

college students who receive Pell Grants each year. In contrast, the proposed Republican budget will cut college aid for nearly 10 million students, slashing the maximum Pell Grant award by more than \$2,500.

Today, I stand here with my colleagues in celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month to say that we must pass the DREAM Act.

We cannot turn our backs on these hard working, talented students who call America their home. Brought here as children and through no fault of their own, DREAM Act students deserve a chance to go to college and become U.S. citizens.

I am proud of my heritage. I am proud of my ancestors who came to this country from Mexico over one hundred years ago. I am proud of the contributions made by America's growing Latino community.

Today, I urge my colleagues in Congress to join us in celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month. Let us honor our great Nation. Let us all work harder to make the American Dream a reality for all.

ISRAEL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. ELLMERS). UNDER the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTCH) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. DEUTCH. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. DEUTCH. I appreciate the opportunity to be here following those series of speeches delivered that lead perfectly into the discussion that we're here to have.

This is a crucial moment for the State of Israel, for the United States, for the relationship that binds us together. This is an important moment for those who believe in democracy and for those who believe in peace. We will all be watching what transpires at the United Nations in the coming days as the Palestinians continue to move forward with an ill-fated attempt to create a state that can only be created by negotiation.

I appreciate the opportunity to engage in a discussion with some of my colleagues, and I would like to start by recognizing my neighbor and my friend, the gentlelady from Florida, Congresswoman WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you very much for putting together this important Special Order hour to give us an opportunity to come together in support of our ally and friend, the State of Israel.

I rise today in praise of President Obama's enduring, unequivocal support for our ally Israel and a vision for a peaceful world.

This morning at the United Nations, President Obama shared with an international audience his commitment to Israel's security in the midst of a challenging region and complex times. The administration approached this year's U.N. General Assembly standing strong with our ally in many respects. From once again boycotting the anti-Semitic activities surrounding the Durban Conference, to pledging to veto any Palestinian unilateral declaration of independence in the Security Council, to working all summer with our partners and allies against the unending efforts to criticize and delegitimize Israel at the U.N., President Obama has been a stalwart ally of Israel in this international forum. I'm so pleased that he continued in that vein this morning with his address to the General Assembly.

In his historic speech to this global audience, President Obama once again demonstrated his stalwart support for our friend and ally Israel. Importantly, President Obama used this opportunity at the United Nations to unambiguously state his support for direct, bilateral negotiations as the only way to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and create a Palestinian state.

As the President said, "a genuine peace can only be realized between the Israelis and the Palestinians themselves. There is no shortcut to the end of a conflict that has endured for decades. Peace will not come through statements and resolutions at the United Nations. It is the Israelis and the Palestinians, not us, who must reach agreement on the issues that divide them: on borders and on security, on refugees and Jerusalem."

President Obama made it resoundingly clear that unilateral action will never create a state and that we must continue to support a process between two peoples that recognize both security concerns and national aspirations. And that clarity has not gone unnoticed.

Prime Minister Netanyahu, speaking after the President's speech today, said that our President is wearing a "badge of honor" for his commitment to direct, bilateral negotiations as the only way to a Palestinian state.

As he has done so many times in the past, President Obama again put forth our country's unshakable commitment to Israel's safety and security as a central tenet to peace. The President reaffirmed our enduring friendship to our ally Israel noting the very real security concerns of being surrounded by hostile neighbors. He made clear to the world that he understands the very real threat Israelis face in constant rockets and suicide bombs and children coming of age knowing that, throughout the region, other children are taught to hate them. Only when Israel feels its security concerns are met will future generations of Israelis and Palestinians live side by side in pride and in peace.

With the international community assembled, President Obama stressed

the difficult but vital efforts we must all make in our quest for peace, not only for Israelis and Palestinians, but also across the Middle East and all around the world.

He spoke of the accomplishments of revolutions that have brought burgeoning democracies to the Middle East and North Africa over the past year and the frustrated aspirations of many in the region where democracy is yet to come.

In praising the new free Libya and urging the international communities to join us in sanctioning Iran and Syria, the President affirmed his commitment to supporting those who wish to cast off tyranny. And in a world free from the terror of Osama bin Laden, President Obama emphasized our continued quest to end the religious, gender, and sexual persecution that prevents all people from achieving their true potential.

I am so proud of President Obama's unwavering support for Israel and his overall vision for peace that he laid out at the United Nations this morning.

Hopefully, hearing the strong message from the United States, the Palestinians will once again return to the negotiating table with Israel and work out a just and lasting solution between the two parties. In the meantime, we can stand tall with the exemplary efforts by this pro-Israel President as we continue to engage diplomatically over the coming weeks to ensure that bilateral negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians will resume.

Thank you, Mr. DEUTCH, for your unwavering support for our ally.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you very much. The same to you.

I would note the President also spoke today at some length about the need to recognize Israel's security interests. The fact that Israel is a country that is surrounded by enemies, that has faced rocket attacks, barrages, at times on a regular basis, that it is imperative that all of our allies around the world who understand the security threats that Israel faces, that they understand that it is in Israel's interest to take the action necessary to defend herself even as they move toward the negotiations with the Palestinians. That's something that every nation would understand.

I appreciate your bringing that up today.

□ 1810

It is my pleasure and my honor to yield time to the impressive and wonderful former chair and now the impressive and wonderful ranking member of the State, Foreign Operations Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee, Representative LOWEY from Westchester.

Mrs. LOWEY. I want to thank my good friend Mr. DEUTCH. You are a principled, strong supporter of the Israel-United States alliance for organizing this conversation at this very, very critical time, and I thank you very much.

Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to the Palestinian Authority's counter-productive and dangerous gambit to declare statehood unilaterally through the United Nations.

As we all know, a genuine and lasting peace between the Israelis and Palestinians can only be achieved through a negotiated settlement between the parties, themselves. A lasting peace cannot be imposed on Israel and the Palestinians by an outside country, like the United States, or an organization, like the United Nations. That is why it is so disturbing that the Palestinian Authority has chosen to discontinue direct negotiations with Israel and instead to pursue a unilateral declaration of statehood through the United Nations. This action will indisputably set back the prospects of a settlement between the parties and call into question the commitment of Palestinian leaders to genuine and lasting peace.

The Palestinian Authority receives more than \$500 million in economic and security assistance from the United States each year because it is in our interest and that of Israel's to support the ability of the P.A. to provide security and basic services, but that assistance is predicated on the willingness of the Palestinian Authority to negotiate directly with Israel toward its own state. President Abbas has been warned repeatedly, and I remain firm, that this counterproductive action by the P.A. crosses a line and should lead to a re-evaluation of this assistance.

Despite the provocative decision of the Palestinian Authority to abandon negotiations and to pursue instead a unilateral declaration of statehood, I remain optimistic that the administration, working in concert with the Quartet, can facilitate the conditions for a resumption of good-faith negotiations.

I commend President Obama and Secretary Clinton for standing firm in support of a negotiated settlement and for reaffirming the unbreakable bond between Israel and the United States. I support the administration's tireless work to prevent a unilateral declaration of statehood from coming to a vote before the United Nations and to defeat this gambit if a vote does occur.

As President Obama stated today before the United Nations, peace is hard, but we also know that it is very much worth the effort. I encourage President Abbas to make the hard choice to return to negotiations with Israel. It is the only way to achieve the lasting and genuine peace that both Israelis and Palestinians seek.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Congresswoman LOWEY.

There are few in this body who understand as well as you the importance of weighing the decisions to allocate United States' foreign aid and where that money goes. You have been such a vocal and passionate supporter of aid to Israel in order to give Israel the ability to defend herself. I think you spoke eloquently about the questions

that will be raised if the P.A. continues to move forward on this gambit at the United Nations, calling into question their commitment to negotiation and ultimately raising the reevaluation of aid to the Palestinians.

I thank you very much for sharing that with us.

Mrs. LOWEY. I know how hard the administration is working. Every minute of the day has been spent trying to ward off what we think will be a real disaster. So, as an optimist—and I think it's on Friday that Abu Mazen is scheduled to speak—I hope that he is wise and thinks of that decision and gets back to the negotiating table.

Mr. DEUTCH. I thank the gentle lady from New York.

It is now my honor to yield such time as she may consume to a colleague and friend who has often been described as the great pro-Israel Member of the United States House of Representatives, the Representative from Nevada, SHELLEY BERKLEY.

Ms. BERKLEY. I thank the gentleman from Florida very much for putting this Special Order together in order to discuss an issue that is very important and that is certainly front and center on the international scene today as it has been for the last several weeks. I also thank you, Mr. DEUTCH, for your extraordinarily steadfast support for the State of Israel and for the strong American-Israeli relationship that we work on and attempt to foster every day.

Madam Speaker, I rise to support our closest friend and ally, the State of Israel, and to support the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians. We must oppose Abu Mazen's misguided and dangerous effort to bypass negotiations with Israel and go to the U.N. with a unilateral resolution in order to create a Palestinian state. The ramifications of that are extraordinary. They could destabilize the entire Middle East, put Israel on the defensive at the International Criminal Court, and create a failed terrorist state right next-door to the State of Israel—controlled by the Iranians, I might add.

The Palestinians have claimed that they're going to the U.N. because they have no partner to negotiate with, but it is the Palestinians, not the Israelis, who refuse to negotiate. They demand—and they demand it time and again—that Israel cease all settlement growth in the West Bank before they would be willing to sit down and negotiate for peace and a Palestinian state with the Israelis.

I think it's time that we talk and remember the exact history—and it's not such ancient history either. Even a full settlement freeze is not enough for Abu Mazen. In the summer of 2009—if we can remember back to that time—the Netanyahu government, at great political risk, agreed to freeze all settlement growth for 10 months. Did Abu Mazen and the Palestinians sit down at the negotiating table with the Israelis?

There were 10 months of a moratorium—certainly enough time to negotiate a peace agreement that would bring lasting peace to the Palestinian people and a Jewish State of Israel. Did he do that? No, he did not. He waited over 9 months to begin negotiating with Israel and only sat down at the table with weeks left on the Israeli moratorium. Then what did they do? The Palestinians demanded that the Israelis extend the moratorium. They did nothing for nine of the 10 months. Then they wanted to expand the moratorium.

This is not the behavior of a true negotiating partner. What type of negotiating partner invites Hamas, a terrorist organization, to join them and become part of the Palestinian Authority? Certainly not a peace partner that wishes to bring peace and a Palestinian state to the Middle East.

The Israelis, by contrast, have shown their commitment to negotiations and have repeatedly called on the Palestinians to join them at the negotiating table. When Prime Minister Bibi Netanyahu addressed the United States Congress in a joint session on May 24, he reiterated his willingness to make painful compromises in order to reach peace with the Palestinians, but the Palestinians have turned their backs on the negotiations or on any form of compromise and have gone to the notoriously anti-Israel body, the United Nations, where they believe they will receive more sympathy and, ultimately, success.

I appreciate the Obama administration's strong statements that they will veto any Palestinian statehood effort at the Security Council, but I am deeply concerned that the Palestinians will receive overwhelming approval at the General Assembly.

Today, the Palestinian Authority has tentatively agreed to merely introduce their resolution for a unilateral declaration of statehood in the Security Council and then ask that no action be taken until they negotiate with the Israelis. This concerns me greatly. What type of way is this to negotiate? Put a gun to Israel's head, and every time the Palestinians don't like the way the negotiations are going, the Palestinians can threaten that they're going back to the United Nations? I don't think this demonstrates a true interest in sitting down and negotiating for a Palestinian state.

□ 1820

Let me tell you, as I conclude, what I think we can do; and we should do it immediately.

Congress must act. We must send a clear signal to the Palestinians that we will not continue to support them with our foreign aid dollars if they choose to act unilaterally and avoid negotiations.

I will not continue to throw taxpayer money away at the Palestinians when they are refusing to negotiate in good faith for a Palestinian state.

I have introduced H.R. 1592, which would cut off funding to the Palestinian Authority if they unilaterally declare a state outside of negotiations. I hope my colleagues will join me in cosponsoring this timely legislation. We must send a clear message to the Palestinians that their efforts to circumvent negotiations are unacceptable and the only way to statehood, the only way, is at the negotiating table.

Mr. DEUTCH, I thank you so much for allowing me to share my thoughts with you at this most delicate time in world peace.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you very much, Representative BERKLEY.

If there is going to be peace, you are absolutely right: that is peace that will come through negotiations. And I am not sure what type of negotiating tactic it is to, on the one hand, say that there is a commitment to negotiating, but at the same time to run to the United Nations to unilaterally declare a state in a way that only seeks to delegitimize your so-called peace partner.

Israel is committed to peace. We've seen that time and time again. Prime Minister Netanyahu is set, ready to negotiate. It is time that the P.A. moves forward with negotiations. I appreciate your insight and your commentary.

I would tell that you that as you spoke about Hamas, the P.A. made a decision also to move into a partnership with that terrorist organization, a terrorist organization that still holds Gilad Shalit captive and refuses to let the world see him, meet with him. He should be released.

This is a message that was given to Hamas, to the P.A. directly, in a meeting that I was privileged to participate in on a bipartisan trip to Israel some months back. I was pleased to be on that trip with our friend from California, Representative CARDOZA.

I am pleased to yield the gentleman as much time as he desires.

Mr. CARDOZA. Thank you, Representative DEUTCH. You are not just a friend but a great colleague.

Before she leaves the Chamber, I just want to associate myself with Congresswoman BERKLEY's remarks. The gentlewoman from Nevada has been a stalwart for the State of Israel. She is absolutely and unequivocally correct on this issue, and I will gladly cosponsor your bill.

Ms. BERKLEY. Thank you.

Mr. CARDOZA. Mr. DEUTCH, thank you for putting together this Special Order this evening. As you all know, the Palestinian Authority has stated that it will submit, or it's intending to submit, to the U.N. Secretary General Ban ki-Moon a resolution requesting recognition of Palestinian statehood.

As President Obama said today in his speech before the U.N. General Assembly, the bonds between the United States and Israel are unbreakable, as our commitment is to the security of Israel.

And as I and my colleagues in Congress expressed earlier this year, when

there was an overwhelmingly passed House Resolution 268, the only path to a lasting peace is through direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians that leads to a two-state solution.

Lasting peace will not come by playing destabilizing and damaging political games at the United Nations. A unilateral approach to Palestinian statehood will surely fail at the United Nations. It will fail, and in failing it will harm the bilateral negotiation process that is the only way to bring about a lasting peace.

A lasting peace cannot be achieved while a contingent within the Palestinian Government does not recognize Israel's right to exist. A lasting peace cannot be achieved while rockets are being fired into Israel, threatening her children and her people.

I was there with Mr. DEUTCH just days after an anti-tank rocket was shot into a yellow school bus. I ask every American watching tonight and those around the world to think what they would do if the State of Mexico fired on a school bus in El Paso and the response that we as a country would pursue.

A lasting peace cannot be achieved while the same group firing those rockets into Israel is actively trying to define Israel's borders so that those rockets would then strike major populated areas.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, a lasting peace cannot be achieved when one party fundamentally refuses to negotiate the terms of peace.

I call upon President Abbas to do what's right for both the Palestinian people, the Israeli people, and the world and to not put political gamesmanship ahead of a lasting peace. I call upon him to return to a negotiating table and to give up this spurious, dangerous, and damaging game.

Mr. DEUTCH. I thank my friend from California.

There are a lot of opportunities that we as Members have to participate in the process and to see the impact of the decisions that we make.

The opportunity that we had to spend some time in the community that had just been attacked with that rocket fire reminds us of what we are doing here this evening, what President Obama did at the United Nations earlier today, and what our allies throughout the world hopefully will do in standing up to support the one great democratic nation in the Middle East, why that is so vitally important.

Mr. CARDOZA. You are absolutely correct, Mr. DEUTCH, and the visions of those scared mothers talking to us in their community by the bus stop, a shelter that has to be reinforced by concrete so that they can somewhat protect their children on the way to school, is the reason why we must act for a lasting peace, if no other than that.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you for being here, Mr. CARDOZA.

It is my pleasure and honor to yield as much time as he may choose to utilize to my good friend from New York, Representative JOE CROWLEY.

Mr. CROWLEY. I want to thank my dear friend and colleague from Florida for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about one of the most important issues in our world, and that is peace in the Middle East.

For far too many years, many parts of the United Nations have been hijacked by states opposed to the ongoing existence of the State of Israel. Some states simply refuse or are not willing to acknowledge that Israel is a country surrounded by many who seek her destruction. They seem to believe that if the Israelis simply conceded, simply gave up, that peace would come to the region.

That view doesn't only show a lack of understanding; it is simply wrong. The truth is no country in the world would ever take action that undermines its ability to defend itself and neither should the State of Israel.

Day in and day out, the people of Israel face the threat of terrorism. From the moment that they wake up in the morning to when they go to sleep at night, Israeli citizens wonder if they or their families will be the target of attacks.

Dozens of suicide bombings and attacks have been carried out over the past 10 years, and there is no doubt that each and every day Hamas is planning and preparing for even more attacks.

Madam Speaker, we need peace in the Middle East, but these are not the conditions for peace. How can anyone make peace when enemies are seeking their destruction? And now we see this move at the United Nations to secure unilateral declaration of statehood. Instead of finally achieving the peace that is so desperately needed, so desperately wanted, this looks like a step to try to back Israel into a corner.

Let me assure you, this is not the path to positive change. It is a grave error by Abu Mazen to demand recognition of statehood at this time. The fact is, the day after any vote, the situation on the ground in the Middle East will not have changed.

□ 1830

All the same issues will remain in place. The difference will be the trust. Trust will forever be eroded, and for good reason. That's not the only difference, however. There is another issue that I believe we need to have more discussion about.

I believe that what the Palestinian Authority is doing calls into question our funding for their work. The United States supported the Authority as a way to support peace efforts, but this statehood drive undermines those very efforts. American dollars are meant to support efforts by the Palestinian Authority to secure peace and to diminish violence, but this is not a blank check.

We cannot support those who seek confrontation instead of reconciliation.

I believe it is time for a very, very serious review of our policy, the United States Congress and the United States' policy in its funding, not only for the Palestinian Authority but for any nation that seeks to undermine the State of Israel within the U.N., not just the Palestinian Authority but any nation that would vote to undermine the existence of the State of Israel.

I want to thank Mr. DEUTCH and Mr. HOYER and all of my colleagues for putting this effort together tonight. I and my colleagues will continue to stand firmly with the people of Israel.

Mr. DEUTCH. I thank you, Mr. CROWLEY.

The most important point to make right now in listening to you and listening to Mr. CARDOZA and listening to the gentleman from California who spoke earlier from the other side, this is not a partisan issue. This is not a religious issue. This is a question of whether we stand together in support of democratic ideals, in support of the safety and security of our ally. That's what is at stake here, and I thank you for coming to so eloquently and passionately speak to that issue.

Mr. CROWLEY. Let me just make one point. There is partisanship. There are those who would use this opportunity to divide. Not here in the United States, not Republicans and Democrats, but around the world. This is a world forum we're talking about in the U.N., and what I want our allies to know and our friends to know is that we're watching—those who will stand with the State of Israel and those who will not.

Mr. DEUTCH. I thank the gentleman. Efforts to delegitimize the State of Israel at the United Nations must be opposed at every capital in this world. I thank you very much.

It is my pleasure to recognize my friend and colleague, a passionate supporter of the State of Israel who hails from a community in Illinois with an equally passionate zeal for the safety and security of the State of Israel, Representative SCHAKOWSKY.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. I want to thank you so much, Mr. DEUTCH, for organizing tonight's Special Order.

Today, President Barack Obama clearly restated the U.S. commitment to negotiated peace and protection of human rights. In his remarks to the General Assembly of the United Nations, the President emphasized the importance not just of peace but of human dignity and economic opportunity.

In particular, President Obama again demonstrated that he is a true and steadfast friend of Israel and reiterated that "America's commitment to Israel's security is unshakeable, and our friendship with Israel is deep and enduring."

Like the President, I am a strong supporter of a two-state solution. I look forward to a future in which a

Palestinian state exists in peace alongside the Jewish State of Israel. But as the President emphasized at the U.N. today, a genuine, true, and lasting peace can only be reached through negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians themselves.

I strongly support the President's diplomatic leadership and efforts to convince the Palestinians and their international allies to abandon efforts to use the U.N. to bypass negotiations with Israel, and I join him in urging them to return to the talks with the Israelis. While we acknowledge that the conflict will not be resolved easily and that it will require difficult sacrifices from both parties, it is only through direct peace negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians themselves that a lasting solution can be found. There can be no substitute for such negotiations. As the President stated today in New York, "Peace will not come through statements and resolutions at the United Nations."

In his speech today, the President recognized the legitimate desires of the Palestinian people for a state with recognized borders and opportunities for economic growth. I share his commitment to working toward that goal. But, as he also emphasized, any peace agreement must acknowledge and address the ongoing security threats faced daily by Israel and the Israeli people and be based on a recognition that Israel is the historic homeland of the Jewish people.

Instead of appealing to the U.N., the parties simply need to return to the table. A lasting peace cannot and will not be imposed by any external party. It must be reached by the Israelis and the Palestinians themselves, with regional and international support, including that of the United States of America. The Palestinians should abandon this effort at the United Nations. Our allies should stand with the State of Israel and a real peace negotiation. That means the Palestinians have to return to the bargaining table.

I thank you, Mr. DEUTCH.

Mr. DEUTCH. And I thank you, Congresswoman SCHAKOWSKY. Your talk about the President's statement today is important. Equally important is what the administration has been doing leading up to that speech today, in the way that the U.N. Ambassador has continued to press our allies, in the way that this administration has been clear throughout that if this movement goes forward, if the Palestinians continue to go to the Security Council, that the United States will veto that resolution because it is not a way to achieve peace. I appreciate your sharing those thoughts and raising those issues with us.

It is a great privilege for me now to turn over the floor and yield to my friend, who is one of the fiercest defenders of the U.S.-Israel relationship, one of the most outspoken Members of this body when it comes to standing up for the safety and security of the State

of Israel and someone who has steadfastly remained engaged in this issue, even traveling to New York, before coming back to Washington, to speak directly to those who will be making decisions at the United Nations, a good friend and a great colleague, ELIOT ENGEL.

Mr. ENGEL. I thank the gentleman from Florida for yielding, and before I talk about these issues, let me first compliment the gentleman from Florida. He hasn't been in Congress very long, but he certainly made his mark very strongly, particularly on the U.S.-Israel relationship. He has been a stalwart supporter and a very articulate spokesperson for the U.S.-Israel relationship. I know that Mr. DEUTCH has been very, very effective, and it is an honor to do this Special Order with him this evening.

Madam Speaker, I agree with everything that every one of my colleagues said. Let me first say, because we are Democrats having this Special Order, there has been a lot of fighting in Congress, but one thing we don't fight about, Democrats and Republicans, we agree that the U.S.-Israel relationship must remain strong. If there is one thing that unites this Congress and unites Democrats and Republicans, it's strong support for the U.S.-Israel relationship.

Many of my colleagues have made very, very good points, many of which I want to reiterate, but I think the most important thing to reiterate is this: If there is a dispute anywhere around the world, the only way you can resolve that dispute is getting the two adversaries face to face in direct negotiations to hammer out all of the areas of disagreement and hopefully come to a peace agreement.

That happened in Ireland, in Northern Ireland, a place that we never thought would get peace but did, because both sides made the commitment that they preferred peace over war and over misery that had gone on for far too long. So they sat down face to face, with a little prodding from other countries, including the United States, and were able to hash out an agreement. That, I'm convinced, is the way that the Middle East difficulties will come to fruition, only by face-to-face negotiations.

□ 1840

The Palestinians, in my estimation, have attempted to throw so many preconditions at Israel before they will even sit down and negotiate that it has made it impossible for Israel to be able to sit down and talk with them. Boundaries like 1967 boundaries or settlements or expansion of neighborhoods, all these are final status issues. These are not issues where one side says to the other side, you have to unilaterally agree with our position before we will even sit down and negotiate with you. That makes no sense whatsoever. So face-to-face negotiations are the only way that we can have peace.

I would argue that going to the United Nations by the Palestinians actually sets back the cause of peace because if the United Nations were to declare a Palestinian state, say on the basis of the 1967 lines, which is what the Palestinians want, well, that is a guarantee that there can never be peace with an agreement like that. First of all, if the United Nations were to agree to that, no Palestinian leader in the future could ever accept anything less. And the Israelis can never accept, and will never accept, a return to the 1967 borders, which were indefensible. Israel fought wars because those 1967 borders were not defensible. And so these preconditions, and this going to the United Nations, actually sets back the cause of peace.

Now I just think a little bit of history is important because it's so easy to go on college campuses or to try to delegitimize Israel and the United Nations or to have statements that aren't really true. The fact of the matter is that Israel has always been prepared to make painful concessions for peace. I was in this Congress during 2000–2001 when President Clinton helped negotiate what we thought was a peace, the Oslo Accords, and what we thought was a peace between Israel and the Palestinians. I remember in 1993 on the White House lawn with Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin shaking hands. I remember being there with my 8-month pregnant wife in 95-degree weather, and we all had such high hopes.

But what has happened? Abba Eban used to say the Palestinians never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity. And there have been many opportunities for peace. In 2000–2001, Israel agreed to a peace. Arafat, who was the Palestinian leader, said no. And what did Arafat turn down at that time? He turned down a Palestinian state, part of Jerusalem, 97 percent of the West Bank and billions and billions of dollars of aid. Israel said yes. He said no. I think it's important to put that in perspective.

Then the Palestinians talk about the right of return. They want to flood Israel with Palestinian refugees—not refugees that left in 1948, when Israel was founded—but their descendants. And that's a pipe dream because that could never happen. It would undermine the essence of a Jewish State of Israel.

So if there is going to be peace in the Middle East, we need to go back to what the partition of Palestine in 1948, the original resolution, said in the U.N. It said Palestine is to be partitioned into an Arab state and a Jewish state. And here we are, some 63 years later, and the Palestinians and most of the Arab world won't even recognize Israel as a Jewish state. That's where the problem lies, not with Israel. And the attempt to go to the United Nations and sort of do an end game around Israel will not work.

Finally, and then I'd be happy to discuss this further with my colleague

from Florida (Mr. DEUTCH), let me just say this, and we have heard some rumblings about it with some of our colleagues here. This Congress will not continue to fund the Palestinian Authority. It's not going to be a blank check. If the Palestinian Authority doesn't want peace and doesn't show that it wants peace, we are not going to continue to fund them.

I introduced a resolution in the Foreign Affairs Committee which came before the State Department markup which passed unanimously on a roll call vote withholding money, ending money to the Palestinian Authority if they come to the United Nations for a vote. It passed unanimously—every Democrat, every Republican. And so this Congress is not going to be a fool. Either the Palestinians want peace or they don't. But they cannot have it both ways. They cannot say they want peace and refuse to sit down and talk to Israel face to face at a negotiating table.

So, Mr. DEUTCH, I want to thank you for doing this. I think it is very, very important that all people of good will, Democrats and Republicans, stand together in support of Israel. I think the President's speech today at the United Nations was a very good speech where he talked about the bond is unbreakable between the United States and Israel.

And we have to make sure that the Palestinians live up to their commitment. Israel is willing to live up to its commitments. Israel wants to live in peace. We're now waiting to see what the Palestinian and the Arab states want to do.

Finally, let me say this. There are two factions in the Palestinians: One is Fatah, which is Abbas' faction, and one is Hamas. Hamas controls Gaza. Hamas is a terrorist group. Hamas doesn't recognize Israel's right to exist. Hamas certainly doesn't recognize the right of a Jewish state to exist. How can we expect our ally Israel to sit, negotiate, and make peace with an entity that denies its very right to exist and an entity whose whole reason for being is to destroy the Jewish state?

We wouldn't ask that of ourselves. We shouldn't ask that of Israel.

Mr. DEUTCH, I thank the gentleman.

Mr. ENGEL, if the Palestinians were serious about peace, they would abandon their unity with Hamas. They would abandon this plan to move forward at the United Nations, and they would return to the negotiating table. But this doesn't seem to be the case, as we've discussed here tonight. They seem intent on, in fact, making a mockery of the United Nations by using it as a platform to delegitimize Israel. But we will stand up to that effort. We'll stand up against it. The fact is from the vile "Zionism is Racism" resolution of the 1970s to the biased and misleading Goldstone Report, the United States has, time and time again, stood up against such delegitimization efforts, loudly voicing

our opposition and declaring that we won't tolerate such bogus and malicious accusations. And we'll stand up again for Israel this week in New York, but not just today and Friday.

I would like to take a moment to talk about what is going to be happening tomorrow. When Mahmoud Ahmadinejad brings his campaign of hatred to the United Nations General Assembly, as he stands just miles from Ground Zero a mere 3 weeks after the 10th anniversary of the September 11 attacks and blasphemously declares that the U.S. Government orchestrated the attacks to reverse the declining American economy, as he did last year, we will stand up for those brave men and women who lost their lives that day and every day since fighting for freedom. And when he stands at the U.N. and celebrates the 10th anniversary of the Durban hatefest that was an anti-Semitic rant against Israel, we will stand up for the freedom and democracy that Israel represents, the freedom and democracy that Ahmadinejad so brutally represses in his own country. That's going to be our role just tomorrow. And I know that you will look forward to standing in strong opposition to those statements from one who wishes to see Israel wiped off the map, one who could probably be tried for incitement to genocide for his statements, you will stand with me, as you always have, in opposition to the rhetoric, the hateful rhetoric, that we will be forced to listen to tomorrow.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. DEUTCH for pointing that out because, unfortunately, I said before that the U.N. had been a kangaroo court against Israel time and time again. Israel cannot get a fair shake in the United Nations. I do hope that we are able to block the votes in the Security Council where the United States, the Obama administration, has said that the President will do a veto of any kind of resolution, and I hope that it won't even come to that because I hope that they do not get the requisite number of votes to even pass it.

And then the Palestinians might then go to the General Assembly. They say they are going to do that. And while the General Assembly cannot admit a Palestinian state, it can upgrade their status, which would allow them to run around and harass Israeli leaders in the different international courts.

I just think the U.N. better be careful. It sits in my hometown of New York, and we have always been proud that the U.N. is in New York. But I think the U.N. is on the verge of discrediting itself very, very badly.

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There was resolution 242, which talked about land for peace in the Middle East. I would say that the Palestinians, by trying to get recognition unilaterally in the U.N., they are repudiating the land for peace. They're certainly repudiating the Oslo Accords,

which said that both states have to sit down, the Palestinians and the Israelis have to sit down and hammer out an agreement. As I mentioned before, it even repudiates the very basis of the initial partition of Palestine in 1947 and '48 into a Jewish state and an Arab state.

And we talk about the Palestinian refugees. They have been used as pawns by the Palestinian leadership—and frankly by all the other Arab states in the world. And we ought to mention this because it's very, very important. Jewish refugees from North Africa and all over the world, from Europe, from all over the world, came to Israel and were integrated into Israeli society through the years. The Palestinian refugees could have and should have been integrated in the various Arab countries, but the Arab leaders decided to leave them in these horrendous conditions in these camps, to use the Palestinian refugees as pawns in the Palestinian camps.

It wasn't done by the Israelis. It was done by the Palestinians themselves and by the Arab nations themselves to use them as political pawns. So I think we should look at the people who are really suffering here and say why they're suffering. They're suffering because they've had a leadership that has failed them for more than 60 years.

So I'm very proud of the United States of America. I'm proud of our country for standing up for freedom. I'm proud of our country for standing with Israel. I'm proud that the President said the bond between Israel is unbreakable. We have to understand that this is not a fight between two groups that are sort of equal in being concerned about democracy. Israel shares our values. Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East. What's important to Israel is important to the United States. That's why we have to stand with Israel because if we don't do it, nobody else will. We've shown time and time and time again that the international community, particularly the United Nations, is biased against Israel; and unless the United States stands squarely with Israel, Israel will never get a fair shake.

So I am proud that we are doing that now at the United Nations. I am proud that we have taken a stand. I am proud of this Congress, on a bipartisan basis, for taking a pro-Israel stand. The United States—and I would say this to the people of Israel—will always stand with our friends and allies, Israel, who care for the basic human rights and concerns and democracy and democratic values that we care about as well.

So as we see this unfolding, I would just say to the Palestinians, if you really want your state, if you really want a two-state solution—which I believe you are entitled to—then sit down with Israel face to face across the negotiating table, no preconditions, and talk peace. The Israelis are ready to do it. We're still waiting for the Palestinians.

Thank you, Mr. DEUTCH.

Mr. DEUTCH. I thank you very much, Mr. ENGEL, for your passionate words.

I think it's important, as we wrap this up, to think about why it is and to remind our colleagues and the American people why it is that we are so committed to this bond with Israel, and we do it because the bond with Israel runs deeper than our interests in Middle East affairs. It runs deeper than mutual security interests. Our bond is born out of the values that our two nations share, the values of freedom, of respect, of human rights. We as Americans share those values with the people of Israel. They are universal values, American values. They span religious and political parties. They bring people together from all walks of life. They are the things that some of Israel's neighbors are losing their lives fighting for, the values that Israel holds dear as a great democracy in the Middle East and in the world.

Israel faces one of its greatest challenges, a worldwide campaign to unilaterally declare a Palestinian state. The United States must continue to remind the world why it is that we stand in solidarity with Israel.

I urge our allies around the world to stand with us now in urging the Palestinians to abandon this misguided and dangerous quest. If Mr. Abbas seeks a state where the Palestinian people can truly prosper, a peaceful state, then he will look to Israel as a partner. He will understand why negotiations provide the only path to peace; and he will take his seat at the negotiating table.

To our whip, STENY HOYER, who helped us arrange this hour, and to my colleagues who participated, and to everyone who has tuned in even for a moment, I want to say thank you, thank you for giving us the opportunity to stand up at this most difficult and crucial moment in the history of the U.S.-Israel relationship and remind our allies from around the world—and every nation from around the world—just how strong and unbreakable the bond between our two nations is.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SIRES. Madam Speaker, Palestinian Authority President Abbas has announced that this Friday he will formally seek statehood recognition at the United Nations.

While there are obstacles to achieving a lasting and peaceful two-state solution, the PA's attempt to seek recognition at the UN demonstrates that they are not truly interested in achieving peace.

Such a unilateral approach, will not lead to peace. This action violates the letter and spirit of the Oslo accords and deals a significant blow to future negotiations.

Recognizing a Palestinian state would also give legitimacy to Hamas given that the terrorist group currently is in control of the Gaza Strip—an area the PA claims for its state.

By granting recognition of a state, the international community will reward Hamas for its terrorist actions, rather than condemn them.

Furthermore, this reckless action at the UN could lead to widespread violence on the ground.

The only way to achieve a two-state solution is through direct negotiations leading to a peace treaty fully accepted by both governments and by both peoples.

A vote on a unilateral UN resolution will likely set prospects for peace in the region back years.

The United States needs to stand strong with Israel, and I am pleased that President Obama has called the Palestinian efforts at the UN a "mistake" and has stated that the United States will veto this resolution should it be brought before the Security Council.

We need a unified voice from the United States and our allies showing that this action is not the way to achieve a peace and that if such action is taken, there will be consequences.

Mr. WAXMAN. Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to join with so many Members of the House to express our profound concern, and strenuous opposition, to the impending request by the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, to seek a unilateral declaration of statehood at the United Nations later this week.

The Palestinian leadership says it wants peace with Israel, but their actions and words contradict their assertions. It is not at all clear President Abbas is even capable of making peace with Israel. He refused to enter direct negotiations last year even when Israel agreed to a settlement freeze. He refuses to accept a simple statement that he accepts Israel as a Jewish state. And, as a prelude to his bid for statehood from the United Nations, he wrote in the New York Times last May: "Palestine's admission to the United Nations would pave the way for the internationalization of the conflict as a legal matter, not only a political one." Recognition of statehood by the United Nations, in other words, is simply another front in the conflict—and not a settlement of the conflict.

Any move towards statehood for Palestine in the United Nations is gravely flawed.

First, a unilateral declaration of statehood, by the Palestinians themselves or through the United Nations, constitutes a unilateral repudiation of the peace process. A Palestinian state can only emerge at the conclusion of a peace treaty with Israel. As President Obama told the assembled leaders of the world today at the United Nations: "There is no short cut to the end of a conflict that has endured for decades. Peace is hard work. Peace will not come through statements and resolutions at the United Nations."

Second, a unilateral declaration by the Palestinians will not bring a State of Palestine into existence. Without agreed borders, there is no agreed state. Without an agreed state, there is no lawfully constituted government of the state of Palestine.

Third, such action at the United Nations may well provoke violence in the West Bank and Gaza and possibly across the region. Excessive expectations among the Palestinians have been induced by the public campaign of the Palestinian Authority to seek statehood through the U.N. Reality cannot and will not meet those expectations—leading to immense frustration for Palestinians in the West Bank and elsewhere. In the past, this has led to successive uprisings targeting Israel. Such violence has been vicious and inhumane, with

immense loss of life—and it serves no purpose. It brings neither peace nor statehood any closer. But the threat of violence overhangs the Palestinian maneuvers at the U.N.

Fourth, unilateral action at the United Nations will be a major setback of incalculable duration to any meaningful resolution of the issues if there is to be a just and lasting peace with Israel, and the establishment of a Palestinian state. If the Palestinians seek to act on their own, what is there to negotiate with Israel? Where is the dialogue? What can possibly be the prospects for a meeting of the minds and a resolution of the issues of borders, security, Jerusalem, and refugees? A unilateral declaration of statehood is not a substitute for the peace process; it is a repudiation of the peace process. And that means the end to the peace process.

Fifth, a recognition of Palestine by the United Nations will lead to great legal vulnerability to Israel and its government's leaders by giving Palestine standing in several international institutions, such as the International Court of Justice. No settlement of any issues or grievances between the parties can be advanced by legal harassment of Israel in international organizations.

For all these reasons, I believe it is imperative that the United Nations reject any unilateral bid for statehood for Palestine.

The member states of the United Nations must understand that a vote against a resolution in the General Assembly is not a vote against a Palestinian State—it is a vote to get the parties into direct negotiations so that a Palestinian State can truly and successfully and legitimately arise.

As President Obama said today: "We will only succeed in that effort if we can encourage the parties to sit down together, to listen to each other, and to understand each other's hopes and fears. That is the project to which America is committed, and that is what the United Nations should be focused on in the weeks and months to come."

Last week, I was pleased to join with dozens of Members of the House in correspondence directed to several dozen foreign heads of state, in which we urged that their governments reject a unilateral declaration of statehood for Palestine by the United Nations.

I commend our correspondence to all our colleagues. We will continue our efforts at the United Nations and redouble our commitment to the re-commencement of direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians leading to a peace agreement between them.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

September 15, 2011.

We write on a matter of great urgency, on the eve of the United Nations General Assembly meeting. It is our understanding that the leadership of the Palestinian Authority will pursue a resolution at the United Nations—in either or both the Security Council and the General Assembly—to grant the Palestinians the equivalent of statehood and/or prejudice final issues, including borders and the status of Jerusalem. One of the major goals of this effort is for the Palestinians to better position themselves to petition the International Criminal Court, very possibly bogging down the court for the foreseeable future.

It is our strong belief that such unilateral action would have devastating consequences for the peace process and the Palestinians themselves. Accordingly, we urge you in the strongest terms not to support this effort.

We believe that the only way to achieve a two-state solution is through direct negotiations leading to a peace treaty fully accepted by both governments and by both peoples. A just and lasting peace cannot and must not be imposed on the parties. If the Palestinians pursue such a unilateral approach, it violates the letter and spirit of the Oslo Accords and will deal a significant blow to future negotiations. Given the expectations gap among the Palestinian public, such action could lead to widespread violence on the ground, jeopardizing the West Bank's impressive economic and security gains over recent years. There is also a substantial risk of more broadly inflaming the region and increasing violence at a time of already great instability. Finally, the United States will reconsider its assistance program for the Palestinian Authority and other aspects of U.S.-Palestinian relations if they choose to pursue such a unilateral effort.

We are confident that your government shares the United States' commitment to a comprehensive resolution of the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians. That outcome can only be achieved through direct negotiations. A vote on a unilateral UN resolution will likely set prospects for peace back years.

Our bilateral relationship is based on certain fundamental values. We urge you to vote those values, and to stand with the United States in not supporting unilateral action at the UN that would impede the peace we all seek.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Democratic Whip Steny H. Hoyer; Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi; Rep. Gary Ackerman; Rep. Joe Baca; Rep. Shelley Berkley; Rep. Howard Berman; Rep. Madeleine Bordallo; Rep. Leonard Boswell; Rep. Dennis Cardoza; Rep. Russ Carnahan; Rep. David Cicilline; Rep. Emanuel Cleaver; Rep. Gerry Connolly; Rep. Jim Costa; Rep. Jerry Costello; Rep. Mark Critz; Rep. Joseph Crowley; Rep. Susan Davis; Rep. Rosa DeLauro; Rep. Ted Deutch.

Rep. Eliot Engel; Rep. Charlie Gonzalez; Rep. Gene Green; Rep. Janice Hahn; Rep. Brian Higgins; Rep. Kathy Hochul; Rep. Tim Holden; Rep. Steve Israel; Rep. William Keating; Rep. Larry Kissell; Rep. James Langevin; Rep. John Larson; Rep. Sander Levin; Rep. Dan Lipinski; Rep. Nita Lowey; Rep. Carolyn Maloney; Rep. James McGovern; Rep. Gregory Meeks; Rep. Michael Michaud; Rep. Chris Murphy.

Rep. Jerrold Nadler; Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton; Rep. Bill Owens; Rep. Gary Peters; Rep. Steven Rothman; Rep. C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger; Rep. John Sarbanes; Rep. Janice Schakowsky; Rep. Adam Schiff; Rep. Allyson Schwartz; Rep. David Scott; Rep. Brad Sherman; Rep. Heath Shuler; Rep. Albio Sires; Rep. Betty Sutton; Rep. Edolphus Towns; Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz; Rep. Henry Waxman.

MEDICARE AND OBAMACARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I thank our majority leader for giving me the opportunity to take this time this

evening to talk about two of the most important issues on the minds of every American, but especially on the minds of our seniors, and those two issues are, number one, Medicare, and, number two, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Now, if you go to the 11th Congressional District of Georgia, Madam Speaker, and you say, what do you think about the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act that was passed on March 23, 2010—1½ years ago—in this body, they would say I don't know what you're talking about. What is PPACA, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act? And then if you said to the folks in the 11th of Georgia, well, ObamaCare, they would say yes, of course, now I know what you're talking about. So tonight I will use the term "ObamaCare"—not in a pejorative way, but it's the term that's most recognizable to the American people.

Of course even today, 1½ years after passage of ObamaCare, fully 60 percent of people across this country are opposed to it. They were opposed to it at its inception; and yet when President Obama was inaugurated and became our 44th President, just within weeks there was this push to have something that I would call national health insurance or government-controlled health insurance for this great country of ours.

Many times, Madam Speaker, the dialogue was, well, we have been wanting this government-controlled health insurance, national health insurance, Medicare-for-all government insurance from cradle to grave for years, way back in probably the days of Theodore Roosevelt. We have been wanting this and trying to get this passed, and now is our opportunity. Now finally we have the opportunity to bring this to the American people.

Well, who was it, Madam Speaker, that wanted it all these years? And why, if they wanted it so badly for 50, 60, 70 years, why was it never passed? Indeed, why was it not passed the last time before this passage in March of 2010? Why did it fail back in 1993–94, during the administration of President Clinton, when we referred to it as HillaryCare? Everybody remembers that very well. Well, it's because the American people don't want this. They didn't want it then, didn't want it in 1993–94, absolutely didn't want it in March of 2010. And yet this President and that majority—at the time, the Democrats controlled this House of Representatives. They controlled the Senate. They had the White House.

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All their ducks were in a row. Everything was aligned. And they literally spent a year and a half, Madam Speaker, a year and a half forcing that legislation, literally, down the throats of the American people, even when folks of all ages, but especially seniors, were saying, you know, We don't really want this.