

to be a world-renowned research institution that the State of Texas truly needs. They won their bowl game, having not won one in a number of years.

It's exciting to see the manner of enthusiasm amongst the alumni and our schools. Obviously our schools are there to educate, but it really is grand for the City of Houston and all of its population to celebrate two great winners, Rice University and the University of Houston, who won their bowl games, 2008.

Go forever, Rice and the University of Houston.

HONORING LETTER CARRIER RICHARD LEAKE

(Mr. CONAWAY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CONAWAY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge an outstanding achievement of one of my constituents, Mr. Richard Leake of San Angelo, Texas.

Mr. Leake is a long-serving letter carrier with the United States Postal Service. He was recently inducted into the Million Mile Club of the National Safety Council in recognition of his impossibly good safety record.

As the name of the award states, Mr. Leake has traveled over 1 million miles on behalf of the Postal Service and done so without causing an accident. His dedication to getting the job done safely every time sets a standard for professionalism and conscientiousness that I believe we should all strive for.

I highlight his accomplishment today to remind us that as we take up the people's business in the 111th Congress, it is possible for us to do our jobs without running over one another.

It is a great pleasure to brag on Mr. Leake today, and I am proud to represent an outstanding constituent here in Washington D.C. On behalf of all the residents of District 11 in Texas, I would like to congratulate him on a career well done and thank him for making the streets of San Angelo a little bit safer.

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COMMENTS ON THE SITUATION IN THE GAZA

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, today I wish to comment on the bloodbath occurring in the Gaza. No human being can watch this carnage and not be reminded of the festering hatred that grows with each successive unleashing of violence in Israel, the Gaza, in the Palestinian territories that sadly rescars that tragic region.

In voting for the resolution today, I want to be clear I did not do so because I believe more war or violence is the

solution to stability. In fact, more war will breed more retribution, as history surely demonstrates. I voted for the resolution because its preamble clearly states our goal is supporting the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

The proportionality of Israel's response to Hamas' incessant terrorist rocket launches is lamentable. Over 750 Palestinians have now died, one-third of them women and children; there have been four Israeli soldiers killed; and in the last 7 years three Israeli casualties from the rocket launches from the Gaza into Israel. Immediately, there is a lack of adequate humanitarian relief from the world community, and for the victims, that is appalling. Two wrongs do not make a right.

My view is, the current administration has left Israel more vulnerable and less stable as hatreds grow toward it regionally. Our Nation's reputation, too, has been badly damaged globally.

I would like to enter into the RECORD today an editorial written by President Jimmy Carter called "The Unnecessary War," the only President in the last 3 decades to achieve real, lasting peace in the Middle East. There is a road forward. His life is proof the future of that region can be better than the past as development replaces war as the common denominator. But that will take courage. It will take perseverance. It will take more than congressional resolutions. It is why our hopes ride high at this moment with the incoming administration of President-elect Barack Obama.

[From the Washington Post, Jan. 8, 2009]

AN UNNECESSARY WAR (By Jimmy Carter)

I know from personal involvement that the devastating invasion of Gaza by Israel could easily have been avoided.

After visiting Sderot last April and seeing the serious psychological damage caused by the rockets that had fallen in that area, my wife, Rosalynn, and I declared their launching from Gaza to be inexcusable and an act of terrorism. Although casualties were rare (three deaths in seven years), the town was traumatized by the unpredictable explosions. About 3,000 residents had moved to other communities, and the streets, playgrounds and shopping centers were almost empty. Mayor Eli Moyal assembled a group of citizens in his office to meet us and complained that the government of Israel was not stopping the rockets, either through diplomacy or military action.

Knowing that we would soon be seeing Hamas leaders from Gaza and also in Damascus, we promised to assess prospects for a cease-fire. From Egyptian intelligence chief Omar Suleiman, who was negotiating between the Israelis and Hamas, we learned that there was a fundamental difference between the two sides. Hamas wanted a comprehensive cease-fire in both the West Bank and Gaza, and the Israelis refused to discuss anything other than Gaza.

We knew that the 1.5 million inhabitants of Gaza were being starved, as the U.N. special rapporteur on the right to food had found that acute malnutrition in Gaza was on the same scale as in the poorest nations in the southern Sahara, with more than half of all Palestinian families eating only one meal a day.

Palestinian leaders from Gaza were non-committal on all issues, claiming that rockets were the only way to respond to their imprisonment and to dramatize their humanitarian plight. The top Hamas leaders in Damascus, however, agreed to consider a cease-fire in Gaza only, provided Israel would not attack Gaza and would permit normal humanitarian supplies to be delivered to Palestinian citizens.

After extended discussions with those from Gaza, these Hamas leaders also agreed to accept any peace agreement that might be negotiated between the Israelis and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, who also heads the PLO, provided it was approved by a majority vote of Palestinians in a referendum or by an elected unity government.

Since we were only observers, and not negotiators, we relayed this information to the Egyptians, and they pursued the cease-fire proposal. After about a month, the Egyptians and Hamas informed us that all military action by both sides and all rocket firing would stop on June 19, for a period of six months, and that humanitarian supplies would be restored to the normal level that had existed before Israel's withdrawal in 2005 (about 700 trucks daily).

We were unable to confirm this in Jerusalem because of Israel's unwillingness to admit to any negotiations with Hamas, but rocket firing was soon stopped and there was an increase in supplies of food, water, medicine and fuel. Yet the increase was to an average of about 20 percent of normal levels. And this fragile truce was partially broken on Nov. 4, when Israel launched an attack in Gaza to destroy a defensive tunnel being dug by Hamas inside the wall that encloses Gaza.

On another visit to Syria in mid-December, I made an effort for the impending six-month deadline to be extended. It was clear that the preeminent issue was opening the crossings into Gaza. Representatives from the Carter Center visited Jerusalem, met with Israeli officials and asked if this was possible in exchange for a cessation of rocket fire. The Israeli government informally proposed that 15 percent of normal supplies might be possible if Hamas first stopped all rocket fire for 48 hours. This was unacceptable to Hamas, and hostilities erupted.

After 12 days of "combat," the Israeli Defense Forces reported that more than 1,000 targets were shelled or bombed. During that time, Israel rejected international efforts to obtain a cease-fire, with full support from Washington. Seventeen mosques, the American International School, many private homes and much of the basic infrastructure of the small but heavily populated area have been destroyed. This includes the systems that provide water, electricity and sanitation. Heavy civilian casualties are being reported by courageous medical volunteers from many nations, as the fortunate ones operate on the wounded by light from diesel-powered generators.

The hope is that when further hostilities are no longer productive, Israel, Hamas and the United States will accept another cease-fire, at which time the rockets will again stop and an adequate level of humanitarian supplies will be permitted to the surviving Palestinians, with the publicized agreement monitored by the international community. The next possible step: a permanent and comprehensive peace.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.