NOT A HEARTBREAK HOTEL
HON. THOMAS E. PETRI
OF WISCONSIN
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, on March 6, the Christian Science Monitor printed a very perceptive and useful article on the Middle East peace process by Ralph Nurnberger, a fair-minded long-time expert in this area. For the benefit of my colleagues, I ask that it be reprinted in the Record at this point.

[From the Christian Science Monitor, Thursday, March 6, 1997]

NOT A HEARTBREAK HOTEL
(By Ralph Nurnberger)

The day before he left for his official visit to the United States, Yasser Arafat presided over the groundbreaking ceremony for a Marriott Hotel to be built on the beachfront in Gaza.

This project says, symbolically, that the Middle East peace process might, finally, produce results for the people on the ground, especially those who seek employment in Israel, the numbers able to cross the borders are significantly below the 120,000 able to find daily work in Israel in 1992.

While the Netanyahu government has eased some limits on Palestinians seeking employment in Israel, thousands of Palestinians seek employment in Israel, the numbers able to cross the borders are significantly below the 120,000 able to find daily work in Israel in 1992.

Had Arafat been able to reduce tension, the momentum from the ground up, the peace process might have succeeded. For the majority of Israelis and Palestinians, it is whether the peace accords will result in an improved quality of life. Developing a thriving economy that provides new employment opportunities will remove the need for these tensions, but will also bring about the promise of a new life.

Economic divergence exacerbates political and religious tensions. Since the first Rabin-Arafat signing, Israeli per capita income has increased from $13,800 to over $15,000, while Palestinian incomes have dropped by a third to under $1,200.

Delays and relocations of internationally pledged contributions, the reluctance of foreign investors to establish projects in Gaza and the West Bank, border closures, the slow pace of diplomatic negotiations, and difficulties encountered in setting up a viable Palestinian economy have contributed to growing frustration. Public infrastructure and services, including education, health care, sanitation, water, waste water disposal, and electricity, continue to be inadequate. Despite a minor building boom, a housing shortage remains.

While the Netanyah government has eased some limits on Palestinians seeking employment in Israel, the number of those able to cross the borders are significantly below the 120,000 able to find daily work in Israel in 1992.

Rather than growing to absorb these workers, the Palestinian economy has declined over the past two years. Thus, workers have lost some opportunities to find employment within Palestinian areas. The unemployment rate in Gaza, always high, is now estimated at approximately 50 percent, with the rate in the West Bank at 30 percent. Unemployment is highest among young, single men—the most likely recruits for terror-oriented groups.

BIG AID PLEDGES, LITTLE FOLLOW-THROUGH

At the US hosted an international meeting on Oct. 1, 1993, at which $2.4 billion in assistance to the West Bank and Gaza was pledged. Most of these funds have not been delivered or have been diverted from long-term emergency programs and to objects other than the rapid construction of new housing units.

The United States committed $500 million, of which $75 million annually for five years, is managed by the Agency for International Development (AID). The other $25 million was to come from the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) to assist American investors through a combination of loans, loan guarantees, and political risk insurance.

AID has assisted a number of worthwhile projects, including $12 million for construction of six housing units with 192 apartments in Gaza called Al Karam Towers. AID is also helping to improve water resources and assisting private sector economic growth through technical assistance, training, loans to local firms, and establishment of industrial parks. But AID funds have been diverted from long-term projects to help in establishing Palestinian self-rule. For example, AID committed $2 million to support local elections in the West Bank and Gaza, and to assist Palestinians in promoting more responsible and accountable government.

AID has minimized help for the agricultural sector, the one area where Palestinians could immediately develop profitable exports, especially under a new Free Trade Agreement. mango, citrus, dates, and olives, could be sold to foreign markets. By helping out the Palestinian Authority, AID has led the way, even where subcontractors are concerned. AID has been leading the way in helping out the Palestinian Authority, AID has led the way, even where subcontractors are concerned.

Every Member of Congress has heard about some of the OSHA's ridiculous regulations and tactics from their constituents. It's time to send