

for their swift offer of assistance for our citizens and for their efforts to alleviate the distress and suffering of our families. I pray for their safe return.

There also have been some other positive developments recently, based on Cypriot President Papadopoulos' initiative. He and Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat agreed earlier this month to begin a process of bi-communal discussions to find a comprehensive settlement to the Cyprus problem. The decision, which is part of a set of agreed upon principles, was made during a meeting between the two leaders in Cyprus with the U.N. Undersecretary General for Political Affairs Ibrahim Gambari. The two leaders stressed their commitment to the unification of Cyprus, based on a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation, and political equality, as set out in the relevant Security Council resolutions.

President Papadopoulos already has submitted a comprehensive proposal for the establishment of two committees on Economic Integration and Population Determination. The Government of Cyprus also has proposed and is ready for the establishment of additional bi-communal committees that will tackle other problems arising from the division of the island. Asked about Turkey's EU accession course in relation with the developments in the Cyprus problem, President Papadopoulos said they were two separate issues, and pointed out that Ankara still had to meet its obligations toward the EU. In a conversation with President Papadopoulos, U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan expressed his satisfaction with the result of the meeting and congratulated both sides.

The agreement is the first positive result after the meeting in Paris last February between President Papadopoulos and U.N. Secretary General Annan, where they had expressed their common hope that these discussions would help restore trust between the two communities and prepare the way for the earliest full resumption of the negotiating process.

The following is the set of principles agreed to on July 8, 2006:

1. Commitment to the unification of Cyprus based on a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation and political equality, as set out in the relevant Security Council resolutions.

2. Recognition of the fact that the status quo is unacceptable and that its prolongation would have negative consequences for the Turkish and Greek Cypriots.

3. Commitment to the proposition that a comprehensive settlement is both desirable and possible, and should not be further delayed.

4. Agreement to begin a process immediately, involving bi-communal discussion of issues that affect the day-to-day life of the people and other substantive issues, both of which will contribute to a comprehensive settlement.

5. Commitment to ensure that the "right atmosphere" prevails for this process to be successful. In that connection, confidence building measures are essential, both in terms of improving the atmosphere and improving the life of all Turkish and Greek Cypriots. This requires putting an end to the so-called "blame game."

The following are the decisions by Mr. Papadopoulos and Mr. Talat:

1. The Technical Committees on issues that affect the day-to-day life of people will com-

mence by the end of July provided that, at the same time, the two Leaders will also have exchanged a list of issues of substance and its contents to be studied by expert bi-communal working groups and finalized by the Leaders.

2. The two Leaders will meet further, from time to time as appropriate, to give directions to the expert bi-communal working groups as well as to review the work of the Technical Committees.

I would like to stress that the Government of Cyprus continues to emphasize that it remains committed to reunify Cyprus as a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation with democratic and human rights for all Cypriots. The Cypriot Government has announced a series of measures aimed at assisting those Turkish-Cypriots residing under the control of the occupying Turkish army. The package included a wide range of political, social, humanitarian, educational and economic measures that would enhance the Turkish-Cypriots' ability to enjoy many of the benefits that the Republic of Cyprus offers to its citizens—including benefits which result from its European Union membership. Far beyond a merely symbolic gesture, the package is a substantive program to integrate the Turkish-Cypriot community into the larger Cypriot society.

The Republic of Cyprus and Greek-Cypriots have provided the Turkish-Cypriot community more than \$700 million dollars in aid. In the past two years, the Government of Cyprus has paid more than \$43 million dollars in social insurance pensions to Turkish-Cypriots, and Turkish-Cypriots working outside the Green Line made \$7 million dollars in wages last year. Since April 2003, more than 24,000 Turkish-Cypriots have received free treatment in hospitals and medical centers inside the Republic of Cyprus, the combined cost of which totals more than \$9 million.

Since the invasion more than three decades ago, Turkish-occupied areas have received free electricity from the Cyprus Electricity Authority at a cost of nearly \$343 million. Also, more than 150,000 birth certificates, identity cards and passports have been provided to Turkish-Cypriots by the Republic of Cyprus, so that Turkish-Cypriots could travel and acquire work more efficiently. The Republic of Cyprus has begun a program where it pays the full tuition fees of Turkish-Cypriot pupils in secondary education private schools in the government-controlled areas. To date, this program has promised more than \$5.4 million in tuition fees, and the program added five times as many students this year than it did in 2003, its first year.

The occupying Turkish regime partially relaxed restrictions that limited travel across the Green Line. Since then, there have been more than ten million incident-free border crossings by Turkish and Greek Cypriots to visit areas and homes that were inaccessible to them for over 30 years. This has produced rare displays of human kinship, exchanges of flowers and pastries, and emotional visits to homes abandoned in the mid-1970s. As a result, Greek-Cypriots have infused more than \$57 million into the impoverished, Turkish-occupied economy in the North.

Still, neither the Government's incomplete, albeit well-intentioned, benefit package for Turkish-Cypriots, nor the limited lifting of restrictions by Turkey's occupying regime, substitutes for a comprehensive resolution to end Cyprus' divide. I urge the Bush Administration,

the United Nations, the European Union, and this honorable body to remain engaged in efforts to resolve the Cyprus problem, and to work toward a fair and lasting reunification of Cyprus.

We should look to correct the wrong that occurred more than thirty years ago. We should work to bring about a just resolution to the situation. And, at the very least, we must act to halt the continuing injustice which the world community allows to continue in Cyprus, our proven and strong ally.

TRIBUTE TO MR. ALFREDO
ZAMORA

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 2006

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Alfredo Zamora, Jr., Chief Executive Officer of South Texas Rural Health Services, Inc., for his exemplary leadership in providing healthcare to those living in rural areas in South Texas.

Alfredo Zamora, Jr. was born on June 19, 1941, to his Mexican-American migrant parents, Guadalupe Cantu and Alfredo Zamora. His family would travel to Wisconsin, and to the fields of Illinois to work the land there. After he graduated from Cotulla High School in 1961, he joined the United States Army, and received a honorable discharge in 1963, which allowed him to attend a teacher's college where he then continued his further education at Carthage College in Kenosha, Wisconsin, and he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in elementary education in 1968.

He also received a fellowship in the Ford Foundation Leadership Development Program in 1969 that helped him learn how to become an effective leader in advocacy, community organizing, and political awareness. The leadership skills that Mr. Zamora learned was put to great use by becoming the first Mexican-American mayor of the City of Cotulla in the State of Texas. In 1972, Mr. Zamora was recruited to become Executive Director of SER-Jobs For Progress, an advocacy organization that helped represent Hispanics in Racine, Wisconsin. He also attended the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee where he received his M.S. in Supervision and Administration, and extensive study work towards his Ph.D. in Urban Education during his tenure with SER-Jobs For Progress.

In 1981, Mr. Zamora was hired as Chief Executive Officer of South Texas Rural Health Services, Inc., a community health center. He has successfully guided the organization from a singular site and a \$250,000 operating budget to approximately \$4.5 million worth of needed services to a multiple-county service area in South Texas. Mr. Zamora has spent his life working to help better the lives of those in his community, and I commend him for his commitment to South Texas and to improving rural healthcare services.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to have had this time to recognize the wonderful dedication and commitment of Alfredo Zamora, Jr. to advocacy in the areas of healthcare and education for the City of Cotulla and to the rural community of South Texas, and I thank you for this time.

CONDEMNING THE RECENT ATTACKS AGAINST THE STATE OF ISRAEL

SPEECH OF

HON. JIM RAMSTAD

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 19, 2006

Mr. RAMSTAD. Madam Speaker, I rise today as a strong and consistent supporter of Israel to urge my colleagues to pass H. Res. 921.

This important resolution condemns the recent attacks on Israel by the Hamas and Hezbollah terrorist groups and expresses continued U.S. support for the right of Israel to defend itself.

The State of Israel was created in 1948, and the United States was the first country to formally recognize its right to exist. Since that time, Israel has been one of our strongest allies in the world and a glimmer of hope in the Middle East as the only developed democracy in a region that has known too much war, too much terror and too much violence.

Israel consistently stands shoulder to shoulder with the U.S. in countering the most dangerous threats we face today, including the use of terror by groups attempting to destabilize moderate regimes and disrupt various peacemaking efforts.

In August 2005, Israel began its withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and gave the Palestinian Authority (PA) the opportunity to prove themselves capable of exercising just and rightful authority over their own people. Since that time, the PA has proven to be ineffective at immobilizing terrorist activities, as shown by Hamas' frequent rocket attacks on Israeli cities and the cross-border ambush that took place only a few weeks ago, which resulted in the deaths of two Israeli soldiers and the kidnapping of another.

In addition, Iran's public declarations calling for both the destruction of the state of Israel and greater development of nuclear arms have produced a dangerous and volatile situation both regionally and globally. As Iran continues to provide weapons and supplies to terrorist groups like Hezbollah, we must allow Israel to continue to take necessary action to protect itself.

This is a critical time for Israel. We must allow Israel to continue its self defense efforts and attempts to prevent terrorist organizations from destroying the Middle East. As Prime Minister Olmert stated in his address to Congress, "[We must] replace the 'Culture of Hate' with an 'Outlook of Hope.'" Hezbollah and Hamas are organizations that have proven to be committed to this "Culture of Hate." Consequently, their removal from the Middle East is essential to instill hope into a region that has seen far too much destruction of innocent life.

Once again, I urge my colleagues to support this important resolution.

FREEDOM FOR VIRGILIO MANTILLA ARANGO

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 2006

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about Virgilio Mantilla Arango, a political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba. Mr. Mantilla Arango is a pro-democracy leader in totalitarian Cuba. Because of his steadfast conviction in human liberty and his constant work to bring freedom to an island enslaved by the nightmare that is the Castro regime, he has been a constant target of the dictatorship.

According to multiple reports, Mr. Mantilla Arango was arrested on March 4, 2002, for peacefully protesting at a provincial hospital. The reports outline how, at the hospital, the group shouted "Long live human rights" and sat on the floor. After 2 years in the gulag, and after a sham trial in April 2004, Human Rights Watch reports that Mr. Mantilla Arango was "sentenced" to 7 years in the totalitarian gulag. The "sentence" included 4 years for his participation in the March 2002 protest and 3 years for continuing to peacefully protest against the nightmare that is the Castro regime during his time in the gulag before his "trial."

The U.S. Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices—2005, describes the deplorable conditions in the totalitarian gulag as, "harsh and life threatening." Sadly, this is all too true for Mr. Mantilla Arango. According to reports published on Net For Cuba, Mr. Mantilla Arango has suffered savage beatings by dictatorship thugs for denouncing the tyranny and hanging signs above his bed that say "Down with Fidel" and "We Need Freedom." In July, Mr. Mantilla Arango informed the Cuban Human Rights Foundation that he has been in brutal, solitary confinement since putting on a T-shirt last month that carried the words, "Down with Fidel."

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Mantilla Arango is the face of the real Cuba. No matter how intense the beatings, no matter how remorseless the repression, no matter how inhumane the conditions, he will never relent in his belief that the people of Cuba should be and will be free.

Mr. Speaker, it is as inconceivable as it is unacceptable that, in the 21st century and only 90 miles from our shore, brave men and women are locked in grotesque dungeons because they believe that all people have basic human rights. It is a profound embarrassment for mankind that the world stands by in silence and acquiescence while political prisoners are systematically tortured because of their belief in freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. My colleagues, we must demand the immediate and unconditional release of Virgilio Mantilla Arango and every political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

CONDEMNING THE RECENT ATTACKS AGAINST THE STATE OF ISRAEL

SPEECH OF

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 19, 2006

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, today the House is considering H. Res. 921, a resolution condemning the recent attacks against the State of Israel.

The resolution focuses on the attacks by Hamas and Hezbollah on Israel and expresses its condolences to all families of innocent victims of the recent violence. While the resolution is not perfect, it does call on the international community to cooperate to bring an end to the violence in the region.

The two sides cannot resolve this by themselves, and it is clear that only a diplomatic track will help to address the widespread unrest in the Middle East. Believing that, I would prefer the resolution would do more to solidify the U.S. as an honest broker in the conflict.

It is unfortunate that while the violence has continued for more than a week now, Secretary of State Rice still has failed to travel to the region. Even further, she has declined to send a special envoy to focus exclusively on the crisis. This is yet one more example of the Bush administration's failure on the foreign policy front.

The administration must become engaged with the international community in pursuing a peaceful and just resolution to this on-going crisis instead of standing by while innocent civilians are killed. President Bush's stubborn involvement in Iraq has made it difficult for the U.S. to focus on this and other conflicts in the region. Instead of bringing parties to the negotiating table, President Bush and Secretary Rice have ignored the region while it has literally gone up in flames.

History has shown that the U.S. is most successful when it supports even-handed, diplomacy-based foreign policy. This can be achieved by supporting and implementing the legislation I introduced earlier this year, SMART—H. Con. Res. 158. SMART steps include:

1. preventing future acts of terrorism by strengthening international institutions and respect for the rule of law;
2. reducing the threat and stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction;
3. addressing the root causes of terrorism;
4. shifting U.S. budget priorities to more effectively meet our national security needs;
5. pursuing to the fullest extent alternatives to war.

Until the Bush administration adopts principles like these in the Middle East, and throughout the world, the cycle of unrest will continue.

Unlike previous congressional acts, SMART strives to achieve a balance of support for all parties and puts the U.S. in the role of a partner for peace in Middle East.

With my constituents and colleagues, I call on the President to dedicate himself fully to the peace process and to guarantee the safety and well-being of all innocent civilians involved in the chaos in the Middle East.