is being celebrated today around the world. Since May 1948, the Jewish state has transformed itself from a fledgling band of pioneers and immigrants to a strong, robust, and democratic state. Israel has been an indispensable friend over the years and remains our greatest ally in the Middle East. One of the world's most innovative and exemplary countries, Israel has lived up to its founding ideal of being a "light unto the nations."

Beset on all sides by enemies, Israel declared its independence under cover of night on the fifth day of the Jewish month of Iyar. The new country was immediately recognized by U.S. President Harry Truman, a decision which continues to make America proud. Still, the surrounding armies immediately invaded. Challenged in a war for its survival, Israel prevailed to enjoy its independence. Israel would face existential threats from larger foes several times again, prevailing each time and steadily growing stronger.

And yet, for 60 years now, the State of Israel has done far more than just survive and persevere. Mr. President, it has thrived.

Politically, Israel has built a sanctuary of democracy, the rule of law, and basic rights and freedoms. Religiously, Israel has built a tolerant society for the Jews, Christians, Muslims, and Bahai who share the Holy Land. Economically, it is a modern marvel, home of some of the most high-level technological advances in the world. In the field of agricultural production, which is so important to my home State of South Dakota, Israel has done the so-called impossible and it has made the desert bloom. The invention of the surface drip irrigation system revolutionized farmers' ability to bring water to their crops, creating a lasting benefit for the entire world.

Congratulations to Israel on 60 years of statehood. Our friendship and alliance with Israel is an extension of our interests and our values, and I look forward to a strong U.S.-Israel relationship for generations to come.

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Rep. Stephanie Tubbs Jones (D-OH)

April 22, 2008

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in celebration of Israel's 60th anniversary of Statehood.

On May 14, 1948, David Ben-Gurion announced to the world that the State of Israel had been created. This declaration was made in accordance with the United Nations Resolution 181 which was passed in November 1947. The creation of two states was proposed, one Jewish and one Palestinian. The new State of Israel established an opportunity for Ben-Gurion and other Zionists to realize a return to the “promised land.”

Although the new state would be tested immediately following its creation, its citizens, supporters and ideals would hold. Even at the conclusion of the first Arab-Israeli War, a constant barrage of state and non-state actors would seek to destroy this government. Sixty years later this battle continues, as the entire world copes with the challenging yet necessary task of respecting the beliefs of others and protecting the natural rights of all mankind.

The “land of milk and honey” is significant not only for its ability to offer refuge to a people who have been persecuted for the past two millennia, but to also demonstrate the global communities' determination to right wrongs and to help their fellow man. Today there are close to 7 million individuals who inhabit Israel. Although the vast majority of those persons happen to be Jewish, there are also people who follow the Christian and Arab faiths. While there happens to be conflict currently between the Jewish and Muslim populations, the possibility of Israelis and Palestinians coexisting in peace is still feasible.

As a Member of Congress, I have been blessed with the opportunity to visit Israel, to talk with those that live there and to see the success that it has become. There exists within the Eleventh Congressional District of Ohio and across the United States, a strong community of individuals who are committed to supporting our close ally. I am proud to consider myself a fellow advocate and look forward to supporting the State of Israel in the future.

May the people and the government of Israel continue to enjoy their statehood and be blessed with peace.

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Rep. Ron Klein (D-FL)

April 24, 2008

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.

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Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-OH)

April 24, 2008

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 settlements 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 a 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.

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Rep. Doug Lamborn (R-CO)

May 20, 2008

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Israel's 60th anniversary and the progress it has made as a nation.

In May, 1948, after almost 2,000 years of exile, Jews returned to their homeland and made the State of Israel a reality. Israel is a model of democracy in action and a pillar of humanity in the Middle East. Its civil liberties are guaranteed by laws, and its laws are protected by an independent judiciary.

Since its founding in 1948, Israel has been constantly aware of the necessity of a strong defense. Wars, conflicts, and terrorism have taught it the importance of utilizing innovative technologies to protect democracy.

The U.S. was the first nation to recognize Israel as a state 60 years ago. Now our countries continue to cooperate in the fight against global terrorism and work together to create and maintain a strong ballistic missile system.

This month we celebrate how far Israel has journeyed since its birth. It is a model of human rights, democracy, and freedom. We are proud to call Israel an ally.

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Rep. Nick Lampson (D-TX)

April 24, 2008

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.

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Rep. Tom Latham (R-IA)

April 29, 2008

Mr. Mark Finkelstein
Director of Community Relations
Jewish Federation of Greater Des Moines
910 Polk Blvd
Des Moines, IA 50312

Dear Mr. Finkelstein:

Although prior commitments unfortunately have prevented me from attending, I would like to thank the Jewish Federation of Greater Des Moines for inviting me to be a part of this special celebration of the 60th Anniversary of Israel. The Jewish community in Iowa as well as across America is of course integral to the fabric of our great nation, and I am honored to serve supporters of the Jewish Federation in my capacity as a U.S. Congressman. As a strong supporter of the close and longstanding relationship between Israel and the United States, I also offer my best wishes to Israel and its many supporters worldwide on this notable occasion.

I thank the Jewish Federation for its continued efforts to promote a strong and lasting relationship between the U.S. and Israel, and I look forward to future opportunities to lend my support to Israel as we collectively strive for a prosperous and more peaceful Middle East and world.

Sincerely,

Tom Latham
Member of Congress

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Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA)

April 22, 2008

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Israel and its people on the 60th anniversary of its founding and offer my sincere hope that the seventh decennial of its existence will usher in a period of lasting peace between it and its neighbors.

We all agree that Israel and the Israeli people have accomplished much during its 60 years. As this resolution points out, Israel has forged a politically diverse and dynamic society with a thriving economy and vibrant cultural and intellectual life. It has produced 8 Nobel Prize winners and has provided sanctuary for millions of Jews throughout the world.

I have visited Israel on more than one occasion and I was most impressed by its commitment to many of the democratic principles we cherish here in the United States. As the resolution points out, there are many common bonds between the United States and Israel.

So, Mr. Speaker, as a strong supporter of the Israeli people and Israel's right to exist, I agree we should take time to recognize Israel on this momentous occasion. I also believe, however, that we must take this opportunity to encourage Israel and all the parties involved to find a workable solution to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and to redouble efforts on the path to peace.

For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I support H. Con. Res. 322, which recognizes the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel.

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Rep. John Lewis (D-GA)

April 22, 2008

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues as a proud original cosponsor of this important resolution.

I congratulate our brothers and sisters in Israel on this important milestone--the 60th anniversary of becoming an independent nation. From the first hour on that first day, Israel and the United States began a relationship based on democratic values, friendship and respect that continues to this day.

Over the years, Israel has developed into a thriving society, a world leader, and an active democracy. Welcoming people from Russia to Ethiopia, Israel has become a refuge for those persecuted for thousands of years.

In fact, many of my constituents have traveled or lived in Israel . In 2005, we made history when Atlanta became the first U.S. city in the Southeast to have non-stop direct flights to Tel Aviv.

I, too, have a personal connection with the people of Israel --like me, they are descended from survivors. The atrocities of the holocaust must never be forgotten. Every day, we must recommit ourselves to never allow this history to be repeated. We have overcome so many trials and hardships, but there is still so much farther to go.

It is my hope that one day, together we will be able to celebrate peaceful relationships and coexistence with all the countries in the Middle East. And I hope that this peace comes long before another 60 years.

Mr. Speaker, I extend my deepest congratulations to the Israeli people on this historic day.

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Rep. Daniel Lipinski (D-IL)

May 14, 2008

Mr. LIPINSKI. Madam Speaker, sixty years ago today, as the world was still recovering from the horrors of the Second World War and the devastation of the Holocaust, the modern state of Israel was founded.

In the sixty years since its founding, Israel has overcome numerous security threats while serving as a model democracy in the Middle East and a beacon of freedom in the region. Importantly, Israel has also been one of America's strongest and most steadfast allies.

In fact, the strong relationship between our two countries dates back to Israel's very founding.

Within eleven minutes of Israel's declaration of Independence, President Harry Truman formally recognized the new nation and established America as Israel's first and closest friend.

Today, the strong partnership between our two countries continues through commerce, educational links, familial ties, and joint efforts to stabilize and bring peace to the Middle East.

So as we mark this important date and pay tribute to Israel's founding, let us also recommit to a continued friendship and partnership with Israel and a renewed dedication to securing a lasting peace in the Middle East.

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Rep. Nita Lowey (D-NY)

April 22, 2008

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.

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Rep. Edward Markey (D-MA)

April 24, 2008

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.

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Rep. Tim Mahoney (D-FL)

April 24, 2008

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.

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Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY)

April 22, 2008

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, today we recognize the 60th anniversary of the creation of Israel . On May 14, 1948, thousands of volunteer Yishuv fighters led by David Ben-Gurion celebrated as the Jewish Agency declared Israel an independent nation in accordance with the 1947 U.N. partition plan. The difficult months of fighting ahead were only eased by the knowledge that the volunteer army was fighting for its new and independent nation. U.S. President Harry S. Truman immediately recognized Israel as a sovereign and independent nation forging a bond between our two great democracies that has been one of mutual support and friendship ever since.

The people of Israel have, over the 60 years since Israel has become an independent state, established a vibrant 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. Israel has developed an advanced, entrepreneurial economy, and is among the world's leaders in the high-tech industry. Israel has also bravely defended itself from numerous military attacks and acts of terrorism.

I stand with my colleagues and with my nation to celebrate the 60 years of a special relationship based on mutually shared democratic values, common strategic interests, and bonds of friendship and mutual respect. I am a cosponsor of H. Con. Res. 322 that was introduced by Speaker PELOSI to celebrate this important milestone. On this occasion I also want to highlight the efforts that Israel and its leaders have made to make a lasting peace with its neighbors. I would like to extend my warmest congratulations and best wishes to the Israeli people for a peaceful, prosperous, and successful future.

[\[TOP\]](#)

Rep. Doris Matsui (D-CA)

April 24, 2008

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.

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Rep. Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY)

April 23, 2008

Mrs. McCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 322, a resolution celebrating Israel's 60th anniversary. I am proud to have been a cosponsor of this resolution.

Israel proclaimed its statehood on May 14, 1948. On its first day of existence, the armies of five neighboring Arab countries declared war on Israel. The war for independence lasted about a year and resulted in armistice separate agreements, but not before 6,000 Israeli lives were lost.

Within 8 months of independence and before the war ended, Israel held its first national elections. Eighty-five percent of all eligible voters cast their ballots to create the first 120-seat Knesset or Parliament.

A state founded by refugees of and survivors of religious persecution, Israel has been and continues to be one of America's closest and most consistent allies.

This desert nation exists in a region that is, unfortunately, as steeped in violence as it is rich in history and tradition. We must do all that we can to ensure the security of the State of Israel and its people. Just as the United States is vital to the survival of Israel, I believe Israel is also vital to the survival of the United States. Our countries are linked together on so many levels.

Unfortunately, today, Israel has new and increasing threats to its security. Palestinian rockets have been fired from Gaza and hit Israeli communities on an almost daily basis. More than 200,000 Israeli citizens are within range of these Palestinian rockets. One of the saddest aspects of the terrorism situation in Israel is that it grabs the newspaper headlines and distracts the world from seeing the many advances made by Israel in democracy and human rights, science, agriculture, transportation, and so many other areas.

Despite nearly impossible odds, Israel's will to survive and her people's dogged determination have resulted in the development of a thriving democracy in one of the globe's least democratic regions. In fact, in only 60 years Israel has grown into a mature democracy that has produced some of the finest thinkers, scientists and entrepreneurs of the modern era.

We must never forget the conditions that, in many respects, laid the foundation for the creation of the State of Israel. After one of the most horrific atrocities in human history, the Holocaust, Israel was established as a home to a nearly decimated people. It is often said that we must ``never forget" the horrors and the lessons of the Holocaust. And since April is Holocaust Remembrance month, this is an appropriate time to reaffirm our unyieldingly strong obligation to our friend and ally and vow to ``never forget" our commitment to Israel.

The United States and the all of the nations of the world have a moral responsibility to ensure and support the existence of the State of Israel.

H. Con. Res. 322 recognizes the historical significance of Israel's 60th anniversary, supports Israel as it continues to pursue peace with its neighbors, commends the people of Israel for helping to create a thriving democracy, and acknowledges the strong bonds that exist between the two countries.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in congratulating Israel on its 60th anniversary and wish her a safe and prosperous future. Support H. Con. Res. 322.

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Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY)

May 14, 2008

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, more than a hundred years ago, the Hungarian journalist Theodore Herzl set into motion a political movement that would change the world.

Herzl's vision for a Jewish homeland would not be realized in his own lifetime, but the nation that would become the modern State of Israel would have exceeded even his dreams of a prosperous home for the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

In the nearly 2,000 years that had passed since the exile, the Jewish people had remained faithful to their traditions, praying and hoping for their eventual return. That right was acknowledged in the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and reaffirmed by the mandate of the League of Nations in 1922. The horrors of the Nazi Holocaust made Israel's establishment all the more urgent, and had created among the American people a deep sympathy for the aspirations of the Jewish people. At the stroke of midnight, on this day in 1948, the modern State of Israel was born, and just eleven minutes later, here in the U.S., President Truman recognized the new state, solidifying for all time the bond between our two countries.

A deep friendship between America and Israel is natural, given the many political and moral values we share. But our strong diplomatic ties were far from inevitable. Historians tell us that recognition was strenuously opposed by Secretary of State George Marshall, a foreign policy realist who valued strategic interests over humanitarian concerns. In this case, Marshall was overridden by his Commander in Chief, who, following the Holocaust, saw the moral and humanitarian imperative of the Jewish people having their own state. Despite President Truman's deep respect for Marshall, it was a decision that Truman would never regret.

The U.S. Congress, it should be noted, had spoken out on the issue long before recognition was sought. As far back as 1922, Congress expressed its sympathy for a sovereign homeland for the Jewish people. It would take two more decades for that state to come about, but when it did Congress and the American people were ready once again to express overwhelming support.

In the decades since the birth of the modern State of Israel, much has changed. This desert land has in many ways become "a land that floweth with milk and honey." In this, it reflects the ingenuity and the resourcefulness of the Israeli people.

Over time, the U.S.-Israeli relationship has only grown stronger. A bond that was originally based largely on moral grounds and shared values has been fortified by shared strategic interests.

While some Arab states recognize Israel, most do not. And Israel faces numerous threats, including an existential threat from Iran.

Yet on this day of celebration, it is my fervent hope that Israel will soon celebrate its birth as a state that is recognized by all its Arab neighbors, safe from the threat of terror. Until then, I know my colleagues and I will do everything in our power to ensure that the U.S.-Israeli relationship is robust, and that the Jewish state has all it needs to defend itself.

On this anniversary, we send our best wishes and every expression of heartfelt goodwill and congratulations to the Jewish people.

[\[TOP\]](#)

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-MA)

April 24, 2008

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.

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Rep. John McHugh (R-NY)

May 1, 2008

Mr. McHUGH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and commend the State of Israel on the 60th anniversary of its independence. On May 14, 1948, Israel declared its independence. Within 11 minutes, the United States became the first nation to give de facto recognition to the State of Israel. America's friendship with Israel continues to this day. Having visited Israel several times, I know well that Israelis and Americans share the common values of peace, freedom and democracy.

The modern state of Israel is a safe haven for Jews from all corners of the world. Since its founding, Israel has been a home to Holocaust survivors and their descendants, as well as Jews fleeing oppression. While strides have been made to combat global anti-Semitism, I am disappointed that recent reports indicate a rise in anti-Semitism worldwide.

A strong and secure Israel is vital to America's national interest. Israelis know all too well the terror of indiscriminate homicide attacks by radical terrorists. The enemies of Israel have also targeted their attacks against Americans. The terrorist group Hamas is responsible for the deaths of at least 26 Americans, including teenagers and young children. In 1983 Hezbollah bombed the U.S. embassy in Beirut. Hezbollah was also involved in the bombing of the United States Marine barracks, in an attack that claimed the lives of 241 American servicemen. These groups operate with support and funding from Iran, a country whose president has called for Israel to be "wiped off the map." Hamas continues to launch rockets into Israel, terrorizing innocent civilians living near the Gaza border. However, Israelis have shown tremendous courage in the face of these hostilities. Despite the constant threat of annihilation, Israelis have made the desert bloom. They have created a flourishing culture and society. Israel has also developed a thriving economy and is the world's leader in the development of many cutting edge industries. Israeli technology has even been used to help keep our troops safe in battle in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Madam Speaker, I join my colleagues in congratulating the State of Israel on its 60th anniversary, and express my sincere hope that the next 60 years come with peace and security for our close friend and ally.

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Rep. Michael Michaud (D-ME)

April 22, 2008

Mr. MICHAUD. 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.

Today marks the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel. For the past six decades the United States and Israel have forged a special relationship based on our shared history of overcoming oppression, tyranny and hatred. This bond has strengthened over time through our common interest in peace, prosperity, and democracy.

As we commemorate this anniversary, we must also recognize the challenges that face Israel. Security and prosperity will only be reached when a resolution to the conflict between the Palestinian and Israeli peoples is achieved.

It is critical that we engage both Israel and the Palestinian leadership to find a way forward. It is also critical that we support initiatives that create greater dialogue, cooperation and economic development between Israelis and Palestinians. I have been a strong supporter of Seeds of Peace, which has a camp located in my district, which brings Arab and Israeli youth together to dispel stereotypes and build lasting trust within the regional leaders of tomorrow. I have also been a strong supporter of the Middle East Regional Cooperation program and other programs that create people-to-people reconciliation and coexistence in the Middle East.

Israel is friend and ally of the United States and it is my honor to recognize the 60th anniversary of its founding. True support for Israel lies in standing with our friend as its civilians face down indiscriminate rocket attacks and in pushing for a permanent peace that provides security and dignity to both Israelis and Palestinians.

On this special occasion it is important to commemorate the past, but also to look toward the future. As our two Nations enter our seventh decade as allies, we must continue to actively pursue our common dream of peace, freedom and security--a dream that I believe is shared by all peoples of the world.

Mr. Speaker, I reiterate my firm support of H. Con. Res. 322.

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Rep. Jeff Miller (R-FL)

April 24, 2008

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today also to honor the state of Israel which will celebrate its 60th anniversary in May. The relationship between the United States and Israel is indeed a special one. Israel has been our close friend and ally through the Cold War and now in the global war on terror. It is a relationship that will continue to strengthen in the years to come.

Even after 60 years, Israel continues to fight for its very survival against relentless attacks by Hamas and Hezbollah and other terrorist groups. The United States and Israel must always stand in complete solidarity against those nations and groups that seek to destroy Israel. We have stood together against anti-Semitism for the last 60 years, and we will continue to do so for many years to come.

I congratulate the Israeli government and the Israeli people on their special day. May God continue to bless the very close American relationship with Israel not only in this special year, but for all eternity.

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Rep. Patrick Murphy (D-PA)

April 24, 2008

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.

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Rep. Michael McNulty (D-NY)

April 24, 2008

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.

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Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD)

May 13, 2008

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President. This month we are celebrating one of the greatest achievements of the 20th century--the founding of the modern State of Israel.

The story of Israel is unique. A people forced into exile, who endured centuries of persecution, rebuilt their ancient homeland. They forged a nation where they could practice their ancient faith and traditions. They created an open and free democratic society. And always, they offer a home to Jewish immigrants from around the world.

The founding of Israel followed the most incomprehensible and evil event of the 20th century, when the Nazis--with the complicity of so many others--sought to exterminate a people. The survivors of the Holocaust helped to build modern Israel. Never again will the Jewish people be dependent on anyone else for their security.

At first Israelis envisioned an agrarian society. But today, Israel is a center for technology and science. American scientists and engineers are working as partners with Israelis to develop the innovations of the future. Our great Federal Laboratories, like the National Institutes of Health, are now working with Israeli scientists on a cure for cancer and other deadly diseases. Together America and Israel are working toward a future that is safer, stronger, and smarter.

America's relationship with Israel is also unique. We share common goals, values, and interests. We stand by each other in good times and bad.

Israel has had to endure many wars and live in constant readiness for battle. They live with the constant threat of terrorism. Yet the people of Israel are strong and resolute. They are committed to building a safer and more peaceful future.

On this anniversary, all friends of Israel should recommit ourselves to ensuring the survivability and viability of the State of Israel, now and forever. Our friendship is based on shared values, shared interests, and strategic necessity. My support for Israel is unabashed and unwavering. I will continue to be a voice for Israel and a vote for Israel in the United States Senate.

Mr. President, I salute the people of Israel as they celebrate 60 years of independence, and I look forward to a future of peace, prosperity, and friendship.

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Rep. Harry Mitchell (D-AZ)

May 22, 2008

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Israel's 60th anniversary.

Before I joined Congress, I had the privilege of visiting Israel . It was a trip that I will never forget. I will always remember my visits to Yad Vashem and Masada. I even have a picture of Masada hanging in my office to remind me of this life-changing trip.

I have always considered myself a friend of Israel, but that trip made me realize that our two countries are more than just friends, we are relatives. Both the United States and Israel had to fight bloody wars of independence to establish peaceful democracies. Both countries know that to maintain such democracies requires eternal vigilance.

That visit left me with a big impression and provided me with what I think is a unique understanding of how the security of our two nations is interdependent. This experience helped me understand that I have a responsibility to do what I can in Congress to strengthen the relationship between the United States and Israel . One of the ways we must do this is by standing firm to stop Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

I was proud to cosponsor H.R. 1400, the Iran Counter-Proliferation Act. And in the age of growing threats to Israel's security, I was proud to stand up and support a foreign aid package that helped Israel defend itself and our own security interests in the Middle East.

I look forward to continuing to work to ensure that the U.S.-Israel relationship grows stronger during this difficult time in the Middle East and around the globe.

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Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-NY)

April 24, 2008

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

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Rep. Richard E. Neal (D-MA)

May 11, 2008

Congratulating Israel on its 60th Birthday

Op-Ed Published in *The Republican* (Local Newspaper in Springfield, MA)

This Wednesday, the state of Israel will celebrate Independence Day and the 60th anniversary of its establishment as a state and homeland for the Jewish people. I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to all the friends of Israel upon this momentous occasion, and to reaffirm my commitment as the congressman from Western Massachusetts to a safe and secure Israel, living in peace with her neighbors.

The creation of Israel has been one of the greatest achievements of the 20th century. On May 14, 1948, 60 years ago, the people of Israel proclaimed the establishment of a sovereign state of Israel, and the United States government established full diplomatic relations. Israel would serve as a homeland for the Jewish people, following the tragic and systematic slaughter of more than 6 million European Jews during the Holocaust.

The modern state of Israel has rebuilt a nation and forged a new and dynamic democratic society. Israel today is a vibrant democracy that embraces the principles of freedom of speech, association and religion. There is rule of law in Israel, an independent judiciary, a free press and regularly held free and open elections. Israel guarantees women equal rights and equal pay. Israel is also a melting pot, assimilating Jews from countries throughout the world into Israeli society.

We in the United States share with Israel many core values, one being a firm commitment to freedom of religion. While Israel was established as a safe haven for Jewish people in the aftermath of the Holocaust, Israel has always made religious freedom for all faiths a priority. Each religious community in Israel is free to exercise its faith, to observe its holidays and a weekly day of rest and to administer its internal affairs. Christians and Jews in Israel today are free to visit their holy sites at any time of their choosing. Israel has allowed Islamic religious authorities administrative control over the Temple Mount, and freedom to worship at their holy sites. Israel permits its Muslim citizens to pass through countries that do not recognize the state of Israel by arranging for them to use Jordanian travel documents so that they can fulfill their obligation of pilgrimage to Mecca.

Economically, Israel is a world leader with a burgeoning high-tech industry. Technologies created in Israel have transformed homes, offices and businesses throughout the world - not to mention the Internet. It is a world leader in developing renewable energy sources. Israel has emerged as one of America's premier Middle East trading partners and as a leading source of investment opportunities for U.S. firms and entrepreneurs. Israel is our number one Middle East destination for U.S. exports, totaling \$13 billion in 2007. That far exceeds the value of U.S. exports to any other country in the region.

And conversely, Israelis invest in America. According to the Department of Commerce, Israel led all other Middle Eastern countries in direct investment in the United States. From 2002 to 2005, Israelis invested about as much in U.S. firms and properties as residents of all other Middle Eastern countries combined.

All of this being said, the threats to Israel today are real and they are serious. Most of Israel's Arab neighbors do not acknowledge Israel's existence. Some radical regimes and leaders, like Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the president of Iran, have gone so far as to call for "wiping Israel off the map." That is dangerous and provocative language coming from a leader of a country that continues to develop its nuclear weapons arsenal, despite United Nations Security Council resolutions.

Despite facing hateful rhetoric and enemies who hide bombs in ambulances and dispatch women and children to carry out terrorism attacks, Israel remains committed to following the rule of law. Israel's Supreme Court has outlawed torture.

It is important to note that Israel's desire to co-exist peacefully with its neighbors is and has over time been demonstrated not just through words but also through specific actions. Israel has traded significant parts of its historic homeland for peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan.

Having been a visitor to this historic land on two occasions, I recently supported a congressional resolution to reaffirm America's enduring support of Israel as Israel pursues peace with its neighbors, and reaffirms its right to defend itself against threats to security and existence. The resolution commends the people of Israel for achievements in building a new state in the face of terrorism and hostility from some neighbors; reaffirms the bonds of friendship that have existed with the United States and congratulates Israel for a peaceful and prosperous future.

More than 40 years ago President John F. Kennedy said that "Israel was not created in order to disappear - Israel will endure and flourish. It is the child of hope and the home of the brave. It can neither be broken by adversity nor demoralized by success. It carries the shield of democracy and it honors the sword of freedom." Now, more than ever, these words still ring true.

Congratulations, Israel, on your 60th birthday.

U.S. Rep. Richard E. Neal, D-Springfield, represents the Second Congressional District.

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Sen. Barack Obama (D-IL)

May 8, 2008

This week marks the 60th anniversary of the fulfillment of a dream -- the independence of the State of Israel. Throughout many centuries, Jews held fast to the hope of returning as free people to the land of their ancestors. Blessed with visionary leaders like Theodore Herzl and David Ben-Gurion, in the 20th century they began to take the practical steps necessary to build a modern state. Against all odds, and overcoming obstacles from international indifference, to hostile opposition in the region, to the murderous crimes of the Nazis, the leaders of the Zionist movement declared the establishment of the State of Israel in May 1948.

In their moment of triumph, they were immediately plunged into a war for their new nation's very survival. Because of the courage and commitment of its people, Israel did survive. While threats to its existence have endured, Israelis have built their nation into a strong, vibrant democracy, with a prosperous economy, a rich cultural life, and a deep friendship with the United States that benefits both our peoples in so many ways. Even in hard times, Israelis have so much to be proud of.

As the Jewish State continues to grow and prosper, the United States will always stand with Israel to ensure it can defend itself against threat of terrorism and violence, from as close as Gaza and as far as Tehran. We must never waver in our unshakeable commitment help Israel achieve its goal of true security through lasting peace with its neighbors.

On this happy occasion, I send congratulations and warm wishes to President Peres, Prime Minister Olmert, and the Israeli people, and I join with Jews and friends of Israel everywhere in celebrating Israel's 60th Independence Day.

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Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA)

April 22, 2008

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.

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.

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Rep. Ed Perlmutter (D-CO)

May 15, 2008

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Israel on its 60th anniversary. While Israel is frequently cited as a model of democracy in the Middle East, I would like to focus on Israel's advances in embryonic stem cell research.

The United States is still trying to fully harness the potential of this valuable research. We aim to cure debilitating diseases like Parkinson's, diabetes, epilepsy, spinal injuries, and others. But for years at facilities like Hebrew University, Tel Aviv University, the Weizmann Institute, and many others, Israeli scientists have blazed a path for the rest of the world to follow.

For 60 years, Americans and Israelis have built a friendship embracing all that we share, and as the United States works to unlock the promise of embryonic stem cell research, we find yet another reason our friend Israel is so special.

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Rep. Todd Russell Platts (R-PA)

May 7, 2008

Mr. PLATTS. Madam Speaker, on May 14, 1948, the dream of the restoration of a sovereign and independent State of Israel was realized. On that day, a mere 11 minutes following the declaration by Israel's Government, the United States officially recognized the Israeli state--extending a hand of friendship and support which has not once been withdrawn. Today, 60 years following that historic occasion, I rise to commemorate Israel's independence and congratulate the Israeli people on their dedicated efforts toward establishing a flourishing and thriving state.

Israel is currently the only fully established democracy in the Middle East, having free elections, a free press, freedom of religion, and the separation of powers. In addition, Israel is home to several of the leading universities in the world--spurring on its advanced economy with an emphasis in the technology sector. Israel's political, cultural, and economic success has not been easy, however, being attained in the face of war, ongoing terrorist attacks, and unfair boycotts against Israeli businesses.

I first visited Israel with five other members of Congress in 2003 and was struck by the degree to which ordinary Israelis were under the constant threat of terrorist attacks. Homes had bulletproof windows, security guards and metal detectors were necessities in most public places, and the threat of suicide bombings was a daily reality.

I am confident that terrorist attacks and other roadblocks to Israel's security and prosperity will not serve to undermine the resolve of Israel's people. Instead, these attacks will only increase the vigor with which the Israeli people defend their commonly held values of justice, freedom, and democracy.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to have this opportunity to recognize the 60th anniversary of the State of Israel, and sincerely hope that Israel will in the coming years finally attain the lasting peace its people have long desired.

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Rep. Ted Poe (R-TX)

April 24, 2008

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 Jersey. 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.

[\[TOP\]](#)

Rep. Tom Price (R-GA)

April 24, 2008

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.

[\[TOP\]](#)

Rep. Mike Pence (R-IN)

April 24, 2008

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 its 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.

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Rep. Charles Rangel (D-NY)

May 21, 2008

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to wish the State of Israel a chag sameach and happy birthday on its 60th anniversary of independence.

Over the past 60 years, Israel has exhibited strong and unparalleled growth in every aspect: governmentally, educationally, culturally, economically, industrially, and militarily. Today she is as strong as she has ever been. The state's population is nine times what it was in 1948, the year she declared her independence. It is hard to imagine that in the earlier part of the 20th century she was nothing but a swampy British colony.

Governmentally, Israel's democracy is alive and well. It is the only democracy with free and fair elections in the Middle East. Israel has some of the world's top universities and its citizenry is highly educated. According to the state's Census Bureau, in 1948, 208 people received degrees from the country's two universities; 2 years ago, 53,000 people received degrees from 62 local colleges and universities. Eight Israelis are Nobel Prize laureates.

Israel's diverse population, which is composed of immigrants from countries throughout the world, has contributed to its rich culture of arts, music, and literature. Economically, Israel is considered to have one of the most advanced economies in Southwest Asia.

Industrially, Israel has managed to become completely self-sufficient despite its lack of natural resources and small size. This has been thanks to its groundbreaking technological advances in agriculture and its hard-working Zionist pioneers. Militarily, despite the country's size, its army is one of the most superior in the world.

Israel is and will continue to be a key and necessary ally of the United States. The cross-Atlantic friendship shared by our countries is critical to both our democracies. I recognize Israel's contributions toward rooting out terrorism and salute its citizenry for their resilience and bravery.

As the state turns the page and moves into a seventh decade of independence, I hope and pray that a future with peace and prosperity for all of the people in the region is on the horizon.

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Rep. Steve Rothman (D-NJ)

April 24, 2008

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.

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Rep. Silvestre Reyes (D-TX)

April 24, 2008

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.

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Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV)

April 24, 2008

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.

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Rep. Dutch Ruppersberger (D-MD)

April 24, 2008

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.

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Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL)

April 22, 2008

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 redeemed, 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.

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Rep. Tom Reynolds (R-NY)

April 03, 2008

Mr. REYNOLDS. Mr. Speaker, May 14 marks the 60th anniversary of Israel's independence. On behalf of the House Republican Israel Caucus, I rise today to honor the Jewish state for its significant achievements over the past six decades.

Israel has shared an important strategic relationship with our Nation. And today, our countries are working more closely than ever before to defeat the common threat of terrorism.

Research and development collaborations between our countries have produced security technologies that are now used to protect the lives of Americans, Israelis, and of people all over the world. In fact, Israeli equipment has saved the lives of hundreds of U.S. soldiers stationed in Iraq and Afghanistan. And because of Israel's desert location, farmers and agricultural experts there have been forced to adapt their irrigation methods. This research now benefits dry weather areas around the world, all because Israel discovered a way to make the desert bloom.

Over the years, I have had the great fortune to travel to Israel four times, and each trip has been marked by emotional and spiritual moments. Anyone who has traveled to Israel feels a connection to the people and places there. This is because America shares a special bond with Israel. This bond will only become stronger in the next 60 years, and I am very humbled to begin this celebration.

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Rep. Bill Sali (R-ID)

May 13, 2008

Mr. SALI. Madam Speaker, the 60th birthday of the State of Israel is a time of joyous celebration for all who honor hope, dignity and liberty.

Since even before the First World War, Jewish people from all over the globe have traveled back to their historic homeland. The hope of a secure Jewish homeland was a dream worked for by so many for so long. From dispersion and oppression to bitter pogroms and on through the murderous horror of the Holocaust, the Jewish people have endured more than can be put into words.

Still, through it all, they have persisted and persevered, maintaining their identity, traditions and faith.

On that great day some 60 years ago, the State of Israel declared its independence. Only eleven minutes after Israel did so, President Harry Truman declared America's recognition of the new Jewish State. Since this time, all the leaders of the United States have expressed their support for the State of Israel, and the people of both countries have continually nurtured, promoted and developed their shared values and interests.

President Bush recently made a public statement which summarizes my own views on Israel: "The United States will never abandon its commitment to the security of Israel as a Jewish state and homeland for the Jewish people."

I am an uncompromising advocate for Israel's security and freedom. Anything which infringes upon the rights and welfare of the State of Israel is not in America's interests and must never be tolerated. I have served and will continue to serve proudly on the Congressional Israel Allies Caucus. I have co-sponsored legislation to protect this great nation through condemning ongoing Palestinian rocket attacks on innocent Israel civilians, anti-Semitic rhetoric and the glorification of terrorism.

Support for Israel must remain central to American foreign policy. This support is especially essential given the threats Israel continues to face. The brutal terrorist organization Hamas is an ongoing threat to Israel's well-being. Iran continues to shake its potential nuclear sword against Israel, and Al-Qaeda fights for a foothold in Pakistan in order to spread its viral cruelty all the way to Jerusalem. Syria proudly maintains its hostility to the Jewish State, seeming only to be waiting for an opportune moment to pounce.

We must always help Israel keep a well-armed guard up. To do less would be to breach our national interest and our national honor.

For 60 years, the Israelis have strained and endured in their desert home, overcoming in several major wars, endless attacks and terrorism. Amazingly, out of all of this turmoil,

pain, and violence, a home has bloomed out of the Middle Eastern sands for these wonderful individuals who only seek a home for themselves and their families.

Sixty years is an anniversary well worth celebrating. While the pain of the past cannot be eradicated, nor can the courage, fortitude and hope of a people who have endured and triumphed, again and again.

May we all join in the prayer of the 122nd Psalm:

I trust that all my colleagues will join me in saying “amen”to this prayer.

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Rep. Linda Sánchez (D-CA)

May 19, 2008

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ. Madam Speaker, I rise to mark Israel's 60th year of nationhood. As a cochair of the Democratic Israel Working Group I am proud to join my colleagues to celebrate the importance of America's relationship with Israel and to commemorate the founding of our trusted ally in the Middle East.

On May 14, 1948, the nation of Israel was born, bringing Jewish refugees from all over the world together, under one unified flag, providing a permanent home for a people persecuted throughout history.

For 60 years, the United States has enjoyed Israel's trusted friendship and support. Our peoples have worked together to promote respect, stability, and prosperity.

As we reflect on the significance and importance of Israel's 60 years of existence, we should not forget there is still much work to be done and many goals to be accomplished.

I ask my colleagues to join me in ushering in Israel's 60th anniversary.

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Rep. John Sarbanes (D-MD)

May 15, 2008

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Israel's 60th anniversary.

My first visit to Israel was in 1985. It was during the time of the Ethiopian airlift, before the first Intifada, before the second Intifada, and a decade before the tragic assassination of Prime Minister Rabin.

I can remember feeling deeply moved by the powerful mix of history, culture and religion, the sheer humanity that pulsed through the tiny nation of Israel and those charged with its stewardship. I realized, too, that America's stake in the existence and preservation of Israel was nearly as fundamental as the stake of Israel's own citizens, not just because of Israel's role as a strategic military ally in what is a notoriously unstable part of the world, although that alone would justify the maintenance of strong aid and assistance to Israel, not just because of Israel's status as the only true democracy in the Middle East, although that, too, would call upon the United States to give its unwavering support. Beyond those things, for many Americans there is a deeper, usually unspoken reason that the United States must never depart from its staunch support for the State of Israel. In the wake of World War II and its tragic legacy for the Jewish people, the existence of Israel will always be a profound moral and spiritual imperative for the United States.

On a return trip just 2 years ago, I had the opportunity to witness the growth and change that has occurred in Israel since my first visit a generation earlier. From the technology being developed in the "Silicon Wadi" to the advances in health care and preservation of the ecosystem, Israel is a model for other industrialized nations.

Mr. Speaker, in the last 60 years, Israel has demonstrated time and time again its value to the world, not just in geopolitical terms, but in what its people have given us in ingenuity, innovation and expression. This anniversary offers us an occasion to thank the people of Israel for their strength, their courage, and their enormous contributions to our global community.

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Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL)

April 22, 2008

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the 60th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel.

I am just a few years older than the State of Israel, and I remember, as a little Jewish girl, the pride and joy my family felt that a Jewish state was a reality. My parents expressed tremendous relief that there was now a place in the world safe for Holocaust survivors, and a haven for all Jewish people wherever we may live.

We watched with amazement as an arid land turned green as it was transformed into farms and towns. We ourselves planted trees in Israel by buying a tree certificate and gave it to our family friends on every special occasion, so we could participate in making the desert bloom. We all stood a bit taller, and every Passover, the holiday of freedom, was sweeter because Israel wasn't just a longing of our people, but a real country on the map.

That pride burns brightly today. Sixty years later, Israel has weathered war and terrorism and remains a strong, thriving democracy--the only democratic nation in the Middle East and America's closest friend and ally in the region. Israel has become a resource for the United States and the world because of her groundbreaking discoveries in the areas of medicine, energy, clean water, and security technologies.

On her 60th anniversary, the vibrant Jewish community in the Chicagoland area is proud of Israel's pioneering leadership and the strong United States-Israel bond, and works hard every day to strengthen and refresh that relationship.

I will always support the State of Israel, and I urge all of my colleagues to vote ``aye" on H. Con. Res 322.

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Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA)

April 22, 2008

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, six decades ago, on May 14, 1948, David Ben-Gurion declared the independence of the modern State of Israel--the resurrection of a nation that had been scattered and persecuted for nearly two millennia.

Ben Gurion's declaration was followed, 11 minutes later, by American recognition of the new state. Within hours, five Arab armies attacked the nascent country. These two elements--the deep friendship with the United States and conflict with its Arab neighbors--would remain dominant threads in the saga of Israel from 1948 to today.

In many respects, modern Israel has fulfilled the early Zionists' goal of creating a ``normal" nation--one that would take its place alongside the world's other states. The country's booming high-tech economy, its modern infrastructure, its global leadership in science and medicine, its laid-back Mediterranean lifestyle and its vibrant democracy are testament to more than a century of effort by Israelis and the Jewish pioneers who preceded them. Two of its Arab neighbors, Egypt and Jordan, have had the courage to sign peace treaties with Israel.

Unfortunately, Israel's successes have been undermined by the continued hostility of many of its Arab neighbors and by the unjustified vilification of Israel at the United Nations and in much of the world's media. The singling out of Israel for unjust condemnation has bolstered the hands of Israel's implacable foes and has been a tragic impediment to the realization of progress, prosperity and security for both Israelis and Palestinians.

America has long enjoyed a unique bond with Israel--in fact Americans were leading advocates for the reestablishment of Jewish sovereignty in the Holy Land as far back as the early 19th Century. American support was critical to Israel's survival in its early years and, following the 1967 Six-Day War, the two countries forged a strategic alliance that endures to this day.

Our bond with Israel is strong because it encompasses a number of dimensions: it is built on mutual security interests, shared values and a commitment to the rule of law. In its democracy and free press, Israel stands as a beacon to its neighbors, and its openness is all the more remarkable given the security threats that have shaped the country since its founding. As Americans, we should acknowledge these achievements and support Israel as it works toward a durable peace.

Mr. Speaker, in the spring of 1948, there were many who predicted that the State of Israel would not even survive a month, much less 60 years. That it has--with its values and vision intact--is a miracle and one worth celebrating.

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Rep. Jean Schmidt (R-OH)

May 22, 2008

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and celebration of the 60th anniversary of Israel's founding and pay tribute to a man who contributed greatly to the freedom and democracy enjoyed both by Israel and the United States.

Marvin Belkin enlisted in the U.S. Army at the age of 18 to fight in World War II, and by the age of 19 he was a bomber captain. Ultimately, he flew 51 combat missions over the South Pacific until his plane was shot down on New Year's Day in 1945, when he was subsequently taken prisoner. He was a prisoner of war until August of 1945 when the hostilities with Japan ended.

In 1947, Marvin answered the call again and volunteered to travel to Palestine to help support the formation of the State of Israel. In Palestine, Marvin worked to establish the ground school of the Israeli Air Force. He remained in Israel through the War of Independence, playing an active role in training the new Israeli Air Force pilots. Upon returning to the United States in 1949, Marvin was again called back into military service as an instructor during the Korean War.

Marvin Belkin's commitment to Israel and the United States is symbolic of the relationship shared by our two nations and his service should be commended, for without it, we may not be here today to celebrate Israel's independence.

To all the citizens of Israel , I wish you a great happy birthday. I look forward to the continued growth and strengthening of our relationship with you, our ally and our friend.

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Rep. Allyson Y. Schwartz (D-PA)

May 8, 2008

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Madame Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 60th anniversary of Yom Ha'atzmaut – Israel's Independence Day, to congratulate the Israeli people on their significant accomplishment, and to celebrate the strong U.S.-Israel relationship.

As the daughter of a Holocaust survivor, I very much appreciate the important role that Israel plays in the world for the Jewish people. On May 14, 1948, the State of Israel was created providing a new homeland and safe haven for those who most recently had survived the Holocaust and for Jews before and since who had been scattered throughout the world after a millennia of conflict, discrimination, and persecution.

I am proud that the United States was one of the first countries to recognize Israel. Today, the U.S.-Israel relationship continues to be strong. And I pledge to work with our trusted ally to pursue a stable and peaceful Middle East, which assures safety and security for the State of Israel.

In the quest for peace in the Middle East, the United States has no stronger partner than Israel. As the Middle East's only democratic country, Israel is an important example for other countries in the region. It has free elections, a free press, and protection of minority rights. It is a strong and vibrant democracy and a trusted friend.

Maintaining a democratic society has not been easy. Israel has endured neighbors that have attempted to wipe it off of the map, and it continues to face threats from terrorist organizations which oppose Israel's existence and seek to disrupt any possibility of a peaceful coexistence for all people.

Even today as Israel seeks security within its borders and peace with its neighbors, radical extremists attack its citizens with daily rocket barrages. It is crucially important that we stand by our friend and ally, now and in the future.

It is important to note that support for Israel is an issue that Democrats and Republicans here in Congress consistently work on in a bipartisan manner. Our willingness to work together sends a strong message internationally that the United States is committed to our friend and partner, Israel.

Madame Speaker, it is truly an honor to stand by Israel and I know my colleagues join me in expressing Mazel Tov to all Israelis for a remarkable 60 years and to wish Israel and its people a safe and secure future.

[\[TOP\]](#)

Rep. Pete Sessions (R-TX)

May 13, 2008

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Israel's 60th Anniversary and to recognize the strong partnership between my home State of Texas and Israel . Israel has made tremendous strides since its establishment in 1948--and today it is a strong security and trading partner with the United States. Israel's growing business sector has benefited the United States as a whole and the State of Texas.

Because of this growing partnership, the Texas-Israel Chamber of Commerce was established in Richardson, Texas. Texas is Israel's third largest U.S. trading partner--exporting over \$1 billion in goods in 2007. The State's low taxes, affordability and strategic trade location make Texas is a great place for Israeli companies to do business. Additionally, Texas's reputation as a leader in telecommunications, energy and security technologies make the State very attractive to Israel . With the second highest number of companies on NASDAQ and strong investment incentives, Israel is equally attractive to U.S. investment. Israel boasts an extremely high level of skilled engineers and is the world leader in medical device patents.

Through the State's Department of Agriculture, the Texas-Israel Exchange program has encouraged the development of business relationships and joint technology research for agriculture and natural resources.

The strong ties Texas shares with Israel are reflective of our Nation's valued friendship with the Jewish community. I am grateful for the bonds our two countries share and I will continue to work to strengthen our relationship for the next generation.

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Rep. Joe Sestak (D-PA)

May 14, 2008

Mr. SESTAK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and honor Israel on the 60th anniversary of its founding--May 14, 1948. Over the past 60 years, the United States and Israel have developed a close friendship based on our common democratic values and security interests. I strongly believe that it is in our Nation's best interest to further strengthen our relations with Israel and create a peaceful Middle East.

There are over 3,500 Holocaust survivors living in the Greater Philadelphia region, and many are in my district. These men and women serve as a constant reminder to me to the history and birth of this nation. I have been to Israel numerous times in the Navy, and I recently met with Israeli Ambassador to the United States, Salai Mender, and Commander-in-Chief for the Israeli Navy, Eli Marom, to discuss how our countries' relationship can be developed further.

Our conversation touched on our nations' economic relationship: the United States is Israel's top trading partners and American companies have significant investments in Israel's economy. I believe Congress has vested interest in continuing this economic relationship.

Furthermore, we discussed the state of Israeli's military as well as foreign affairs, from Iraq and the Global War on Terrorism to the close relationship between Israel and the United States and their militaries. I firmly believe our economies would mutually benefit including the potential of a joint venture between the United States and Israel, such as the development of Littoral Combat Ships.

Joint ventures would result in great mutual benefit by providing not only greater interoperability between American and Israeli militaries--while also driving down costs for procurement by working together--but would also greatly enhance the already strong relationship between these two countries.

More than our common bond of trade and security, however, our people share the common belief of Theodore Herzl, who once said "if you will it, it is no dream." A safe and secure Israel is necessary not only for the people of Israel, but for the future of the democratic world. I stand here to affirm my commitment to enhancing the relationship between our nations and to congratulate Israel on its 60th anniversary.

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Rep. Albio Sires (D-NJ)

April 22, 2008

Mr. SIRES. 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.

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Rep. Ike Skelton (D-MO)

April 22, 2008

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.

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Sen. Olympia Snowe (R-ME)

May 14, 2008

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, over the past week, the Jewish people and their friends around the world have celebrated the historic and proud occasion of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel . I rise to join my colleagues in again congratulating and honoring the Israeli people in reaching this monumental milestone, and to recognize the enduring and unwavering relationship between our two countries.

During my tenure in public service, it has truly been an honor to consistently stand with Israel. Throughout my 29 years in Congress--begun the same year, 1979, when I attended the signing of the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty at the White House--I have fought for Israel's absolute right to exist in peace, and I have understood Israel's enduring value as a strategic ally to America. And for twice as long as I have been privileged to help enhance this relationship in Congress, Israel has proven itself time and again not only to be a true ally of the United States in terms of our shared security interests, but also in terms of upholding democratic ideals.

In its first 60 years, the modern State of Israel has proven itself to be a bastion of democracy in a region rife with authoritarianism. Israel is the only country in the Middle East whose citizens enjoy the right to vote, speak, and pray freely. As notable as it is that Israel has successfully brought these critical elements of western-style democracy to the region, it is even more remarkable that it has been able to guarantee these freedoms while under constant threat from terrorists and countries along its borders. In this way, Israel has proven itself to be a true democracy--a paragon of political openness and liberty.

As the first woman to serve in both houses of a State legislature and both Houses of the U.S. Congress, I regard Israel's inclusion and empowerment of women in politics as an especially inspiring feature of its democratic triumph. Highlighted by the election of Golda Meir as Prime Minister in 1969, Israeli women played as central a role in the founding and flourishing of the State of Israel as their male counterparts. Meir's legacy is proudly continued today by countless Israeli women in top government positions in Israel, including Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, Speaker of the Knesset Dalia Itzik, and Justice Dorit Beinisch, who serves as the President, or Chief Justice, of the Supreme Court.

Again, Israel's proud record of outstanding participation by women in the governance of their country stands in stark contrast to the disenfranchising of women from public life elsewhere in the Middle East. And while many of its neighbors suffer from a high illiteracy rate among women, Israel has achieved educational parity for men and women, with 57 percent of all academic degrees in the country being earned by women.

By advancing the causes of political inclusiveness and freedom, the State of Israel has done more than provide a vibrant homeland for the Jewish people, it has emerged a beacon of modernity and hope in an ancient and still troubled region. And there should be no doubt that the people and Government of United States continue to stand alongside

Israel as it seeks peace even as it endures daily rocket attacks against its citizens and vile, hate-filled rhetoric from radical and dangerous strongmen who speak of its destruction. In supporting Israel against these threats, we support the dignity of all peoples against those who would prefer the oppressions of humanity's past to the promise of its future.

And so, on the occasion of its 60th anniversary, I rise not only to commend the State of Israel and its people, but also to thank them, for their friendship, for their bravery, and for their defense of that which is righteous in the world.

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Rep. Zack Space (D-OH)

April 22, 2008

Mr. SPACE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 60th anniversary of the Nation of Israel.

I join a bipartisan group of my colleagues in support for H. Con. Res. 322--a measure 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. This measure passed the House of Representatives earlier this week by a vote of 417 to 0.

As a member of the Democratic Israel Working Group, I am proud to commend Israel and her people on the occasion of this significant milestone.

We and the international community are grateful to Israel for her contributions in the fields of agriculture, technology, and medicine to name a few. Furthermore, Israel is a true democracy in an unstable region of the world, and the nation has long been an ally of the U.S.

Again, I join my colleagues in commending Israel and in looking forward to a future of continued friendship.

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Sen. Arlen Specter (R-PA)

May 14, 2008

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I have sought recognition to commemorate the 60th anniversary of Israel's founding.

On May 14, 1948, members of the Jewish People's Council gathered at the Tel Aviv Museum to approve the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel. The declaration stated, in part, "The State of Israel will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations." These were the principles Israel was founded on, and these same principles guide it today.

I have visited Israel 25 times since taking office in 1981. Under the able leadership of the numerous Israeli leaders whom I have come to know over that period, Israel has remained a bastion of democracy in the Middle East.

According to the Freedom House's "Freedom in the World 2008" report, Israel is the only free country in the Middle East. Evidence of Israel's strong democratic traditions is seen in the inquisitiveness of its press: the Freedom House considers the Israeli press to be the only free press in the region.

Israel's economy has also prospered under democratic rule. According to the Economist Intelligence Unit, "Israel's economy is far more diversified and sophisticated than its neighbors." "Israel has the highest proportion of engineers in the workforce [worldwide], and nearly double the share of second-place US and Japan." Its well-educated populace has enabled its high-tech industry to make advances in research and development, enabling Israeli firms "to achieve global leadership in a number of fields, including various segments of the software industry, anti-virus protection and computer security systems, as well as in the areas of fiber optics and electro-optics, medical instruments and medical imaging systems."

During my time in the Senate, I have worked to ensure Israel's security. One aspect of this has been securing economic and military assistance for Israel. During my most recent trip to Israel, in December 2007, I met with President Shimon Peres and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert. We discussed, among other things, the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, Iran's role in the region, and the U.S.-Israeli bilateral relationship. In each instance, it was clear to me that both the United States and Israel benefit greatly from our strong ties and shared ideals.

At the core of the United States-Israeli relationship is the Middle East peace process. There have been so many developments since Israel emerged as a state. The enmity which has existed for decades has meant senseless killing, terrorism in Israel, and Hezbollah and Hamas firing rockets into Israel, prompting the justified retaliation by Israel as a matter of self defense.

It is crucial that Israel's neighbors understand the importance of words and perceptions in the peace process, bringing the region closer to the goals set forth in the November 27, 2007 Joint Israeli-Palestinian Declaration at Annapolis: “We express our determination to bring an end to bloodshed, suffering and decades of conflict between our peoples; to usher in a new era of peace, based on freedom, security, justice, dignity, respect and mutual recognition; to propagate a culture of peace and nonviolence; to confront terrorism and incitement, whether committed by Palestinians or Israelis.”

The democratic principles set forth in the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel have enabled Israel to thrive for the past 60 years and will continue to guide it into the future.

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Rep. Betty Sutton (D-OH)

May 14, 2008

I rise today to offer my most heartfelt congratulations to the state of Israel on the occasion of its 60th anniversary. Since its declaration of independence, Israel has stood as a strong ally and friend of the United States.

This friendship stems from the commonalities that led to our respective foundings and our shared hopes for the future of the global community.

In forging a new nation, Israel established a home for people that were targeted for extermination and ostracism in other lands. From an arduous beginning, Israel's rise has come to mirror our own. Hailing from more than 100 countries on 5 continents, Israel's population exudes a diversity of culture and ideas.

Israel has flourished through the development of a diverse and technologically advanced economy and has come to exemplify the best of what a democracy can be.

Our countries have stood by one another in peace and in war. And we will continue to stand together in fighting terrorism and threats from stateless actors and rogue nations.

I congratulate and celebrate with Israel and am proud to be part of the continuing friendship between our countries.

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Rep. John Tanner (D-TN)

April 22, 2008

Mr. TANNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my strong support for H. Con. Res. 322, a resolution commemorating the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel . I am proud to be a cosponsor of this important resolution.

The movement to establish a modern homeland for the Jewish people launched in 1896 with the publication of Theodore Herzl's The Jewish State. Out of the atrocities and horrors of the Second World War, the long sought dream of re-establishing that homeland was finally realized. In 1948, Israel claimed its hard-fought independence.

Since Israel's beginnings, the United States has held a special bond with this important ally. As the only liberal democracy in the region, Israel knows all too well what it means to fight against violent agents of intolerance and religious extremism for the sake of personal freedom and fair government. From the birth of their modern state, the Israeli people have struggled to keep and maintain their homeland.

I have had the great privilege of traveling to Israel. It is only in visiting this great country, that one can appreciate the beauty, history and danger that dominate the lives of its everyday citizens. Nowhere in the world is there such a confluence of religion and faith. However, peaceful worship often gives way to violent conflict, and despite the holiness of the land, terrorism has become all too common in this region.

We have stood with Israel in its fight against terrorism, and we will continue to do so. For six decades, our shared commitments to democracy and freedom, as well as our shared cultural heritage, have kept the link between our two nations close, despite existing in very different parts of the world. With passage of this resolution, we honor that bond and look forward to our continued friendship.

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Rep. Ellen Tauscher (D-CA)

April 22, 2008

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.

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Rep. Todd Tiahrt (R-KS)

May 14, 2008

Mr. TIAHRT. Madam Speaker, congratulations to the people of Israel and their fore bearers on the 60th anniversary of the reestablishment of the State of Israel. Born out of genocide and conflict, the modern State of Israel has developed into a free, democratic and prosperous country. An unfailing ally of the United States, Israel is a beacon of freedom and religious tolerance in the Middle East. I am honored to strongly support the modern State of Israel and reaffirm the bonds of close friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel.

The narrow strip of land that now constitutes modern Israel has been important to the Jewish people for four millennia, and the first Jewish kingdom was established in this region over 3,000 years ago. Although forced to emigrate from the historical Jewish homeland over the centuries, the Jewish people have continuously yearned for and often returned to their home. History shows that waves of Jewish people returned to the Holy Land at the very least during the 12th, 15th, 16th, and 18th centuries. Large-scale migration back to Israel started in the late 1800s and continues through today.

On November 29, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly formally approved the partitioning of the British Mandate of Palestine and the creation of a Jewish State. On May 14, 1948, the people of Israel proclaimed the establishment of the modern State of Israel. Under the leadership of President Harry S. Truman, the United States was the first nation to recognize the State of Israel and establish full diplomatic relations.

Over the course of three wars, countless military operations, constant terrorism, and unjustified diplomatic and economic boycotts, Israel's existence has been continuously threatened. But, through it all, the Jewish people have remained vigilant and continue to build a strong and vibrant state.

Today, Israel has one of the leading economies in the Middle East, while maintaining a strong commitment to human rights, freedom of speech, press and religion, and democratic values. With open and free elections, and an independent judiciary, Israel remains the most democratic country in the region.

Since the creation of the modern State of Israel, the hallmark of the relationship with the United States has been a strong friendship. Israel has been a trusted military ally and partner for six decades. The close relationship between our governments and continued military assistance are essential for promoting democracy and peace in the Middle East and throughout the world.

In times of humanitarian need or global crisis, the United States can always count on Israel to stand close and provide assistance. From contributing search-and-rescue teams following the 1998 bombings of the American Embassies in east Africa, to providing humanitarian aid following the 2005 devastation of the Gulf Coast from a series of

hurricanes, the State of Israel has always been a stalwart friend to the American people. The United States must remain committed to supporting the State of Israel.

It is important to honor this historic milestone. The United States Congress and the American people look forward to continued growth and success of the State of Israel. I ask that all my colleagues honor this important anniversary.

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Rep. Niki Tsongas (D-MA)

April 22, 2008

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.

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Rep. Mark Udall (D-CO)

April 22, 2008

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, as a cosponsor of H. Con. Res. 322, I am glad to have the opportunity to vote for this important resolution today.

The United States recognized the State of Israel the day it was established on May 14, 1948. In the ensuing 60 years, the people of Israel have established a democratic society, developed an advanced economy, and created a thriving culture in the face of war, terrorism, and threats to its security.

H. Con. Res. 322 expresses "enduring support for Israel as Israel pursues peace with its neighbors." The importance of peace in the region cannot be overstated. Without it there can be no regional stability and no security for Israel . Over the decades, the United States has played a special role in helping facilitate the peace process in the region, and I believe we must continue to play that role.

For 60 years, the United States and Israel have shared strong bonds of friendship, common values, and strategic interests. Our support for the people of Israel has been a fundamental part of American foreign policy and remains so today. In the post-9/11 world and with American soldiers engaged in two wars on Islamic soil, I believe our historic alliance with the State of Israel has even greater significance.

So again, Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Israel on its 60th birthday and send my best wishes to the Israeli people for a peaceful and prosperous future.

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Rep. Tom Udall (D-NM)

April 22, 2008

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, roughly 60 years ago today, Harry Truman had a problem.

After 2,000 years as "strangers in a strange land," the Jewish people were about to establish a homeland in the land of their fathers. Many Americans believed that our Nation would support the aspirations of the Jewish people. However, President Truman's own Secretary of State threatened to vote against the President in the next election if Truman backed Israel.

At midnight on May 14, 1948, Israel declared independence. Eleven minutes later, America recognized the new state. Truman's act of courage created an essential and vital bond. Every American Government since that day has recognized America's special relationship with Israel.

Since 1948, Israel has shown the world true courage and perseverance. They have made the desert bloom, fended off countless acts of aggression and built a lasting testament to the potential for democracy and freedom in the Middle East. Today, Israeli citizens speak dozens of languages and come from hundreds of countries. They include war-scarred Holocaust survivors, refugees from the ghettos of the Eastern Bloc and young pioneers from the New World. What they share is a common love of their country and commitment to their people. Like America, Israel has turned its diversity into a source of strength and pride.

In New Mexico, we have a great deal of respect for those who make the desert bloom. Israel now ranks as New Mexico's 11th leading trade partner and since 1996, we have exported more than \$490 million worth of goods to Israel. In 2006 alone, our State produced nearly \$3 million in defense products for the Israeli military. Like those throughout New Mexico, I have consistently supported Israel's efforts to defend itself against terrorists and others who seek to harm her, and to seek peace with her neighbors. As we pass this resolution honoring the 60th Anniversary of Israeli Independence, I want to express my congratulations, my support, and my hope that the next 60 years will bring peace and prosperity to Israel and the region.

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Rep. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD)

April 22, 2008

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.

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Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL)

April 22, 2008

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the 60th anniversary of the independence of the State of Israel and to reaffirm the steadfast relationship between our two strong democratic allies.

May 14, 2008, marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the sovereign and independent State of Israel. With little resources and seemingly insurmountable obstacles, Israel has become a thriving and prosperous democracy, and has made significant worldwide contributions in technology, medicine, agriculture, and environmental innovation. Additionally, eight Israelis have been awarded the Nobel Prize.

When we speak about Israel, too often we focus on Israel's troubles and don't focus enough attention on her beauty and her spirit. But what I want to focus on today is her resolve.

Since its independence in 1948, Israel has continually overcome every conceivable roadblock placed in her way. She has beaten back hostile neighbors during war and now she endures terrible economic hardship from terrorist cowards who perpetrate hideous violence against innocent victims.

As a critical partner in our fight against terror and as the only democracy in the region, Israel's strength and security is paramount. Therefore, I encourage this House to continue to pass bipartisan bills in support of Israel and her ability to protect herself from hostile neighbors.

The blossoming of a nation that grew from desert sand into a thriving example of democracy, economic progress, and cultural diversity is a magnificent achievement for this strong and vibrant country.

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Sen. David Vitter (R-LA)

May 14, 2008

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I wish to also speak on Israel's 60th anniversary. It is a very important date for a truly remarkable country and a remarkable people who, in a mere six decades of existence, have built a vibrant, successful, modern democracy out of almost nothing.

When I was still a student, I had the opportunity to visit Israel with my sister. She had a college friend who had moved to Israel after graduation. Even back then--I was very young--I couldn't help be impressed by the determination and perseverance of all the people I met and their effort to build a vibrant, democratic state, to create a safe, secure homeland for all Jews, no matter where they may have originally been from around the world.

I had a second opportunity to visit Israel as a Member of Congress many years later. It was a very different sort of trip, very different itinerary, a very different set of meetings than when I was a student. But I left with the same strong feelings of respect and admiration for all the people of Israel, the same recognition of their determination and unflagging faith in their nation and countrymen. Their belief in the importance of their mission had not faded at all in the years between my visits.

What makes today especially notable is it is the 60th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel. There is wonderful hope in this celebration of the 60th anniversary, and there is also sober appreciation of the challenges that remain.

On the hopeful side, on the impressive side, is that in a mere 60 years, as I have said, Israel has created a nation characterized by strong democratic principles, a compassionate and determined people, innovative industry, especially in technology, medicine, and science, a competitive global economy.

In a mere six decades, Israel has built all that tremendous innovation, tremendous economic prosperity and progress virtually out of nothing, virtually out of the sands of the desert. It has become a beacon of freedom and democracy in a region that has very few examples to speak to. Israel is the only fully developed democracy in that sense. It represents to all peoples what can be achieved when people come together in a common cause, set aside differences, work together in a very determined way to make life better for them and their children. I recognize this important anniversary.

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Rep. Henry Waxman (D-CA)

April 22, 2008

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.

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Rep. Dave Weldon (R-FL)

April 22, 2008

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.

Rep. Dave Weldon (R-FL)

April 10, 2008

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Madam Speaker, it is my honor to rise in celebration of the coming 60th anniversary of the creation of the Nation of Israel next month. I have long been a supporter of Israel, and I am proud of the strong bonds that unite Israel with our own Nation.

Not only is Israel one of our foremost allies in the current fight against terrorism, but they have been a long partner in peace, in commerce and in the values of liberty. Israel, like America, rose to prominence through the hard work of immigrants, and Israel remains the best model of democracy, religious freedom and peaceful coexistence in a very hostile location in the world. The contributions of Israeli ingenuity and Israeli technology are making an impact in the Middle East and throughout the world.

And today, with Iran threatening to destroy Israel and developing nuclear technologies and ballistic missile technologies, it's more important than ever that people of good will, Jews, Christians and of all faiths rise up in support of Israel and acknowledge Israel's coming 60 birthday. Mazel Tov, Israel.

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Rep. Robert Wexler (D-FL)

April 22, 2008

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 I'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.

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Rep. Lynn Woolsey (D-CA)

April 22, 2008

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.

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