



# ALERT

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April 22, 2010

## **Congressional Speeches on Israel's 62<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary**

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**Rep. Howard Berman (D-CA)**

Mr. Speaker, since the founding of the State of Israel sixty two years ago, the United States has had no greater friend in the Middle East. The U.S.-Israeli friendship is based on shared democratic values, progress, and our hope for peace between nations. This friendship is buttressed by our nation's unshakeable commitment to Israel's security.

Since its founding in 1948, Israel has spurned the authoritarian model that dominates its region and has built a world-class civilization: a vibrant democracy, a thriving economy, and a culturally and academically rich society.

Israel produces more scientific papers per capita than any other nation. Nearly a quarter of the Israeli workforce holds university degrees, ranking Israel third in that category in the industrialized world, after the United States and Holland. Israel also claims one of the world's highest numbers of books and museums per capita.

Over the last sixty two years Israel has become a global leader in medicine and technology. Israeli medicine and medical equipment is exported world wide. And Israeli technologies are protecting and assisting U.S. military personnel deployed around the globe.

High-tech companies are rushing to get an Israeli presence. In addition to boasting the highest density of start-ups in the world (a total of 3,850 start-ups, one for every 1,844 Israelis), more Israeli companies are listed on the NASDAQ exchange than all companies from the entire European continent.

Moreover, Israel is leading a green revolution with its high-tech companies and Israel is the only country in the world that entered the 21st century with a net gain in its number of trees.

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.

Still, despite its strength, Israel faces incredible challenges to its existence. The Islamic-militant group Hamas, which is determined to bring about Israel's destruction, remains in control of the Gaza strip and continues to plot against Israel. Hamas is actively working to disrupt the return to peace negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians.

Hezbollah, which is sustained by Iran and supported by Syria, remains perched on Israel's northern border. As The New York Times recently noted, it is believed that Syria has delivered accurate long-distance Scud missiles to Hezbollah, placing cities deep in Israel's heartland, including Tel Aviv, within range.

Furthermore, the Islamic Republic of Iran, a theologically-based state whose President has threatened to "wipe Israel off the map", is rapidly developing nuclear weapons and long-range missiles.

In my view, there is no greater threat to Israel, the United States, and the world than the prospect of a nuclear Iran. For this reason, in the coming weeks the Congress will send President Obama legislation designed to strongly sanction Iran in order to cripple its nuclear weapons program. I am proud to be the sponsor of that legislation.

In closing, I congratulate Israel on its 62nd anniversary of independence. Today we 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. Israel's security is America's security, Israel's hopes for peace are America's hopes for peace, and we will always stand side by side. (*Congressional Record, April 21, 2010*)

**Sen. Ben Cardin (D-MD)**

Mr. President, I rise today to express my congratulations to Israel on the 62nd anniversary of its independence.

This week, America's closest ally in the Middle East, Israel, commemorated its Independence Day, Yom Ha'atzmaut, 1 day after its Memorial Day, Yom Hazikaron, and 1 week after Holocaust Remembrance Day, Yom HaShoah.

While Independence Day is about celebration for the people of Israel, this Memorial Day was marked by somber ceremonies and national grief over the loss of their soldiers. Nationwide sirens and moments of silence emphasize the sacrifices all Israelis have made living in their thriving, free and democratic state. These intensely personal losses in such a small country underscore the continuing threats faced by Israelis, the scale of their efforts and the importance of a Jewish homeland.

I commemorated last week's observance of Yom HaShoah in Baltimore, where I joined fellow community members to view a movie marking the 50th anniversary of Adolf Eichmann's capture and trial. Eichmann was a premier architect of the Holocaust. Rather than dealing with such a war criminal through forceful vengeance that would have been understandable, Israel prosecuted Eichmann by following the rule of law and his trial was a model of transparency and justice. This display of our shared values of law, justice, and fairness help to illustrate why the United States and Israel have continued to build upon our "special relationship" for six decades.

I observed Israel Independence Day at an event focused on the growing threat of a nuclear Iran. If Iran acquired this capability, it would be an unequivocal "game changer" in the Middle East and, indeed, throughout the world. An undeniable threat to Israel and the United States, a nuclear Iran cannot become a reality. We therefore must do all in our power to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear capabilities. One of our first steps should be

immediate enactment of powerful and effective economic sanctions against Iran, and the foreign companies that do business with this rogue nation.

While we work to minimize the key threats to Israel's security, we must also focus on opportunities for peace in the Middle East. Israel has always been prepared to pursue those opportunities and make peace with its neighbors. Over the past six decades, despite diplomatic gestures, multiple Arab countries have repeatedly attacked Israel. We should not forget that it was the Palestinian's leaders who walked away from the negotiation table at Camp David in 2000, on the eve of what would have been a historic breakthrough for peace.

Today, it is Israel who continues to acknowledge the necessary framework for any peace agreements, a two-state solution. While Israel has shown willingness for direct negotiations, the Palestinians continue to be, an unreliable partner in moving forward towards peace. How can Israel make peace with any partner whose so-called "moderate" Fatah leaders are not willing to meet directly with Israelis leaders and whose Parliament is controlled by Hamas, an organization still sworn to the destruction of Israel?

I am proud to have joined with 75 of my colleagues in reaching out to Secretary of State Clinton in a recent letter which included a reaffirmation of this fact as well as a reminder, that not only do the U.S. and Israel share common values but also common interests. Top among these interests is restarting the peace process and preventing Iran from becoming a nuclear state.

This is precisely why the role of the United States in this process must be one of an honest broker. President Obama must not place wrongful or unreasonable pressure on Israel or, worse, to put forward a proposal without Israel's consent.

Since Israel's founding 62 years ago, every American administration has worked to strengthen the bonds between the U.S. and Israel. This has been vital for Israel, as the nation is under constant threat of military and terrorist attacks, economic boycotts and diplomatic hostility, often merely due to the fact of its very existence. At this critical moment, when Iran is moving forward with its nuclear program and simultaneously strengthening Hezbollah's capacity to attack Israel, it is imperative the Obama administration say in clear and unambiguous language that we stand with the people of Israel and will do all in our power to protect our shared values and national bonds.

As Israel celebrates its anniversary, let us all proclaim that the U.S. continues its unbreakable alliance with our closest ally in the Middle East. (*Congressional Record, April 21, 2010*)

**Rep. Judy Chu (D-CA)**

Sixty-two years ago on Monday, the State of Israel was born, and on that day many did not believe Israel could withstand the impending struggle and remain a beacon of hope

and democracy for the world. Despite decades of terror and threats to its existence, the nation still stands today, proud and defiant to those who would wish her harm.

Sixty-two years ago, just minutes after David Ben-Gurion announced the establishment of a home for the Jewish people, the United States was the first Nation to recognize its independence. Our unwavering support for the security and prosperity of Israel continues to this day because of the core ideals our two countries share, ideals of perseverance, democracy, and innovation. I am proud to stand here today to congratulate the State and people of Israel on the anniversary of their independence, and to pledge that we will continue to work together to achieve global security, peace, and prosperity.

*(Congressional Record, April 21, 2010)*

### **Rep. Ted Deutch (D-FL)**

Mr. Speaker, as the Nation's newest Member of Congress, it is truly an honor to have my first remarks on the floor be in commemoration of Israel's 62nd anniversary.

Today I proudly rise in support of House Concurrent Resolution 260, which recognizes the independence of the Jewish state of Israel and reaffirms the unyielding friendship and unshakable alliance between our two great nations.

As Israelis and Jewish communities throughout the world celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut, this resolution holds a special significance for me and my constituents in Florida's 19th District. I proudly represent a district with one of the Nation's largest number of Jewish Americans, as well as Holocaust survivors.

So many of my constituents remember when the promise of Israel was only an unlikely possibility, and over the years they watched the amazing realization of this dream and the establishment of this great nation.

For so many of my constituents and to so many Americans, that day in 1948 when Israel declared its independence was the day that a promise was fulfilled to the Jewish people who for so long struggled to find a place they could call home. Sixty-two years later, Israel has grown into a thriving democratic state with a technologically advanced economy and a rich, democratic culture.

The people of Israel embrace freedom, and through art and literature, music and business, the entire globe has benefited from Israel's existence and success. Throughout these 62 years, the people of Israel have shown an open-hearted desire to live in peace and a fierce resolve to protect the security of their citizens no matter what the cost. This nation and these citizens have shown incredible determination and fortitude in the face of terrorism and threats from those who deny and threaten Israel's very existence. Whether they be attacks from terrorist groups like Hamas and Hezbollah or the continued financial sponsorship of terrorism by Syria and Iran, the people of Israel should know that the United States will always, unequivocally stand in support of Israel's right to self-defense.

The relationship between the United States and Israel is unbreakable. The relationship is one between two peoples, our common values, the history we share, our commitment to freedom, and our joint vision of a secure and peaceful Middle East.

From the recognition of the new state of Israel by President Harry Truman in 1948 through today, let me make this clear: The United States stands with Israel and the United States will always stand with Israel. The relationship is secure and the relationship is strong.

This resolution not only reaffirms Israel's right to self-defense but recognizes that the single most serious threat facing Israel's security is that of a nuclear-armed Iran. Iran's illicit quest for nuclear weapons poses an existential threat to the state of Israel and an unacceptable threat towards the United States. The importance of this issue cannot be understated.

Just this week, the very week we celebrate Israel's independence, news organizations have reported that President Ahmadinejad has approved new uranium enrichment plans in Iran. This threat is real and it is unacceptable. Congress and the administration must work together and use every tool at our disposal to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. The United States must take immediate aggressive action to ratchet up economic pressure on Iran, which I am hopeful the House will continue to work on tomorrow, and we must continue to demand that the international community join with us in this critical effort.

As a new Member of Congress, I look forward to working with my new colleagues from both sides of the aisle on initiatives that will strengthen our bond with Israel, enhance Israel's defense capabilities, and thwart Iran's nuclear weapons program.

America and Israel share a commitment not just to confronting terrorism and extremism but to bolstering freedom, human rights, and democracy across the globe.

The generosity and kindness of the Israeli people could not have been more evident than the days following the devastating earthquake in Haiti. It was Israel that arrived on the scene first and began rescuing men, women, and children trapped in the rubble. It was Israel that built the first field hospital in Haiti and began offering immediate medical care to the injured. And it was Israel that stood with those most in need because of a simple belief in universal human dignity.

Let us stand with Israel today by passing House Concurrent Resolution 260 and by expressing our most sincere hope that our dear ally Israel achieves the lasting peace it has long deserved. (*Congressional Record, April 21, 2010*)

**Rep. Bob Etheridge (D-NC)**

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 62nd anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel and join with the Israeli people in honoring the country's founders and marking its great achievements and successes.

On May 14, 1948, Israel's founders declared that the country would be not only a Jewish State, but also a democratic one, where all citizens, regardless of religion, ethnicity, race or gender, would live in peace with equal civil rights. Since that day, Americans have stood side by side with Israel to form a strong bond of friendship. Even as we celebrate, we also look forward to the next 62 years and beyond.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to again congratulate the Israeli Government, its people, and others on this, their 62nd year of independence.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Israel on her 62nd anniversary of independence.

On May 14, 1948 the day the British Mandate expired, the new Jewish state--the State of Israel--was formally established in parts of what was known as the British Mandate for Palestine. With the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, Jewish independence, lost two thousand years earlier, was restored. When Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion read the Declaration of Independence, 11 minutes later when those words had traveled halfway around the world, they were endorsed by United States President Harry Truman, the first to recognize a new member of the community of nations, and a new friend. President Truman said "I had faith in Israel before it was created. 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 United States and Israel are close allies whose people share a deep and abiding friendship based on a shared commitment to core values including democracy, human rights and freedom of the press and religion. Israel stood by America in spirit and in action after the tragic events of 9-11. Israel has been the only democratic ally of the United States in the Middle East, as both our great nations fight the same scourge of terrorism and Islamic extremism. Like all North Carolinians, I stand united with our allies, like Israel, as we engage in this campaign to hunt down and punish the terrorist perpetrators. We must ensure that those who mean us harm can never again threaten innocent American men, women and children. A strong Israel is an asset to the national security of the United States and brings stability to the Middle East.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to again congratulate the Israeli government and people on their 62nd year of independence. (*Congressional Record, April 21, 2010*)

**Rep. John Garamendi (D-CA)**

Mr. Speaker, on this, the 62nd anniversary of the founding of Israel, I want to extend my warmest regards to the people of Israel and all those who made the Middle East's first democracy possible.

In the wake of one of the most horrific crimes against humanity ever perpetrated, Jews from across the globe sought to form their own homeland, one that enshrined in their constitution 'freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture.'

President Harry Truman was the first international leader to recognize the state of Israel, and we've been proud allies ever since.

In Israel, Americans can see much to be admired, and we share common goals and desires. We are both home to countless innovators, entrepreneurs, scholars, thinkers, activists, immigrants, and democrats. We both strive for peace and a more just and stable world. And we are both familiar with the hard trials, tribulations, and triumphs that come to define a people and a culture.

Let's continue our strong and hopeful relationship as we work toward peace across the globe. (*Congressional Record, April 21, 2010*)

**Rep. Alan Grayson (D-FL)**

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 62nd Anniversary of Israel's Independence. Yom Ha'atzmaut, as it is called in Hebrew, allows us in the American Jewish Community to pay tribute to Israel by reflecting on its past achievements, while simultaneously realizing its capacity to contribute further to the global community and the advancement of human knowledge. As a member of the House Science and Technology Committee, I would like to pay tribute to Israel's Independence by highlighting some of its many accomplishments in the fields of science and technology.

The aspiration of Israeli pioneers to transform a country, which is 60 percent desert and lacks an abundance of natural resources, into a modern state, led to strategic investments in the fields of science and technology, which are now among Israel's most developed sectors. Today, Israeli scientists have contributed to advancements in the fields of agriculture, computer sciences, electronics, genetics, medicine, optics, solar energy, health sciences, and various fields of engineering. Israel is also home to many groundbreaking companies in the high-tech industry, such as Symantec and Allot. Symantec helped develop cloud computing which secures and manages information on the internet, and Allot produces the broadband pipes needed for smart phones. Israel has over 3,850 start-ups that have been established in Israel, and has the largest number of NASDAQ-listed companies outside of North America. Most NASDAQ Israeli firms are high-tech companies, and over a dozen have market capitalizations of over \$500 million.

Proportionally to its size, Israel's contributions to science and technology over the past decades have been significant. Israel has made important contributions in a number of areas in space research, including laser communication, research into embryo development, and osteoporosis, pollution monitoring, mapping geology, and soil and vegetation in semi-arid environments. Israel's lack of conventional energy sources has

propelled extensive research and development of alternative energy sources--specifically innovative technologies in the solar energy field. For example, Israel has become the world's largest per capita user of solar water heaters in the home. A new, high-efficiency receiver to collect concentrated sunlight has been developed, which will enhance the use of solar energy in industry as well.

One of the major problems confronting the global water supply today is pipe leakage. For Israel, which is two-thirds desert, water-saving technologies are of critical importance. The International Water Association has cited Israel as one of the leaders in innovative methods to reduce non-revenue water, which is water lost in the system before reaching the customer. Additionally, Israel has surpassed many countries in the fields of computer engineering and computer science. Israel's Weizmann Institute of Science and the Technion, Israel Institute of Technology are ranked among the top 20 academic institutions in the world in computer science.

Israel began research and development in space exploration after establishing the Israel Space Agency to coordinate and supervise a national space program. Israel launched its first satellite, Ofeq-1, in 1998, and has since made major contributions in space research, including in areas of laser communication and pollution monitoring. Ilan Ramon became the first Israeli astronaut in space when he was chosen as a Payload Specialist on the Space Shuttle Columbia.

Israeli companies have excelled in computer security technologies, semiconductors and communications. Intel and Microsoft both built their first overseas research and development centers in Israel, and other high-tech multi-national corporations, such as IBM, Cisco Systems, and Motorola, have opened facilities in the country. An Israeli, CEO and president of M-Systems, Dov Moran, invented the first flash drive in 1998.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I celebrate the accomplishments of the State of Israel on the 62nd anniversary of her founding. Israel's successes are a reflection of their commitment to education and innovation, and a tribute to the future of the Jewish State and its people. Our shared dedication to these matters only further strengthens the bond between our two countries. For these and many other reasons, I join with my colleagues in celebration of Israel's anniversary--and as an ally for the protection and advancement of Israel's future. *(Congressional Record, April 21, 2010)*

**Rep. Alcee Hastings (D-FL)**

Madam Speaker, I rise in recognition of the 62nd anniversary of Israel's independence. I have always been deeply moved by the duality of Israel's independence celebration, at once both sorrowful and triumphant.

On one day--Yom Hazikaron, Israel's Memorial Day--Israel honors those who gave their lives defending their families, their neighbors, their communities, their people, and their country. Israel today recognizes even those who died before the state was officially

declared in 1948. This year Israel honors 22,684 soldiers killed in the line of duty, and another 1,750 civilian victims of terrorism. These brave men and women died in service to the foundational belief of Israel: That in their ancient homeland the Jewish people can live in freedom.

But by the dawn of the morning following Yom Hazikaron, Israel exchanges tears of sadness for tears of joy, celebrating their official day of independence--the declaration of the State of Israel by David Ben Gurion in 1948. I know of no other country that combines such deep sadness with such unrelenting delight.

For 62 years now, Israel has stood as a vibrant democracy and a symbol of hope for millions of people around the world. For 62 years Israel has modeled a society where determination and passion, and an emphasis on social progress and education, can build a productive nation.

Madam Speaker, I have been to Israel 14 times as a Member of Congress, and every time I go I encounter ordinary citizens and government officials alike who are genuinely dedicated to living up to the ideals of Israel's independence. I am always impressed by the Israelis' intense desire to persevere. Israel deserves to be secure and prosperous, to live in peace with its neighbors, and to live free from fear and violence.

I look forward to returning to Israel in the near future, and on congratulating Israel again on its 63rd birthday ..... and its 64th, and 65th, and all the years after that.  
*(Congressional Record, April 20, 2010)*

**Rep. Mazie Hirono (D-HI)**

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the 62nd anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel.

Americans stand beside the Israeli people in commemoration of Israel's independence, and we celebrate the vision of the 37 Israelis who established the founding declaration on April 20, 1948, in order to secure a free, just, and peaceful new nation.

Shortly after Israel was founded, President Harry Truman became the first national leader to recognize Israel as a friend and partner of the United States. Since that time, Congressional support for the State of Israel has not wavered, and ties between our two countries remain inextricably linked.

Last August, I was fortunate enough to visit Israel with a number of my Congressional colleagues. That visit left an indelible impression on me. It is one thing to read of Israel's history and about that region of the world, but it is quite another to walk through the streets in Jerusalem, see Israel from the Golan Heights, and spend time at Yad Vashem and at Masada. While there, I also visited Ramallah and met with Palestinians who are engaged in the peace process.

Along with my colleagues in Congress and my constituents back home in Hawaii, I look forward to the day when the Middle East is a region at peace. I am confident that our governments will continue to work together as allies to ensure that the goal of achieving a comprehensive peace in the region becomes a not-so-distant reality.

Congress must also work with the Obama administration to make certain that Israel's security remains intact. On April 15, 2010, a number of my colleagues from both sides of the aisle sent a letter to President Obama assuring him of bipartisan support to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons capability using the tools we have at our disposal, including engagement with the Iranian regime and targeted sanctions. Although I was in Hawaii and did not have an opportunity to sign it, I would like to go on record in support of this letter, which reiterates congressional support for President Obama to do what is necessary to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. Late last year, I voted in support of H.R. 2194, a bill that amends the existing Iran Sanctions Act of 1996 and imposes additional sanctions that would curb energy investments in Iran. Soon the House and Senate will vote on a conference measure, and I hope that passage of this legislation will further deter the security threat that Iran's regime poses to Israel.

I join my colleagues in wishing the Israeli people a happy Independence Day and reaffirm Congress's commitment to our relationship with the Israeli state. (*Congressional Record, April 21, 2010*)

**Rep. Mike Honda (D-CA)**

Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I rise today to celebrate the 62nd anniversary of a great democracy and our close friend and important ally, Israel.

The United States and Israel share a unique and unbreakable bond. This bond is based upon friendship, common values, and a strong interest in a peaceful future for the Middle East. From its first breaths in 1948 until today, Israel has stood as the foremost beacon of democracy in the Middle East.

As the sole democracy in the region, Israel is the United States' most strategic ally in the Middle East, and I have supported policies that strengthen its safety, security and welfare. Israel must be able to rely on the friendship of the United States as it takes the bold steps necessary towards peace in the Middle East.

Some of this reliance comes in the form of U.S. foreign assistance. Providing foreign assistance to Israel is important as Israel faces legitimate, external threats to its survival-- Hamas, Hezbollah, and Iran.

We must also provide Israel diplomatic support in the form of sanctions against the Iranian government, before it is too late. Iran's pursuit of a nuclear weapon is a real and immediate threat to the existence of Israel, and a serious and troubling threat to the

security of the entire Middle East and the U.S. A nuclear Iran is simply unacceptable, and we must do what we can to deter this threat.

The Iranian government, and the international community, must recognize the Jewish, democratic state of Israel's legitimacy and right to exist, given the Jewish people's three millennia of history in the land of Israel. Israel is Jewish land, and this must be recognized.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Israel on its 62nd anniversary. It is imperative that we continue to remain firmly behind our friends in Israel. As our strongest ally in one of the most volatile regions in the world, our country's first priority must be to be a true friend a partner with Israel. (*Congressional Record, April 21, 2010*)

### **Rep. Rush Holt (D-NJ)**

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to congratulate our friend and ally, the State of Israel, on the 62nd anniversary of her founding.

A week ago, I had the honor of attending the National Days of Remembrance ceremony in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda. I was joined by 3 of my constituents, Marlboro residents Toby Shylit Mack, Community Relations Committee Chair of the Jewish Federation of Monmouth County, and her husband Bob Mack, and North Brunswick resident Lee Livingston, President of the Jewish Federation of Greater Middlesex County.

As always, it was a very moving ceremony. Sitting in the Rotunda, amidst survivors and liberators from the U.S. Armed Forces, I was reminded that even in 1945--out of the ashes of the most unimaginable tragedy in human history--there was nothing pre-ordained about the founding of the State of Israel. When he was President, Dwight Eisenhower said, ``Our forces saved the remnants of the Jewish people of Europe for a new life and a new hope in the reborn land of Israel."

However, it took three years of tireless work of leaders like David Ben Gurion, Chaim Weitzmann, and Golda Meir--coupled with the dedicated support of Jews in the U.S. and throughout the world--to make the dream of a reborn land of Israel become a reality. Even upon its founding 62 years ago, there was nothing pre-ordained about Israel's survival.

The State of Israel was created with great courage, and it is from this courage that Israel continues to maintain its vibrant and strong democracy today. Israel's achievements over the last 62 years--in areas ranging from education and economics to science and agriculture--far surpass what could reasonably be expected of such a young nation. During my trips to Israel, I have witnessed the ingenuity and entrepreneurship of Israelis firsthand.

The United States always should be proud that our nation was the first country to recognize officially the new nation. In doing so President Truman confidently said, "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."

Our strong commitment to Israel's existence and prosperity remain steadfast today. Our nations' special relationship extends beyond friendship. It is built on the common values of equality and opportunity for all and our shared commitment to freedom, justice, and peace. Israel is more than just an ally; Israel is an inspiration.

Yet this outpost of democratic ideals in the Middle East continues to face external threats to her very existence. I have seen Israeli families terrorized by rocket attacks, and my visits have only strengthened my conviction that the United States must be unwavering in our support for the right and responsibility of Israel to protect her citizens from legitimate threats. While serving in Congress, I have voted for over \$35 billion in economic and military assistance for Israel, and I will continue to support such measures in the future.

Ultimately, the only way to achieve lasting peace and security for the citizens of Israel is to secure a just, permanent, and peaceful settlement between Israelis and Palestinians. I believe that the greatest service the United States can provide to Israelis is as a facilitator in negotiations among the parties. It is my deepest hope that Israeli and Palestinian leaders soon will join each other at the negotiating table, with the support of the U.S. administration, to make swift progress toward an enduring peace agreement.

On Israel's 62nd anniversary, I believe more than ever that the future of Israel and the Middle East is one of peace, cooperation, security, and prosperity. I am pleased to join the Jewish community of New Jersey and all Americans in celebrating Israel's national successes, her great contributions to the international community, and her continued existence as an inspiration for us all. (*Congressional Record, April 21, 2010*)

**Rep. Ron Klein (D-FL)**

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support House Concurrent Resolution 260 and acknowledge both the sacrifices and the celebrations of the Israeli people on their Independence Day, Yom Ha'atzmaut.

Sixty-two years ago, the founders of the Jewish state gathered together in Tel Aviv to declare: "Exiled from the land of Israel, the Jewish people remain faithful to it in all the countries of their dispersion, never ceasing to pray and hope for their return and the restoration of their national freedom."

In every turn of Jewish history, expulsion after expulsion, pogrom after pogrom, the vision and the dream of the return to Israel would keep the Jewish people going. It was this hope that fueled the establishment of the state of Israel, and through every battle and every war, the words of the Israeli Proclamation of Independence continued to hold true.

The people of Israel's connection to the land keeps them faithful to the ideals of the state that was established 62 years ago.

I feel this commitment every time I visit Israel and see the unshakeable dedication to improving the Jewish homeland. Since its founding 62 years ago, Israel has become a modern state, a beacon of democracy, and a hub of technological advancement. And the world has benefited from Israel's contributions.

Israel is the world's largest per capita user of solar water heaters in their homes. Israel will be launching the world's first electric car network throughout the country, reducing their dependence on foreign oil, and serving as a model to the rest of the world. Israel's experience on the front lines of terrorism have allowed them to use their first responder skills when humanitarian crises occur around the world, not just in Israel. Just a few months ago, Israel dispatched a team to Haiti, setting up a field hospital, delivering medical care, and saving lives. They were the first ones on the ground.

Finally, Israel has taken painful steps toward peace, making sacrifices, sometimes unilaterally, toward the goal of reaching an agreement with its Arab neighbors. Israelis live under constant threat from Hamas's barrage of rocket attacks from Gaza, from the dangerous and genocidal words of a dictator in Iran, from a buildup of weapons on its northern border, from a despicable campaign to delegitimize Israel on the international stage.

While the threats against the United States and Israel grow and strengthen, so too must our joint resolve to confront them. I am proud to be a supporter of a strong U.S.-Israel relationship. We are stronger together through our friendship. We are safer together through our cooperation. And in this uncertain world, the United States and Israel need each other.

On this Israeli Independence Day, I acknowledge the brave men and women and their families who have sacrificed so much for the Jewish homeland, and I look forward to the day when Israel can celebrate independence in peace and security. (*Congressional Record, April 21, 2010*)

**Rep. Harry Mitchell (D-AZ)**

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Israel's 62nd Independence Day.

Israel is not just a vitally important ally to the United States, it is a beacon of democracy in a part of the world where democracies are few and far between.

Sadly, all too often, Israel is forced to defend these democratic values against countless who wish to wipe Israel off the map.

The threat of rocket attacks is nearly constant for Israelis. I had the opportunity to visit Israel last year, and I witnessed firsthand some of the damage caused by rocket attacks by Hamas from Gaza. I am amazed at the determination of the Israelis to continue to lead normal lives despite the constant threats and reminders of terrorism. It was particularly evident during a trip to Sderot, at an indoor playground that also functions as a bomb shelter.

The threat from Iran is even more ominous. Between the Holocaust denials, the arms shipments to terrorists, and the quest for nuclear weapons, Iran is not only a threat to Israel, it is a threat to the United States.

That's why, as we commemorate Israel's Independence Day, I can think of no more appropriate action for those of us here in Congress than to finish our work on Iran sanctions legislation, and to deliver a final bill to President Obama as quickly as possible.

Last year, the House passed H.R. 1327, the Iran Sanctions Enabling Act by a vote of 414 to 6, as well as H.R. 2194, the Iran Refined Petroleum Act by a vote of 412 to 12. In January, the Senate approved S. 2799, the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2009 by voice vote.

There is clearly broad, bipartisan support for this legislation, and I believe we must act without further delay. (*Congressional Record, April 21, 2010*)

### **Rep. Gwen Moore (D-WI)**

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and commemorate the 62 anniversary the State of Israel.

At the same time we celebrate this occasion, we also are recollecting the 65th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps and celebrating the annual Days of Remembrance commemorating the 6 million Jews murdered in the Holocaust as well as the millions of other victims of Nazi persecution. It was out of this torturous past that this new nation was formed.

On May 14, 1948, the people of Israel proclaimed the establishment of the sovereign and independent State of Israel. Literally, within minutes, the United States recognized the modern nation of Israel and welcomed it into the international community. That was the beginning of a longstanding and cherished friendship between the two nations that endures to this day.

The State of Israel remains one of the United States' strongest allies and its endurance is a testament to the ideals of freedom and democracy. Our nations share the common goals of peace, freedom, security, and prosperity for their citizens and for the region. It is this commonality that allows this relationship to endure despite changes in Administrations, of Congresses, and even disagreements that emerge from time to time.

Despite many difficulties and challenges, thanks to its greatest resource--its people--and the help of supporters throughout the world--Israel has built a vibrant democracy and a thriving economy and society.

We must continue to strongly support Israel's right to exist, its prosperity, and security. One of the best ways to ensure this is for the United States to continue to work to bring life to the peace process between Israel and its neighbors.

While recognizing that success ultimately depends on the parties themselves finding compromises and agreements, active U.S. engagement as an honest broker and mediator remains critical.

This will not be easy. Neither was establishing the State of Israel. Nor has it been easy to create a democratic state in a region where many of these tenets remain largely unknown and if known, unpracticed. Yet, 62 years later, Israel stands firm.

Again, I want to extend my congratulations and best wishes to the people of Israel as they celebrate the 62nd anniversary of its independence. (*Congressional Record, April 21, 2010*)

**Rep. Jerry Moran (R-KS)**

Madam Speaker, Today is Yom Ha'atzmaut--Israel's Independence Day. On this day, Israelis celebrate the establishment of the State of Israel as a place of refuge and national homeland for the Jewish people.

Although Jews have maintained a continuous presence in the Land of Israel for more than 3,000 years, it was not until 1948 that they reestablished a state in their traditional land. Since that time, Israel has faced many challenges to its existence. Neighboring Arab nations have launched wars against Israel and attempted to cripple its economy through boycotts. Terrorists have attacked repeatedly, killing civilians and soldiers alike. Iranian leaders have threatened to "wipe Israel off the map" and are steadily moving toward acquiring the means to do so. Israel's enemies are engaged in a campaign to delegitimize the Jewish state.

Even in the face of continual efforts to defeat and destroy Israel, the Jewish state has been successful in establishing more peaceful relations with its neighbors and making its people more secure. Israel has signed peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan. Its efforts to combat terrorism have resulted in a reduction in terrorist attacks--cutting that number in half since 2006. Israel also continues to seek peace with the Palestinians.

Despite overwhelming odds, Israel has not only survived, but it has flourished for the past 62 years. Israel has established a representative democracy with an independent judicial system and strong rule of law. Its citizens are free to worship and speak as they wish.

Israel has also established itself as a world leader in technological innovation. Despite more than half its land being desert, Israelis have "made the desert bloom," growing food for consumption and export. Its universities are first-rate, producing new generations of artists, entrepreneurs, scientists and doctors. And, despite its size, Israel produces more start ups than many larger nations. In fact, there are more Israeli companies than European companies listed on the NASDAQ exchange.

Israel is also a nation that cares about the fate of others. Immediately after learning of the devastating earthquake in Haiti this January, Israel sent hundreds of its citizens to treat the injured and search for survivors. The Israeli newspaper Haaretz reported after the earthquake that only an estimated 25 Jews lived in Haiti. But, that didn't stop Israel from committing manpower and money to do everything it could to save and preserve all life in Haiti.

Through struggles and achievements both, the United States has stood by Israel's side. Our nations share many of the same values and are partners in an effort to build a better world.

There are those that argue, however, that the United States would be better off if we distanced ourselves from Israel, if we weakened our alliance. I am here to say that this would be the worst thing we could do. The United States and Israel are both stronger when we work together against common threats. Economic and cultural ties between our two nations enrich the lives of Americans and Israelis. Our friendship is important and must remain strong.

Today, on Israel's Independence Day, I commend the people of Israel for their many remarkable achievements, congratulate them as they celebrate their 62nd anniversary of independence, and look forward to many more years of friendship and cooperation between our two nations. (*Congressional Record, April 20, 2010*)

**Rep. Patrick Murphy (D-PA)**

Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and commemorate the 62-year history of the State of Israel.

Officially established as an independent nation on May 14, 1948, Israel has grown into a thriving society guided by the philosophy of individual freedom and remains a shining example of a stable democracy in a volatile region.

Israel's story is much like ours. It is a story of hope, perseverance and a desire for independence. Its people struggled to overcome thousands of years of hardship, and suffered the most horrendous of atrocities to create a proud and vibrant free society in an area of the world where, historically, freedom is all too elusive.

It is our shared belief and dedication to peace and liberty that has solidified our alliance with the most successful democracy in the Middle East. Our nation was the first to recognize the State of Israel, and for more than half a century, Israel and the United States have been strong partners, bound by common values and committed to ensuring freedom throughout the world.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to offer my ongoing support and friendship to the people of Israel, as they celebrate their independence. I am confident that Israel will continue to flourish and that together, our two nations will continue to be strong allies and partners in promoting peace and individual freedom. *(Congressional Record, April 20, 2010)*

**Rep. Erik Paulsen (R-MN)**

Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to recognize our great ally, Israel, on the 62nd anniversary of their nation.

As the standard bearer for democracy in the Middle East, Israel is of critical importance to the United States. Since the declaration of the State of Israel in 1948, they have consistently shown the power of democracy in a very volatile part of the world.

Their achievements cannot be understated. The per capita annual GDP in Israel is nearly \$30,000 and the average life span is over 80 years. Israel consistently keeps its citizens safe, despite the security threats that occur on a daily basis. The fact that Israel continues to grow in population at an annual increase of 1.8 percent is a strong signal of the nation's strength.

So today let us recognize Israel and their many achievements and let us always remember the unending bond between the United States and Israel that must continue to be protected. *(Congressional Record, April 20, 2010)*

**Rep. Mike Quigley (D-IL)**

Mr. Speaker, 62 years ago, Israel declared its independence and established a nation founded on the principles of justice, freedom, and peace. These founding tenets are not unlike those on which the United States was built, and these mutual beliefs spurred a resilient relationship between Israel and the U.S., a friendship of six decades which remains strong today.

The United States was the first Nation to recognize Israel, and with that recognition came a promise, a promise to help ensure Israel's security, a promise to stand behind the only democracy in the Middle East, and a promise to always uphold Israel's right to exist. On this anniversary let us celebrate, as the Israeli folk song goes, Am Yisrael Chai--the people of Israel live--and may they have the land of Israel to call home today, tomorrow, and always. *(Congressional Record, April 21, 2010)*

**Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL)**

Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the 62nd anniversary of the founding of the Jewish State of Israel. Israel has weathered decades of war and terrorism, but it remains a thriving democracy and America's closest friend and ally in the Middle East.

As a very young child, I remember the immense pride and joy my family felt when the Jewish state became a reality. I had the privilege of traveling once again to Israel earlier this month. And again I was struck by the resilience, the courage, and innovation of the Israeli people, as well as their pride in the beautifully lush country they had built in the desert.

I thought about my childhood again and the number of times that I had saved my nickels and dimes to buy trees and tree certificates that we used for birthdays and anniversaries to plant trees in Israel and to turn that desert and make it bloom.

No longer just a longing of the Jewish people, Israel today is a leader in technology, and energy, and scientific innovation, including medical innovations. It is also the only democratic state in the Middle East, and our steadfast friend and ally and partner. Today we mark the 62nd anniversary of the State of Israel and celebrate the unbreakable bonds between our two countries, the unbreakable bonds between our two countries.

Sixty-two years after the United States became the first country to recognize the new State of Israel, we still share common dreams and continue to strengthen our critical relationship. Just minutes after the declaration of the founding of the State of Israel, President Harry Truman recognized that country, and it began a 62-year long commitment, nonpartisan, bipartisan, universal throughout our country recognizing the importance of our relationship with the State of Israel.

I believe that this Congress of the United States maintains that dedication and will forevermore. (*Congressional Record, April 21, 2010*)

**Rep. Allyson Schwartz (D-PA)**

Mr. Speaker, I recognize the sixty-second anniversary of Yom Ha'atzmaut, to congratulate the State of Israel on its Independence Day, and to celebrate the unshakeable U.S.-Israel relationship. As the daughter of a Holocaust survivor, I understand personally how important Israel is for all Jews everywhere. On May 14, 1948, Israel declared independence, providing a new safe haven for Holocaust survivors and for Diaspora Jews before and since the Holocaust, who experienced a millennium of anti-Semitism.

In honor of Israeli Independence Day and in recognition of the close relationship between Israel and the United States, we will continue to work with our trusted ally to pursue a secure and peaceful Middle East, assuring liberty, economic prosperity, and security for Israel and its neighbors. While Hamas, Hezbollah and Iran threaten this security with words and missiles, the U.S. Congress stands committed to work towards a secure Israel where all of its citizens can live, prosper, and dream in security.

In its 62 years of nationhood, Israel exemplifies freedom, opportunity, and democratic values. Its unfettered elections, transparent press, and vital economy distinguish it as a leader in the Middle East. It is our closest ally in the region. As such, I welcome the opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate its independence and our shared efforts to ensure its safe and secure future. (*Congressional Record, April 21, 2010*)

**Rep. Niki Tsongas (D-MA)**

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate the 62nd anniversary of Israel Independence Day.

I was fortunate to travel to Israel in 1982 and still have strong memories of my visit to that tiny strip of land that holds so much meaning for so many. Much has changed since that time, and I have heard repeatedly that it is like a whole new country worth visiting again, which I intend to do.

Israel has developed a vibrant and diverse democratic society. It is home to an innovative technology sector with more start-ups than any other country except the United States. I am proud to say that many of these organizations have strong research and development relationships with organizations throughout my home State of Massachusetts and that these relationships continue to create jobs for both Americans and Israelis.

Israel has been a place of refuge and opportunity for thousands coming from countries as diverse as Ethiopia and the former Soviet Union. And Israel has provided relief around the world for victims of natural disasters in Haiti, Southeast Asia and elsewhere.

It has done all this while being surrounded by enemies. In this environment, Israel has forged hard won peace with both Egypt and Jordan, and despite tragic setbacks, the Israeli people continue to yearn for peace with their neighbors.

The strong bonds that exist between Israel and the United States are based on our shared ideals--democracy, opportunity, freedom, and peace--and the mutually beneficial cooperation between our two countries will continue long into the future.

Again, I rise to celebrate the 62nd anniversary of Israel's independence and to recognize the lasting friendship between our two countries. (*Congressional Record, April 21, 2010*)

**Rep. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD)**

Mr. Speaker, today, not only do we celebrate the 62nd anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel, we 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." President Truman was right and 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. Israel also became the home for Jews from scores of countries around the world and continues to provide a refuge to those who face anti-Semitic persecution.

In 62 years, Israel has transformed itself from chiefly an agricultural exporter to an international high-tech superpower, and it has used its wealth and power to come to the aid of others in times of need. I want to especially commend the people of Israel, its defense forces, and the team of 250 Israeli doctors, nurses and relief workers who worked tirelessly to bring aid and comfort to the victims of the devastating earthquake that struck Haiti on January 12, 2010.

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. Despite the threats it continues to face from hostile neighbors and violent militants, the people of Israel have established a vibrant, pluralistic democracy that incorporates the freedoms cherished by all Americans.

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

On the occasion of its 62nd anniversary, I wish the people of Israel continued growth and prosperity. I will continue working with my colleagues in Congress, with the Administration and with the American people to ensure that the enduring bond that unites our two peoples endures for the years and centuries to come. (*Congressional Record, April 21, 2010*)

**Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL)**

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Yom HaAtzmaut, the 62nd anniversary of the independence of the State of Israel, and to reaffirm the unbreakable bond between our two democratic nations.

Sixty-two years ago, on May 14, 1948, the State of Israel declared sovereignty and independence as a homeland for the Jewish people. With little resources and seemingly insurmountable obstacles, Israel has become a thriving and prosperous democracy, and has made worldwide contributions in technology, medicine, agriculture, and environmental innovation. Despite this progress, Israel continues to face threats from hostile actors such as Iran, Hamas, and Hezbollah.

This was strikingly clear when I led a congressional delegation to Israel this past January. Meeting after meeting we heard from strong and resilient Israelis who have lived their lives under the constant showering of rockets and continued suicide bombing attacks. Put simply, we would not allow our government to stand idly by as hundreds of rockets and mortars came crashing down on the heads of our citizens, and we cannot expect Israel to sit idly by either. I believe the Government of Israel has not only a right, but also an obligation to protect its citizens. And I firmly stand by this right and obligation.

Israel's commitment to democracy, freedom of religion, and human rights is a testament to the world view it shares with the United States. We face the same threats in an unstable region. But above all, we share a deep commitment to stand by each other and face the challenges ahead.

One of those challenges that we faced together was the devastating earthquake in Haiti. I commend the efforts and generosity of the Israeli people who worked on the ground in Haiti, the State of Israel, the Israel Defense Forces, and the Israeli people for their outstanding contributions to earthquake relief in Haiti.

In a world of great uncertainty, Israel has been a key partner, ally, and friend of the United States, and I look forward to our continued work together based on these shared values.

Before I close, I would like to take a moment to recognize the Jewish community of South Florida, where I call my home. These inspiring men and women continue to work tirelessly with me so that we can be sure the Jewish State of Israel is secure and prosperous. And it is with them in mind that I say these next three words with gratitude,

passion, and resolve: Am Yisrael Chai! The Nation of Israel lives! (*Congressional Record, April 21, 2010*)

**Rep. Henry Waxman (D-CA)**

Mr. Speaker, this week, Israel marks the 62nd anniversary of the historic date in the Hebrew calendar when the British Mandate over Palestine expired and a modern Jewish state was reborn.

Each year, Israel Independence Day, Yom Ha'atzmaut, is an opportunity to catalogue the remarkable accomplishments of a nation built on the hopes of generations. And it is an opportunity for us to reiterate the enduring support and friendship of the United States government and the American people.

This year, we celebrate a country that has engineered immense economic prosperity, even in the face of the worst economic challenge since the Great Depression. Today, Israel has the second largest number of technology startup companies in the world, after the United States. As we mark the 25th anniversary of the 1984 U.S. Free Trade Agreement, Israel boasts the largest number of NASDAQ-listed companies outside of North America. Considering Israeli leadership in bio-medical, alternative energy, and defense research, it is no surprise that Israeli GDP now rivals countries in Europe.

Military and intelligence cooperation between the United States and Israel has reached unprecedented levels with operations like the joint missile defense exercise Juniper Cobra, approved sales of sensitive military technology, and regular Israeli participation in NATO patrols of the Mediterranean.

In November, I had the honor of attending the dedication of the 9/11 Living Memorial, a monument established by the Jewish National Fund in the foothills of Jerusalem beside a forest planted in the memory of those who perished on 9/11. It is the only memorial outside the United States that names all of the victims and a powerful example of the enduring and emotional connection between our nations.

This year, Yom Ha'atzmaut also comes at a moment of great anxiety. Iran is ramping up efforts to obtain nuclear weapons capability which poses an existential threat to the country's survival. Hezbollah is arming itself with Scud missiles. Gilad Shalit remains in captivity. Gaza remains unstable and in the coming months the United Nations General Assembly will again seek action on the flawed, inaccurate, and biased Goldstone Report on the war in Gaza.

In the face of all these issues, it is clear that the United States is working side-by-side with Israel to meet and resolve all of these challenges.

In the past few weeks, there have been tensions and arguments among good friends. Emotions were high after Vice President *Biden's* recent visit to Israel. It was distressing

that the mishandling of a housing planning announcement tarnished a concrete peace initiative to launch proximity talks designed to facilitate the return to direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. But Israel is not retreating from the road of diplomacy, and neither is the United States. The Palestinian Authority should also stay the course.

What is more significant, are the exceptionally strong statements of support for Israel, its security and our alliance by the President, the Vice President, and the Secretary of State's and Prime Minister Netanyahu's reiteration of his commitment to participate in talks, proximity or direct, without pre-conditions.

Although Israel's enemies want to portray an atmosphere of crisis, there is nothing for them to exploit. The one-state solution they advocate to eradicate the Jewish state is transparently a policy of genocide not peace.

When peace is finally achieved, Jerusalem will remain, as it is today, the eternal capital of Israel. And this will be embraced by the United States in spirit and in law, just as it is today.

The most resounding answer to Israeli's critics is the strength and vibrancy of its democracy, its commitment to live in peace with its neighbors, and its dedication to promoting stability and security in the region.

The United States and Israel have much common ground to celebrate this year as always and we stand proud to do so. (*Congressional Record, April 21, 2010*)