April 1998. What was once described as an intractable conflict between Nationalists and Unionists in Northern Ireland never to be solved, has seen unprecedented calm and cooperation under the Good Friday Framework guided by Senator George Mitchell.

The seating of the executive of the power-sharing Assembly was a crucial moment of solidifying peace in Northern Ireland. Nonetheless, two sensitive areas of implementation under Good Friday lagged behind the others: weapons decommissioning and police reform.

The impasse over weapons decommissioning became so strong that it first halted implementation of the Executive last fall, and then forced its suspension in February just as it had been established. A settlement emerged when the Irish Republican Army agreed to allow its weapons dumps to be inspected by a distinguished international group led by former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari and former African National Congress general secretary Cyril Ramaphosa. The weapons dumps were inspected and the National Assembly resumed in April.

Subsequently, the other looming issue of police reform moved to the fore. The Good Friday Accord called for police reform because it is apparent that a police force composed of 93% Protestant and 7% Catholic could not have sufficient credibility with a Northern Ireland community that is split 58% Protestant, 42% Catholic.

To help create a police force that had credibility across all communities, Chris Patten, a leader in Britain's Conservative Party and former Governor of Hong Kong, was enlisted to produce a blueprint for the future. His 1999 report recommended wholesale change including restoring democratic and local accountability to policing, changing the police force's symbols (name, insignia, uniform) to make them community-neutral, as well as downsizing and re-balancing the composition of the force to reflect the make-up of the communities in Northern Ireland.

It is important to note that this document represented a compromise itself. While the current version of the implementing legislation in the British House of Commons incorporates a number of the Patten recommendations, it falls short in a few—particularly in the area of the name change of police service, where it postpones a decision. While only symbolic, the current name of the police service, the Royal Ulster Constabulary, infuriates Nationalists because the name implies allegiance to the Queen and uses the British term for Northern Ireland—anathema for recruiting more Nationalists into the police service. The Patten Commission recommended the more neutral ''Northern Ireland Police Service.''

The current version of the bill in the British House of Commons still fell short enough that moderate Nationalists such as Seamus Mallon abstained when it came up for vote in June. Peace has perservered in Northern Ireland over the past two years when leaders from both sides have followed the tenets of the Good Friday Accord. Good Friday called for full and thorough police reform and the Patten Commission delivered that fair reform. It should be implemented in full.

As the Washington Post said in an editorial in July, ''. . . the onus remains on the British government to respond to Catholic objections. This is because the Catholics have the Good Friday Agreement on their side. The deal called for the appointment of a special police commission, headed by a respected British politician, Chris Patten; the ensuing report laid down the contours of reform. The Catholic side is only asking that this report be implemented fully. London should be happy to do that . . .''

I urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 547.

Mr. LUCAS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Resolution 547, a bipartisan resolution calling upon the British Government to fully implement reforms to Northern Ireland's police force. These reforms are long overdue and are a crucial part of the overall peace process in this troubled region.

After a quarter century of political violence that left thousands dead, the people of Northern Ireland have taken a brave step forward. The Irish are on the brink of a new era of peace with Catholics and Protestants, for the first time, sharing in government responsibility. The people have spoken and the spirit of peace is alive and strong.

As part of the historic Good Friday Agreement, an independent commission was established to make recommendations for future policing needs. The focus of the report was to take politics out of the police force. The population of Northern Ireland is divided almost equally between Protestants and Catholics, yet the police force is nearly entirely made up of Protestants. With a record of brutality and human rights abuses, this type of demographic cannot work to protect the citizens fairly. In order for these communities and families to feel safe, reforms are desperately needed.

When the Patten Commission completed its report, it included almost 200 recommendations. Among other things, the Patten Commission calls upon the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) to change names and symbols, to increase the number of Catholic officers and to provide human rights training and a code of ethics. We must all remember that the Patten report itself was a compromise between the Unionist and Nationalist perspectives. It is not acceptable to compromise further on a compromise already made. The Patten report must be implemented without any significant change.

I have a deep interest in seeing the historic Good Friday Agreement go forward and policing reform must go hand in hand with this effort. We must work to advance this peace process and implement each and every one of the Patten report's recommendations.

It is not an easy task that the Irish have before them, but rather an extremely difficult and defining one. As the world's greatest superpower and home to over 40 million Irish-Americans, the United States must honor its commitment and stand up for peace and justice. We must lead in promoting human rights for all the world's citizens and lend our strong support to the people of Northern Ireland as they continue this journey towards peace.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PITTS). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 547, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PEACE THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS ACT OF 2000

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5272) to provide for a United States response in the event of a unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 5272

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Peace Through Negotiations Act of 2000''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Resolving the political status of the territory controlled by the Palestinian Authority is one of the central issues of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

(2) The Palestinian threat to declare an independent state unilaterally constitutes a fundamental violation of the underlying principles of the Oslo Accords and the Middle East peace process.

(3) On March 11, 1999, the Senate overwhelmingly adopted Senate Concurrent Resolution 5, and on March 16, 1999, the House of Representatives adopted House Concurrent Resolution 24, both of which resolved that: ''any attempt to establish Palestinian statehood outside the negotiating process will invoke the strongest congressional opposition.''.

(4) On July 25, 2000, Palestinian Chairman Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Barak issued a joint statement agreeing that the ''two sides understand the importance of avoiding unilateral actions that prejudice the outcome of negotiations and that their differences will be resolved in good-faith negotiations''.

SEC. 3. POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES.

It shall be the policy of the United States to oppose the unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state, to withhold diplomatic recognition of any Palestinian state that is unilaterally declared, and to encourage other countries and international organizations to withhold diplomatic recognition of any Palestinian state that is unilaterally declared.

SEC. 4. MEASURES TO BE APPLIED IF A PALESTINIAN STATE IS UNILATERALLY DECLARED.

(a) MEASURES.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, beginning on the date that a Palestinian state is unilaterally declared and ending on the date such unilateral declaration is rescinded or on the date the President notifies the Committee on International Relations of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate that an agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority regarding the establishment of a Palestinian state has been concluded, the following measures shall be applied:

(1) DOWNGRADE IN STATUS OF PALESTINIAN OFFICE IN THE UNITED STATES.—

(A) Section 1003 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1988 and 1989 (Public Law 100–204) as enacted on December 22, 1987, shall have the full force and effect of law, and shall apply notwithstanding any waiver or suspension of such section that was authorized or exercised subsequent to December 22, 1987.

(B) For purposes of such section, the term ''Palestine Liberation Organization or any of its constituent groups, any successor to any of those, or any agents thereof'' shall include the Palestinian Authority and the government of any unilaterally declared Palestinian state.

(C) Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to preclude—

(i) the establishment or maintenance of a Palestinian information office in the United States, operating under the same terms and conditions as the Palestinian information office that existed prior to the Oslo Accords; or

(ii) diplomatic contacts between Palestinian officials and United States counterparts.

(2) PROHIBITION ON UNITED STATES ASSISTANCE TO A UNILATERALLY DECLARED PALESTINIAN STATE.—United States assistance may not be provided to the government of a unilaterally declared Palestinian state, the Palestinian Authority, or to any successor or related entity.

(3) PROHIBITION ON UNITED STATES ASSISTANCE TO THE WEST BANK AND GAZA.—United States assistance (except humanitarian assistance) may not be provided to programs or projects in the West Bank or Gaza.

(4) AUTHORITY TO WITHHOLD PAYMENT OF UNITED STATES CONTRIBUTIONS TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS THAT RECOGNIZE A UNILATERALLY DECLARED PALESTINIAN STATE.—The President is authorized to—

(A) withhold up to 10 percent of the United States assessed contribution to any international organization that recognizes a unilaterally declared Palestinian state; and

(B) reduce the United States voluntary contribution to any international organization that recognizes a unilaterally declared Palestinian state up to 10 percent below the level of the United States voluntary contribution to such organization in the fiscal year prior to the fiscal year in which such organization recognized a unilaterally declared Palestinian state.

(5) OPPOSITION TO LENDING BY INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall instruct the United States Executive Director at each international financial institution (as defined in section 1701(c)(2) of the International Financial Institutions Act) to use the voice, vote, and influence of the United States to oppose—

(A) membership for a unilaterally declared Palestinian state in such institution, or other recognition of a unilaterally declared Palestinian state by such institution; and

(B) the extension by such institution to a unilaterally declared Palestinian state of any loan or other financial or technical assistance.

(6) LIMITATION ON USE OF FUNDS TO EXTEND UNITED STATES RECOGNITION.—No funds available under any provision of law may be used to extend United States recognition to a unilaterally declared Palestinian state, including, but not limited to, funds for the payment of the salary of any ambassador, consul, or other diplomatic personnel to such a unilaterally declared state, or for the cost of establishing, operating, or maintaining an embassy, consulate, or other diplomatic facility in such a unilaterally declared state.

(b) SUSPENSION OF MEASURES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The President may suspend the application of any of paragraphs (3) through (5) of subsection (a) for a period of not more than one year if, with respect to the suspension of the application of each such paragraph, the President determines and certifies to the Committee on International Relations of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate that such suspension is in the national security interest of the United States. Such certification shall be accompanied by a justification for the basis of the determination.

(2) RENEWAL.—The President may renew the suspension of the application of any of paragraphs (3) through (5) of subsection (a) for a successive period or periods of not more than one year if, before each such period, the President makes a determination and transmits a certification in accordance with paragraph (1).

(3) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENT.—A suspension of the application of any of paragraphs (3) through (5) of subsection (a) under paragraph (1) or paragraph (2) shall cease to be effective after one year or at such earlier date as the President may specify.

(c) DEFINITION.—For purposes of paragraphs (2) and (3) of subsection (a), the term ''United States assistance''—

(1) means—

(A) assistance under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151 et seq.), except—

(i) assistance under chapter 8 of part I of such Act (relating to international narcotics control assistance);

(ii) assistance under chapter 9 of part I of such Act (relating to international disaster assistance); and

(iii) assistance under chapter 6 of part II of such Act (relating to assistance for peacekeeping operations);

(B) assistance under the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2751 et seq.), including the license or approval for export of defense articles and defense services under section 38 of that Act; and

(C) assistance under the Export-Import Bank Act of 1945; and

(2) does not include counter-terrorism assistance.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 5272, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. GILMAN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

□ 2115

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, because many of my colleagues remain extremely concerned about the possibility that Yasser Arafat and that the PLO will unilaterally declare a Palestinian state, I introduced H.R. 5272, legislation that underscores the need for a negotiated settlement between the two parties.

Our bill, entitled Peace Through Negotiations Act of 2000, H.R. 5272, recognizes that resolving the political status of the territory controlled by the Palestinian Authority is one of the central issues in the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Palestinian threat to declare an independent state unilaterally would constitute a fundamental violation of the underlying principles of the Oslo Accords and the Middle East peace process. That threat continues unabated.

Over 18 months ago, Congress spoke with one voice about the prospects of any unilateral declaration of statehood by the Palestinians. Nonbinding legislation was adopted by both houses stating that, ''any attempt to establish Palestinian statehood outside the negotiating process will invoke the strongest congressional opposition.''

Because Mr. Arafat and other Palestinian officials continue to claim that they may very well unilaterally declare a state before the end of this year, many of us in this body felt the need, as a preventive measure, to act prior to our Congressional adjournment.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, H.R. 5272 establishes that it is a policy of the United States to oppose any unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state and that diplomatic recognition should be withheld if such an act is unilaterally declared.

As a deterrent, the bill would also prohibit all U.S. assistance to the Palestinians except for humanitarian aid. It would downgrade the PLO office in Washington in the event of a unilateral declaration.

This bill also encourages other countries and other international organizations to join our Nation in withholding diplomatic recognition, and authorizes the President of the United States to withhold payment of U.S. contributions to international organizations that recognize a unilaterally declared Palestinian state.

This legislation was marked up in our committee earlier today. An amendment was adopted giving the President limited authority to waive two of the five mandatory measures that are to be applied against a unilaterally declared Palestinian state.

Mr. Speaker, the Peace Through Negotiations Act is a measured, but forceful response to any real possibility of any unilateral Palestinian action. Accordingly, I urge our colleagues' strong support for this important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) who is a co-author of this legislation before us today.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, we all fervently desire the successful conclusion of a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians that would allow Israelis and Palestinians to live free from violence and from the fear of violence. If part of such a mutually agreed, mutually negotiated agreement is the establishment of the Palestinian state with agreed upon borders, and agreed upon and acceptable security guarantees for Israel, I do not believe the United States would have any reason to object.

But a unilaterally declared Palestinian state with no agreed upon borders, with territorial claims certainly conflicting with those of Israel, and with no security guarantees for Israel, is guaranteed to destroy the peace process and is very likely to result in violence and even war.

That is why last July I introduced, along with the gentleman from New York (Mr. REYNOLDS), the Middle East Peace Process Support Act which now has over 100 cosponsors and is the basis of the bill we have before us today. I believe this is an essential bill. I look forward to an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote for it.

The Peace Through Negotiations Act is meant to send a very clear signal to Chairman Arafat and the Palestinian Authority. Do not destroy the peace process. Do not condemn the Middle East to another round of violence and war by unilaterally declaring an independent Palestinian state. We warn you now, the United States will not recognize such a state. It will not give aid to such a state. It will do everything possible to prevent other nations from recognizing or aiding a unilaterally declared Palestinian state in any manner whatsoever.

Chairman Arafat is now threatening to declare a Palestinian state unilaterally by mid November. Because of this continuing threat and the fact that Congress will not be in session in November, or we hope and trust that we will not be in session in November, it is imperative that we enact this bill now so that the Palestinian Authority understands that any unilateral action will produce a sharp and negative response from the United States. We must make clear that, if the Palestinian Authority unilaterally acts to destroy any prospect of a peace agreement and to make war and violence, very likely there will be severe consequences. The purpose of this bill is to deter such an action and those consequences.

At the end of the most recent Camp David summit, Prime Minister Barak and Chairman Arafat reaffirmed the central point of the Oslo agreement and pledged that Israel and the Palestinian Authority would both refrain from any unilateral actions as well as from statements that would incite violence.

If these general principles are followed and the Palestinians remain peacefully engaged with Israel, which has proven to be a willing and a generous peace partner, this legislation will not need to be invoked, but it will have its desired effect by making such peaceful development much more likely.

I want to thank the gentleman from New York (Chairman GILMAN); the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. GEJDENSON), ranking member; and the gentleman from New York (Mr. REYNOLDS) for the hard work they have done in this legislation.

I urge every Member of this House to support this bill because only a negotiated peace can be a lasting peace.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) for his supportive statement.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from the Bronx and Westchester Counties, New York (Mr. ENGEL).

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY) for leading, and he has clearly been a leader on this issue and as we saw before on the Ireland issue.

Mr. Speaker, it seems that we have been here before. Just last year, I was the lead Democratic sponsor of a resolution opposing the unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state and warning that such a unilateral action would provoke a stern response from this Congress.

This measure passed overwhelmingly in the House and by unanimous consent in the Senate. Since then, President Clinton has worked as no President has since Jimmy Carter to achieve an agreement in the Middle East.

After months of serious negotiations in which Israel demonstrated a willingness to compromise on all issues, even those of the utmost importance, an agreement remained out of reach.

Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian negotiators were ultimately unwilling to make the compromises needed to reach a peace accord. Instead, they threatened the world with the possibility of unilaterally declaring themselves a sovereign state.

This type of rhetoric not only falls outside of the bilateral framework for bridging the gap separating the Israelis and Palestinians, it also represents a dangerous escalation.

If this should happen, Israel will likely respond in kind through unilateral actions of its own, including territorial annexation in the West Bank or around Jerusalem.

Yasser Arafat recently took a tour of several European and Arab nations and asked for support of his nonnegotiating declaration of Palestinian statehood. Everywhere he went, Mr. Arafat received a polite ''No, thank you. Please return to the bargaining table.'' Today Congress will emphasize that message with passage of this important bill.

Arafat must know that, if the Palestinians unilaterally declare themselves a state, the United States will provide them no assistance whatsoever. The Palestinian leadership must understand that their goals can only be achieved in the context of direct negotiations with Israel and that such threats not only undermine the peace process but also put at risk its future relationship with the United States.

I, therefore, strongly support H.R. 5272 and commend the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) for his hard work on the legislation.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) for his strong supportive arguments.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Queens, Bronx and Westchester Counties, New York (Mrs. LOWEY).

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5272, the Peace Through Negotiations Act of 2000, and urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

I especially want to thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) for his leadership on this issue and the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN). I am a proud cosponsor of his bill, the Middle East Peace Process Support Act, which provided the foundation for the legislation we are considering today.

I share the frustration and impatience of those who have waited decades for a peace that will safeguard Israel's security and regional stability. After 7 long years of negotiations, an agreement is within reach, and we recognize how important it is that both parties remain dedicated to the completion of this difficult process. We also recognize the damage that could be inflicted by unilateral acts of irresponsible brinksmanship. Compromise, not nonnegotiable demands and political posturing, must guide the peace process.

H.R. 5272 demonstrates unflinching Congressional support for a fair, negotiated peace agreement. This bill simply states that the United States will not recognize nor will it reward the unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state. The rejection of negotiation as the path toward peace is unacceptable, and we have the opportunity to make this clear today.

In the coming weeks, the most difficult issues in the peace process will be on the table, and now, more than ever before, Israel and the Palestinians must show their dedication to realizing the dreams of the Oslo Accords. Let this legislation be a warning: If Chairman Arafat rejects the fundamental precept of Oslo, if he chooses to squander this historic opportunity for peace, the United States' response will be swift and unequivocal.

I have strongly supported generous assistance for governments in the Middle East who have recognized the value of negotiation and cooperation in the pursuit of peace. But make no mistake, our foreign assistance is too dear to waste on regimes bent on self-destructive actions and guerilla tactics. We must send this message to Chairman Arafat today.

Mr. Speaker, I hope this bill is irrelevant. I hope its provisions are never tested and that negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians bear real

fruit. But if the future brings a unilateral declaration of Palestinian independence and a rejection of these negotiations, we must remain steadfast in our support for the peace process and strong in our condemnation of those who would derail this historic opportunity. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this bill.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY) for her strong support of this measure.

Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 3 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in firm support of H.R. 5272, the Peace Through Negotiations Act of 2000. The unilateral declaration of independence by the Palestinian Authority would negate years of progress made by Israel with Palestinians toward a peaceful resolution to their conflict.

This bill clearly illustrates that the United States discourages such an action, and would strongly condemn the Palestinians should they choose to circumvent the peace process to which they had been a faithful party.

I commend the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) for his hard work in crafting this legislation. I would also like to thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), chairman of the Committee on International Relations for recognizing the importance of a timely consideration of this bill.

I have been a close observer of this peace process since its inception. I have witnessed the success, and I have witnessed the setbacks. I regret having to address the issue of restricting aid to the Palestinians when we are so close to reaching an understanding between the two parties.

In my view, the Palestinians have a choice, stay the course towards peace and reap the benefits of establishing a nation conceived out of cooperation and negotiation or bypass the process, declare an independent state, and risk becoming a pariah in the international arena.

As a supporter of the peace process, I am greatly concerned that Palestinian Authority Leader Yasser Arafat will carry through with his threat to create a Palestinian state with or without an agreement. Frankly, Mr. Speaker, I shudder to think of the repercussions resulting from taking such drastic action.

Mr. Arafat, do not let the dream that you have worked your entire life for crumble in order to quell domestic political concerns. I urge you to choose the path to which you have been committed for nearly a decade, the path of peace.

The people of Israel, the West Bank, the Gaza have suffered through enough violence, torment, and death during the years of struggle for the creation of a Palestinian state. Let us work together to ensure that history does not repeat itself.

The purpose of this bill clearly states that if the Palestinian Authority unilaterally declares a Palestinian state, the United States' provision of resources to the Palestinian Authority would cease immediately.

□ 2130

Furthermore, the bill would prohibit the expenditure of any funds for the United States to formally recognize a unilaterally declared independent Palestinian state. As long as Mr. Barak and Mr. Arafat are willing to sit down together and encourage a constructive dialogue to resolve the issues that divide their people, the United States will do its part to support them in that endeavor.

Though I hope the terms of this bill will never be realized, I believe it is a strong commentary on how this country, the U.S., feels about the prospects of peace. To that end, I encourage my colleagues to support H.R. 5272.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PITTS). The gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) has 17 minutes remaining.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, does the gentleman have any further speakers?

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time; and in closing, I wish to emphasize that this legislation represents a measured and an appropriate response to the very serious threat to U.S. interests in the Middle East posed by the continuing suggestions by Palestinian officials that they may unilaterally declare a Palestinian state. Such a declaration could deal a fatal blow to the peace process and would be a very grave mistake.

Our government makes a very serious mistake if it does not make crystal clear to the Palestinian authorities how we would respond to such a step. It is for that reason that I urge strong support for this measure.

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5272, the Peace Through Negotiations Act of 2000, which expresses support for the Middle East peace process and the need for a negotiated settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

This legislation declares that U.S. policy opposes the unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state. Should such a unilateral declaration occur, this measure would prohibit all U.S. assistance to the Palestinians except for humanitarian aid, and would encourage other countries and international organizations to join the U.S. in withholding diplomatic recognition of a Palestinian state. Further, this legislation would authorize the President to withhold U.S. contributions to international organizations that recognize a unilaterally declared Palestinian state.

As a co-sponsor of H.R. 4976, similar legislation introduced by my colleague from New York, JERROLD NADLER, I believe it is appropriate for the Congress to underscore the threat posed by the unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state. Such a declaration would be a violation of the 1993 Oslo Accords, at which Israel and the Palestinians agreed that the determination of the eventual status of the Palestinian entity—as well as other final status issues—can be made only through agreements by both sides. It is critical for both parties to abide by the agreement to resolve permanent status issues through negotiation, not unilateral action.

Peace talks between the Palestinian Authority and Israel were scheduled to end earlier this month, on September 15, 2000. However, unresolved issues—borders, security, settlements, refugees, and the division of Jerusalem—have prevented the two sides from coming to an agreement. Since the unsuccessful completion of the Camp David negotiations in July 2000, PLO Chairman Arafat has renewed his threats to unilaterally declare a Palestinian state. While Chairman Arafat has backed off from those threats and not set a new deadline, I believe this legislation signifies the extent of Congressional resolve, should Chairman Arafat act to carry out his threat after the 106th Congress adjourns.

In March 1999, both houses of Congress adopted H. Con. Res. 24, non-binding legislation which resolved that "any attempt to establish Palestinian statehood outside the negotiating process will invoke the strongest congressional opposition." The Peace Through Negotiations Act is a legislatively binding response, but only if a unilateral declaration of statehood is actually made. I believe the U.S. must continue to strongly support Israel and resolutely oppose the unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state. Accordingly, I urge my colleagues strong endorsement of this landmark legislation.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5272, as amended.

The question was taken.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

MAKING IN ORDER ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2000 MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES AND CALL OF CORRECTIONS CALENDAR

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that it be in order at any time on Wednesday, September 27, 2000, for the Speaker to entertain motions to suspend the rules and pass, or adopt, the following measures:

H.R. 1795, National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Engineering Establishment Act;

H.R. 2641, to make technical corrections to Title X of the Energy Policy Act of 1992;