

credit unions in Syracuse, NY raised \$150,000 in a single weekend. Empire Corporate FCU, located in Albany, NY has created a \$2 million "interest free" loan fund for credit unions in Manhattan to assist their members or help rebuild their infrastructure. The National Credit Union Foundation, operated by the Credit Union National Association on behalf of 80 million credit union members, has raised \$250,000 through its Credit Unions Rebuild America. In addition to providing operational and financial assistance, credit unions are extending special services to surviving members in the form of lower loan rates, deferred payments on credit, longer grace periods and fee waivers.

As owners of their cooperative financial institution, credit union members feel a sense of community, which is especially apparent during periods of financial hardship. I urge my colleagues to speak with the credit unions in their districts and to encourage their constituents to turn to credit unions for help. The New York credit unions have demonstrated to me their willingness to reach out during this time of extraordinary need to help our communities. Their cooperative spirit will not only see their members through these trying times, but will make us stronger as a Nation in the end.

TRIBUTE TO LATSON ROAD  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

**HON. MIKE ROGERS**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 25, 2001*

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding achievement of Latson Road Elementary School from Howell, Michigan, in receiving a Blue Ribbon Award. Recipients of the Blue Ribbon Award must meet rigorous standards and criteria including: attention to student support, fostering student culture, building community partnerships, meeting challenging standards, and ensuring the quality of their teachers. Furthermore, the process to be recognized at the national level is long and arduous with first being selected by the state department of education to a site visit by a national panel of reviewers to being nominated by the U.S. Secretary of Education. The final step includes the presentation of the awards given tonight at a prestigious banquet in honor of Michigan's top schools.

The Blue Ribbon Award is the hallmark in achieving academic excellence for a school. But a school is a great deal more than a building with chalkboards. A successful school is only as good as the people behind it. Therefore, I wish to wholeheartedly commend the principal, teachers, parents and students that dedicated their time and efforts into making this award possible. I am proud to represent Latson Road Elementary School, a shining example of excellence in education.

ENDORSE THE MITCHELL COMMITTEE REPORT RESOLUTION: SUPPORT AMERICAN INTERESTS BY WORKING TOWARD A JUST, LASTING PEACE BETWEEN ISRAELIS AND PALESTINIANS

**HON. JOHN D. DINGELL**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 25, 2001*

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of myself and the 29 colleagues who have joined me as original cosponsors, I rise today to announce the introduction of an important concurrent resolution pertaining to the ongoing violence in Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip. As we all know, this violence not only endangers Israelis, Palestinians, and their neighbors, but it threatens the interests of the United States at this most critical time.

In introducing this resolution—which is strongly supported by the Administration—my colleagues and I are sending a clear message that violence in this troubled region is unacceptable and serves no one's long-term interests. It stresses that the Mitchell Committee Report offers the best road map toward ending the current cycle of violence and restarting the peace process in the Middle East. It notes that U.S. leadership is vital to creating and implementing a just and lasting peace. Finally, it highlights the fact that peace between Israel and the Palestinian Authority is America's best interest now and in the future.

In the past week we have seen violence beget violence. Assassinations do not serve the interests of the Palestinians. Unjust, aggressive acts do not serve the interests of Israel. Most importantly these acts do not serve American interests, particularly at a time when we are engaged in war and the delicate diplomacy of coalition building. These acts harm our ability to effectively meet and beat the forces of evil that we are fighting in Afghanistan.

I would note that while neither party is beyond reproach, I am troubled by what is taking place in Bethlehem, Beit Rima, and elsewhere. I am deeply troubled that when we shared our concerns with the Government of Israel and asked that they refrain from escalating violence by occupying additional Palestinian lands, they refused.

Mr. Speaker, as we wage war on terrorism, we must be careful to remember that while we have many allies, we must not allow any single country to use this conflict to justify any and all actions they take in their national interest. American interests overlap with the interests of other countries on many points, but they are not identical. American interests must be our priority and must prevail.

The Israel-Palestinian conflict has left thousands dead since 1948, and hundreds dead in the last year. This conflict must be resolved. Both sides have suffered, are suffering, and will continue to suffer if nothing is done. It is in the interest of our nation to encourage these parties to halt the violence and make peace.

The Mitchell Committee was created by the mutual agreement of the United States, Israel, the Palestinian Authority, Egypt, Jordan, the United Nations, and the European Union at the conclusion of the Sharm el-Sheikh Middle East Peace Summit on October 17, 2000. The

Mitchell Committee studied the ongoing violence over a period of months, and the report they submitted included objective findings and constructive recommendations as to how to end the violence and rebuild confidence that will enable the parties to return to the negotiating table.

The United States, the UN, Israel, and the Palestinian Authority endorsed the Mitchell Committee Report because it is the best blueprint as to how to get the peace process back on track. It was accepted because it is a fair and balanced report that highlights the fact that both parties are responsible for the starting and perpetuating violence, and both parties are responsible for stopping it.

Mr. Speaker, the resolution I have introduced is balanced and fair, and merely expresses this body's support for the Mitchell Committee Report. Passing this resolution will send a message to both Israelis and Palestinians that the United States is a true partner for peace, and will work toward creating a just, lasting peace that will protect the interests of all parties.

This resolution enjoys the strong support of the Bush Administration, and I submit a copy of an October 5, 2001, letter of support from the State Department. This letter notes the following:

Passage of this resolution, without amendment, would make a positive and welcome contribution to the Administration's work with the parties to end the violence, implement the Mitchell Committee recommendations, and return to substantive negotiations.

Mr. Speaker, violence between the Israelis and Palestinians only begets more violence. This needless bloodshed runs counter to the interests of all parties, including the United States. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution and demonstrate their support for peace and the Administration's efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinians conflict in a just, balanced manner.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
*Washington, DC, October 5, 2001.*

DEAR MR. DINGELL: Thank you very much for your letter to Secretary Powell and for sharing with us the text of your Concurrent Resolution. Passage of this resolution, without amendment, would make a positive and welcome contribution to the Administration's work with the parties to end the violence, implement the Mitchell Committee recommendations, and return to substantive negotiations. We appreciate very much your support.

As you point out, the Mitchell Committee recommendations represent a practical path back to productive negotiations between the parties. Before negotiations can begin, however, it is essential that the violence end and that both sides do everything possible to restore an atmosphere of calm. The meeting between Israeli Foreign Minister Peres and Chairman Arafat and the renewed security coordination which followed that meeting are important steps in this direction.

It is important that both Palestinians and Israelis avoid actions that jeopardize this renewed dialogue. Both sides must engage in the fullest possible coordination on security issues to help ensure a lasting halt to violence and terror. The Israelis should refrain from provocative acts that can only escalate tensions and undermine efforts to bring about a lasting halt to violence. For their part, the Palestinian authority must take sustained and effective steps to preempt violence and arrest those responsible for planning and conducting acts of violence and terror.