

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. GLENN. Mr. President, as I understood it, we cannot carry this time over until tomorrow. The time has to be used this evening.

We have 1 hour total equally divided. Is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. GLENN. Mr. President, I would be prepared to yield back the remainder of my time, if the Senator from Colorado is prepared to do the same.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I also would be happy to yield back the remainder of my time for this evening.

Mr. President, at this point I will suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GLENN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that further proceedings under the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### AID TO ISRAEL AND EGYPT

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today in support of U.S. aid to our strongest allies in the Middle East: Israel and Egypt.

I believe foreign aid should be dispensed only when and where it is in America's national interest, and H.R. 1868, the foreign operations, export financing and related appropriations bill of 1996, meets those criteria.

H.R. 1868 authorizes \$3 billion for Israel, including \$1.8 billion in military assistance and \$1.2 billion in economic aid; and \$2.12 billion for Egypt—\$1.3 billion in military aid and \$815,000 in economic assistance.

Mr. President I believe support for Israel and Egypt furthers our goal of supporting countries that defend and advance America's interests.

The Middle East is an incredibly volatile region and events that transpire there have major implications for the United States. Both Israel and Egypt help protect our strategic interests in that part of the world and for this reason they deserve our continued support.

Now is not the time to abandon our friends, but rather the time to assist them as they face many of the same challenges we do as we strive to promote stability in the post-cold war world.

The Middle East has witnessed historic changes that seemed unimaginable only 5 years ago: the collapse of the Soviet Union has removed the most powerful supporter of rogue nations in the region; the United States, with Egypt's crucial involvement, led an international coalition in a successful effort during the Persian Gulf War; political and economic relations were established between Israel and Morocco, Tunisia, and many other countries around the world; bilateral negotiations were initiated between Israel and

some of her most ardent enemies; an agreement between Israel and the Palestinians was formalized; and a peace treaty between Israel and Jordan was signed.

But despite these developments and achievements, the Middle East is still among the most dangerous regions in the world.

Instability in the Middle East is contrary to our national security interests because it threatens the supply of oil, which could create a crisis the likes of which the people of Western Europe and America have experienced before. It could also threaten our access to the Suez Canal and increase the influence of terrorist regimes.

And this instability could resurface at any time. Parties opposed to the peace process have sought to undermine it. Economic underdevelopment in many countries breeds political instability and even violence.

In order to minimize these dangers while continuing to build on historic accomplishments in the region, United States support for Israel and Egypt is as critical today as ever. Both Israel and Egypt stand firmly with us in countering these threats.

The joint military exercises the United States conducts with Israel promote American goals in the region by solidifying a cooperative strategic plan which can be quickly implemented. Dozens of American weapons systems, including the Patriot missile and the F-15 fighter, have been improved with Israeli technological innovations. The Arrow missile program, which has been a joint American-Israeli project, should some day help America and our allies protect ourselves against ballistic missile attacks. I should also point out that aid to Israel is used primarily to purchase United States-made military equipment.

Similarly, joint United States-Egyptian military exercises have proven fruitful in such coordinated efforts as Desert Shield and Desert Storm. As the United States assists in maintaining the efficiency of the Egyptian armed forces, these forces can continue to protect and enhance our interests in the region. Furthermore, Egypt purchases over 85 percent of its military equipment from the United States, including the M1A1 tanks.

Mr. President, we must authorize these funding levels not only because it makes sense when considering our strategic goals in the Middle East, but also because it is consistent with our objectives in the ongoing peace process.

As the chief sponsor of both past and current peace negotiations, the United States should maintain its leadership role in pursuing peace in the region by continuing its unequivocal support for Israel and Egypt. Peaceful resolutions to Middle East conflicts will promote stability in this important part of the world.

The provisions of this aid package are, in my view, well structured to serve the interests of Americans, Israelis and Egyptians.

Additionally, H.R. 1868 provides funding for the United States to assist the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza as they develop their economy and strive to accomplish peace in the region. In my view, the United States should help lead an international community effort to stimulate private investment in Gaza and Jericho, including the continuation of a free-trade agreement and the development of industrial parks. Such initiatives can drive economic growth for the Palestinians. A stronger economy in turn will ultimately help produce peaceful self-rule.

Mr. President, I believe we must continue to assist nations which serve our interests by promoting stability in a volatile region. I am hopeful that ultimately there will be a peaceful resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. I urge my colleagues to vote for this legislation, because I believe aid to Israel and Egypt, as well as to the Palestinians, is a small price to help attain paramount international goal of the United States—permanent stability and peace in the Middle East.

I yield the floor.

Mr. GLENN. Mr. President, during the wrapup tonight—I know the procedures for tomorrow will be laid out by my distinguished colleague here. Since the regular floor managers for this bill are not here this evening, I would like to point out that Senator FEINSTEIN had hoped to be able to put her amendment in and have it considered at the end of the hour period and following the vote that will occur on Senator BROWN's amendment.

Although the managers are not here tonight, I hope we can honor that position for her so that the votes on this same subject will occur at about the same time or in sequence tomorrow. I hope that the floor managers tomorrow will look favorably on that, although they are not here to approve that tonight.

I yield the floor.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for the transaction of routine morning business with Senators permitted to speak up to 5 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Thomas, one of his secretaries.

#### EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.