

□ 1830

However, Mr. Speaker, the Speaker of this House is not entitled to act unilaterally as an independent emissary representing his own personal foreign policy; he is not entitled to act like the Secretary of State in waiting. I would like to continue to believe that he is not putting domestic politics above the national interest.

Mr. Speaker, as Pat Holt, writing for the Christian Science Monitor wrote last week, quote, "One of the so far unsurmountable difficulties is that neither most Jews nor most Palestinians are willing to admit that the other side has always suffered legitimate grievances. If either group could see their dispute through the eyes of each other, the peace process would take a giant leap forward."

Instead, in my view, the Speaker's actions are likely to make that leap more difficult.

Mr. Speaker, U.S. Presidents have consistently exerted pressure on Israel as a friend and ally in the context of obtaining diplomatic solutions to complex problems. In 1973 under President Nixon, the United States threatened to reassess Israeli relations in order to secure withdrawals in the 1973 war. President Carter exercised his influence over Menachem Begin at Camp David to grant concessions on giving the Sinai Peninsula back to Egypt. He also exercised his influence over Anwar Sadat to not insist on concessions beyond Camp David to the Palestinians. Both of those actions were necessary to move the process forward. President Bush took a courageous stand in 1991 to withhold support for U.S. loan guarantees to Israel until understandings on Israeli settlements were reached.

These were all tough actions taken by U.S. leaders to help a friend, and Israel is a friend, while at the same time protecting U.S. national interests. What the Speaker has done, in my view, is to make it more difficult for Israel to make tough decisions that it needs to think through and make for their own long-term interests.

That is no doubt why the column written about this episode by Thomas Friedman in The New York Times was headlined, "Brainless in Gaza." It is also probably why Richard Cohen of the Washington Post wrote, quote, "Whatever the case, the Speaker is playing with fire. Netanyahu is a notoriously unpredictable fellow who vacillates between accommodating the Palestinians and rebuffing them. He has an inflated view of his standing in Congress. (The Israeli press quoted him as vowing to 'burn down Washington' if Clinton publicly blamed him for scuttling the peace process), which GINGRICH has done precious little to correct. His political allies are some of the most reactionary and fanatical elements in Israeli society, zealots who want land more than peace. They know what God intends. Others, though, are less sure. In fact, a good many Israelis think there will be no security until

Israel and the Palestinians reach an agreement about land. GINGRICH has now complicated that process, encouraging Netanyahu in his intransigence and Arab radicals in their bitterness."

Mr. Speaker, I would add parenthetically, it also makes it easier for cynical Palestinian rejectionists to undercut any willingness displayed by the PLO leadership to live up to their promises.

Richard Cohen then concluded his column as follows: Quote, "If the Nobel Committee gives a booby prize for peace, this year's winner is a foregone conclusion. NEWT, take a bow."

Mr. Speaker, the world's Jews and Israelis in particular have paid a terrible price for the world's intermittent fits of insanity. Israel would not have been created without the actions of the United States 50 years ago in trying to create a place that would be a sanctuary for that insanity.

Because we helped create the State of Israel, we have a special obligation to stand by it and to assure its survival. But with that obligation comes a concurrent obligation to be frank and truthful with them and the world about what steps we believe are necessary to change the Middle East into a neighborhood that is safer for Israel's survival. For any American President to be silent in the face of Israeli indecision or miscalculation would be the ultimate failure of friendship. The President and our negotiators, who long ago have demonstrated their concern for Israel's future, have courageously recognized that.

Now, ultimately, the hard decisions that need to be made are Israeli and Palestinian decisions. The President and our negotiators have long ago demonstrated that they understand that too. Let them make those decisions in honest dialogue in partnership with the steady and knowledgeable American hands who have worked with them under Republican and Democratic administrations alike. Let them not be misled by new-to-the-scene kibitzers in Congress who, despite their bravado, do not really know the territory or the sensitivities and cross-currents and intricacies that shape it.

It may be popular for individual Members of Congress to issue pronouncements that tell our friends at home and abroad what they want to hear, but that is not what dangerous situations require. They require thoughtful, measured and judicious cooperation between the executive and legislative branches of government. That, unfortunately, has not been forthcoming from this congressional leadership on this issue. It is about time that it is.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2646, THE EDUCATION SAVINGS AND SCHOOL EXCELLENCE ACT OF 1998

Mr. HASTINGS, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 105-579) on the resolution (H. Res. 471) waiving points of order against the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 2646) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow tax-free expenditures from education individual retirement accounts for elementary and secondary school expenses, to increase the maximum annual amount of contributions to such accounts, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3097, THE TAX CODE TERMINATION ACT OF 1998

Mr. HASTINGS, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 105-580) on the resolution (H. Res. 472) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3097) to terminate the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

NUCLEAR TESTS NOT A PRODUCT OF KASHMIR

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my concern over efforts to link Kashmir to the underground nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan.

As my colleagues know, India and Pakistan conducted nuclear tests last month. The United States condemned the tests and immediately imposed economic sanctions on both countries. The United States has called for both India and Pakistan to stop further nuclear tests, not to weaponize their nuclear arsenal, sign nonproliferation treaties, and work towards easing tensions in South Asia. These are goals that I fully support.

However, there seems to be a growing movement to link Kashmir to the nuclear tests, a linkage which makes no sense, in my opinion.

Earlier this week, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright stated that the "recent decisions by India and Pakistan to conduct nuclear tests reflect old thinking about national greatness and old fears stemming from a boundary dispute that goes back more than 5 decades."

In the Senate, there has been talk of a resolution that would call for U.N. mediation in Kashmir through a U.N. Security Council resolution. The resolution would also ask the United