

America's commitment to Israel's security has been one of the principal pillars of U.S. policy in the Middle East.

Today, Prime Minister Olmert faces great challenges. In January's Palestinian legislative elections, Hamas won a majority of parliamentary seats. Hamas is a known terrorist organization that has called publicly for Israel's destruction. It has repeatedly demonstrated its willingness to employ violence and terrorism in pursuit of this objective.

On April 17, a Palestinian suicide bomber killed nine people in an attack in Tel Aviv during the Passover holiday. The Hamas government refused to condemn the bombing.

Here in Congress we share the view that Hamas is a terrorist organization and needs to take substantial steps to become a partner for peace. We are in agreement that Hamas must recognize Israel, renounce its violence and terrorism, disarm its militias, and abide by all previous agreements with Israel, including the roadmap for peace. Until Hamas meets these conditions, foreign assistance for the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority will not be forthcoming.

Since taking office, Prime Minister Olmert has repeated his desire to negotiate an end to this conflict. In fact, he has stated that negotiations with a credible peace partner that is genuinely and demonstrably committed to a peaceful two-state solution and that will end terrorism against Israel is "the most stable and desired basis for the political process."

The Prime Minister has stated that he will allow time for a credible peace partner to emerge in the Palestinian Authority, and like his predecessor, he has demonstrated the willingness and ability to make the difficult decisions necessary for peace in the Middle East. I hope Prime Minister Olmert will continue along this path and get the peace process back on track. I commend the Prime Minister for his leadership in the months since former Prime Minister Sharon's stroke. He can be assured of our continued support.

The United States is proud to be a friend and ally to the people of Israel. The Prime Minister's visit to the Capitol today underscores our strong bilateral relationship. My colleagues and I look forward to working closely with the Prime Minister and his new government to achieve the vision of two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security.

#### RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 12 noon.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 10:28 a.m., took a recess, and the Senate, preceded by the Secretary of the Senate, Emily Reynolds, and the Deputy Sergeant at Arms, Lynne Halbrooks, proceeded to the Hall of the House of Representa-

tives to hear the address by the Prime Minister of Israel, Ehud Olmert.

(The address delivered to the joint session of the two Houses of Congress is printed in the Proceedings of the House of Representatives in today's RECORD.)

At 12 noon, the Senate reassembled and was called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. COBURN.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. In my capacity as a Senator from Oklahoma, I suggest the absence of a quorum. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. MURKOWSKI). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM ACT OF 2006—CONTINUED

##### AMENDMENT NO. 4085

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, I make a point of order that the amendment of the Senator from Kentucky is not germane under rule XXII.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The point of order is sustained.

Mr. KENNEDY. I thank the Chair.

Madam President, in accordance with the agreement that was entered into yesterday, the Senator from West Virginia is prepared to address the Senate on mine safety and then to debate his amendment. I look forward to that discussion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

Mr. BYRD. Madam President, what is so lovely as a day in June? I repeat my question. What is so lovely as a day in June? Of course, the Presiding Officer, who graces the Chair this afternoon, she is—I have said enough. People have caught on already. I am talking about somebody who is as lovely as a day in June. But beauty is in the eye of the beholder, they say.

##### MINE SAFETY

Madam President, this morning the Senate unanimously passed critical mine safety legislation in response to the coal mine tragedies that robbed the State of West Virginia of 18 of its sons this year. A process that began with the introduction of the West Virginia delegation's mine safety bill has taken a significant step forward today. We have learned from the tragedy at Sago, and we have learned from the subsequent mining fatalities in West Virginia, Kentucky, Utah, Alabama, and Maryland.

If the House acts quickly on legislation and the Federal mine regulators are quick in implementing the bill, the miners of our Nation, the miners of our country, will soon have the oxygen—yes, the oxygen—communications, and rescue teams necessary to save lives and to prevent future tragedies. We saw in Kentucky over the weekend

that these mine accidents can happen at any time, so the Senate's quick and unanimous passage of the Senate committee-reported bill this morning is greeted by all who mine coal with welcome relief.

On behalf of the many grateful coal miners and their families in West Virginia, I thank the chairman and ranking member of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, Senators MIKE ENZI and TED KENNEDY. I thank them, yes, I do, on behalf of these people.

I was raised in the home of a coal miner. I married, 69 years ago, the daughter of a coal miner. I know about the lives—the joys and the sadnesses that come to the lives—of the men and women who work in the mines. They are a special breed. They are going to a mine, where an explosion has just occurred, to risk their own lives for other men and women who may be trapped in that mine. A special breed.

So I thank Senators ENZI and KENNEDY for their great work. They have performed a mission. I also thank Senators ISAKSON and MURRAY, the chairman and ranking members of the full committee and the Subcommittee on Employment and Workplace Safety, who committed themselves to the task of producing a mine safety bill. They were unyielding in that effort.

Along with Senator ISAKSON, Chairman ENZI and Senator KENNEDY visited the Sago and Alma mines in West Virginia. Yes, they did. I thank them again. Along with Senator ISAKSON, Chairman ENZI and Senator KENNEDY visited the Sago and Alma mines in West Virginia. They talked with the families of those who had perished. What a sad day. They took a personal interest in the safety of the coal miners of my State.

When it came time to draft a committee bill, the chairman and ranking member graciously solicited the ideas of Senator ROCKEFELLER and myself. Senator ROCKEFELLER has been away for a while recovering from back surgery. He has been away for several weeks now. Senator ROCKEFELLER is a true friend of the coal miners of West Virginia and the miners throughout the Nation. Senator ROCKEFELLER has been recovering from back surgery for several weeks now, but he contributed much—yes, much—to the discussions that produced this bill.

Even in recovery, JAY ROCKEFELLER, my esteemed colleague, is a strong presence. He has been and is a strong presence in the Senate, and throughout his career he has been a very forceful advocate for the safety of coal miners, the miners of West Virginia.

With Senate passage today, our hopes are high that the House of Representatives will act quickly on legislation that can be enacted into law. The sooner Congress passes legislation, the safer our coal miners will be at work, and the greater the likelihood the future disasters can be prevented. Our Nation's coal miners and their families deserve no less.