

ISRAEL'S 60TH ANNIVERSARY -- (House of Representatives - April 03, 2008)
FLOOR STATEMENTS

Rep. Tom Reynolds (R-NY)

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.

Rep. Gene Green (D-TX)

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 cochair 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.

Rep. Eliot Engel (D-NY)

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. Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-TX)

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.