

HOWARD L. BERMAN, CALIFORNIA
CHAIRMAN

GARY L. ACKERMAN, NEW YORK
ENI F. H. FALEOMAVAEGA, AMERICAN SAMOA
DONALD M. PAYNE, NEW JERSEY
BRAD SHERMAN, CALIFORNIA
ROBERT WEXLER, FLORIDA
ELIOT L. ENGEL, NEW YORK
BILL DELAHUNT, MASSACHUSETTS
GREGORY W. MEEKS, NEW YORK
DIANE E. WATSON, CALIFORNIA
ADAM SMITH, WASHINGTON
RUSS CARNAHAN, MISSOURI
JOHN S. TANNER, TENNESSEE
GENE GREEN, TEXAS
LYNN C. WOOLSEY, CALIFORNIA
SHEILA JACKSON LEE, TEXAS
RUBÉN HINOJOSA, TEXAS
JOSEPH CROWLEY, NEW YORK
DAVID WU, OREGON
BRAD MILLER, NORTH CAROLINA
LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ, CALIFORNIA
DAVID SCOTT, GEORGIA
JIM COSTA, CALIFORNIA
ALBIO SIRE, NEW JERSEY
GABRIELLE GIFFORDS, ARIZONA
RON KLEIN, FLORIDA
BARBARA LEE, CALIFORNIA

ROBERT R. KING
STAFF DIRECTOR

PETER M. YEO
DEPUTY STAFF DIRECTOR

DAVID S. ABRAMOWITZ
CHIEF COUNSEL

ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, FLORIDA
RANKING REPUBLICAN MEMBER

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

TELEPHONE: (202) 225-5021

[HTTP://WWW.FOREIGNAFFAIRS.HOUSE.GOV/](http://www.foreignaffairs.house.gov/)

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, NEW JERSEY
DAN BURTON, INDIANA
ELTON GALLEGLY, CALIFORNIA
DANA ROHRBACHER, CALIFORNIA
DONALD A. MANZULLO, ILLINOIS
EDWARD R. ROYCE, CALIFORNIA
STEVE CHABOT, OHIO
THOMAS G. TANCREDO, COLORADO
RON PAUL, TEXAS
JEFF FLAKE, ARIZONA
MIKE PENCE, INDIANA
JOE WILSON, SOUTH CAROLINA
JOHN BOOZMAN, ARKANSAS
J. GRESHAM BARRETT, SOUTH CAROLINA
CONNIE MACK, FLORIDA
JEFF FORTENBERRY, NEBRASKA
MICHAEL T. MCCAUL, TEXAS
TED POE, TEXAS
BOB INGLIS, SOUTH CAROLINA
LUIS G. FORTUÑO, PUERTO RICO
GUS M. BILIRAKIS, FLORIDA
VACANT

YLEEM D.S. POBLETE
REPUBLICAN STAFF DIRECTOR

MARK C. GAGE
REPUBLICAN SENIOR POLICY ADVISOR

DOUGLAS C. ANDERSON
REPUBLICAN CHIEF COUNSEL

July 9, 2008

“The Magnificent Seven or High Noon?”
Statement of Rep. Gary L. Ackerman, Chairman
Joint Hearing of the House Subcommittee on Europe and
the House Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia
“Europe and Israel: Strengthening the Partnership”

Why is it our problem? That might be the first question someone would ask about a hearing in the U.S. Congress on relations between Israel and Europe. We have strong relations with both, we cooperate with both across a range of issues, so what makes this topic worthy of special attention?

The short answer is self-interest. The challenges in the Middle East today are not confined to that region, and cannot be addressed without partnership by ourselves with the most able and effective allies we can find. In addition to the threat from al-Qaeda and like minded terrorist organizations, there is the need to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict, and particularly the question of Palestinian statehood; there are Iran’s terrorist proxies that are working aggressively to destabilize the region; there is the global threat of Iranian nuclear proliferation; and there are shared long-term concerns about how the people of the region can be reconciled with each other: Arabs with Persians and Kurds; Shias with Sunnis; secularists with Islamicists. These problems well exceed the ability of any one part of the triangle of the United States, the European Union, or Israel to resolve on their own.

Alliances, both formal and informal, are essential to effective international politics. They must be based on shared interest, but they thrive best when bolstered with shared values. Fortunately, between ourselves, the Europeans and the Israelis, both conditions are clearly present. We all recognize the threats, we are all committed to democratic and liberal values, and we all recognize that action is necessary to protect our vital interests.

Unfortunately, on this very strong base of agreement of outlook, there are very significant differences on responses, timing, urgency and priority. And it is here that the work of the United States can most usefully be done. Coordination on strategy and policy is a prerequisite for success and there is a substantial gap to be filled in here. Many of the most difficult but most important questions about regional security are not only unanswered, but unasked.

Perhaps, in a perfect world, there would be an international sheriff, who, Gary Cooper-like, would take on the bad guys while the townsfolk watch or hide in fear. But there is no such figure, and there never will be. There is only the hope of international cooperation and cohesion to seek collective security. Such efforts carry more political weight, enjoy greater international legitimacy, and help reassure people in democratic states that their government is not off on an adventure, and they will not be stuck footing the entire bill. The first President Bush understood this idea. The second has chosen to learn this lesson the hard way.

America is at its best not in the role of the lone hero, but as a friend inspiring and supporting others in taking action they thought was beyond their ability to achieve on their own. It is this role we should be seeking with Europe and with Israel, as an ally and a friend encouraging them to go further than they might otherwise in pro-actively seeking to resolve conflicts and to meet the challenges to international security posed by restless and ambitious states like Iran.

One more point should be noted for those in this country and abroad who are more worried about bombing Iran than about Iran with a nuclear bomb: If you want to avoid a situation where Israel feels compelled to take unilateral military action to preserve itself—because its citizens are daily at risk from Iranian-backed terrorism; because it lives under the shadow of tens of thousands of terrorist controlled-rockets provided by Iran; and because Iran’s top politician is a Holocaust denier and refers Israel as a “dirty microbe” and “a savage animal,” language that has already been used in this world as a prelude to genocide – then the best policy is to provide more robust guarantees for Israel’s security, and more tangible commitments to stopping Iran’s nuclear ambitions.

There is nothing free in this world. Not for us, not for Europe and not for Israel. Meeting the challenge posed by Iranian proliferation efforts, if it is truly our top priority, and one we hope to achieve without war, means that each of us will have to sacrifice some of our other preferences.

The first sacrifice we must make is the idea that each of us, or any of us, can go it alone.

I want to welcome our four distinguished witnesses and, in particular, my old and very good friend, Ambassador Oded Eran.

###