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House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. DEAN).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 23, 2019.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MADELEINE DEAN to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2019, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

HOPE REMAINS FOR PEACE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. POCAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POCAN. Madam Speaker, today we will be taking up a resolution to denounce the BDS movement, the boycott, divestment, and sanctions against Israel.

This region is not unfamiliar to me, as I have been there twice, in both Israel and Palestine. I do not support the BDS movement.

When I was last in Palestine, I asked multiple people with whom I met if

they supported the movement, and the response was that they did not, as they were afraid of the economic effect on Palestine, where many are already struggling.

However, I also do not support the resolution today, as it goes too far, in my opinion, in telling people what they can or should think or say about the situation in Israel.

Israel the country and the Israeli people are good friends of the United States. They are a strong democracy and a close ally of our country. I have supported the Iron Dome as a way to deescalate the tensions that occur when a rocket is sent into Israel from inside Gaza, for example. It is better to take out that missile before there is any damage or death rather than returning a volley of rockets back in response, injuring or killing people of both countries.

But I also think it is okay to be critical of the Netanyahu administration, or government, and their policies.

Look, if a dear friend does something that jeopardizes themselves or their family's lives or livelihoods, I have a moral obligation to say something because I respect my friend. It should be no different with our response to Israel. People have a right to be concerned about a number of actions by the Israeli Government.

We have a right to question how continuing to create illegal settlements into the West Bank will make it harder to broker a two-state solution, the best path forward toward peace in the region, given the additional difficulty of the land swaps.

We have a right to question why it is okay to take Palestinian children, or any child, into a military court for detention by Israel.

We have a right to ask if sectioning off 2 million people in Gaza, with over a million people needing food assistance and 95 percent not having access to clean water, will ever lead to peace,

or why not allowing Members of Congress to go into Gaza from Israel is smart. What don't they want us to see by not allowing us in?

We have a right to ask how demolishing Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem or the West Bank or crops in Gaza serves to further peace in the region.

We have a right to ask why it makes sense to have a major highway with a giant wall in the middle of it with one side for Palestinians and the other for Israelis, as it looks like something we have judged poorly previously in history.

We have a right to ask if a bullet directed at a child is an equivalent response to a thrown rock.

I am not saying that Hamas, the organization that has been recognized by the United States as a terrorist organization, is innocent or pure—anything but. But, obviously, not all Palestinians are Hamas by any stretch of the imagination.

If we really want peace in the region, where we will never have to send young men and women from our country to risk their lives, then we need a government in Israel that respects human rights more and works more aggressively towards peace.

I was told a resolution advocating for a two-state solution would be up today as well, a resolution I support; but apparently it is not, and that is a mistake. Instead, only this resolution opposing BDS is up.

And while I do not support BDS, I cannot support this resolution as worded. My hope is that we will have real peace in the region someday, that we will have a two-state solution where both Israelis and Palestinians will live in peace, both internally and with each other. But this resolution won't do that.

Madam Speaker, I just wish real efforts toward peace were what we were debating today.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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