



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 109th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

House of Representatives

CONDEMNING THE RECENT ATTACKS AGAINST THE STATE OF ISRAEL

SPEECH OF
HON. RUSH D. HOLT
OF NEW JERSEY
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WEDNESDAY, JULY 19, 2006

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 921, which condemns the recent attacks against the State of Israel and supports her right to defend herself. The United States has no closer ally in the Middle East and, at this difficult and troubling time, it is essential that the United States maintain its steadfast commitment to Israel and all her people.

Today, my thoughts and prayers are with Israel, her brave citizens, the captured soldiers, and all the innocent people on both sides of the border with Lebanon and the Gaza Strip. It is important that America supports Israel as she defends herself against the deadly and destructive acts of terrorists. Those who committed these heinous attacks must know that they will not succeed in destroying the State of Israel, nor will they diminish the spirit of the Israeli people.

Each day brings more rocket attacks from Hezbollah that target innocent civilians in northern Israel. These attacks must be stopped, and to do so Israel has the right to go after the Hezbollah terrorists who launch them from southern Lebanon with the assistance of Syria and Iran.

Despite the commitment and good faith efforts made by Israel to build a lasting peace in the Middle East, the terrorist organizations Hamas and Hezbollah engaged in unprovoked attacks on Israel and kidnapped three of her soldiers. Israel withdrew from the Gaza Strip, but Hamas responded with violence. Israel withdrew from southern Lebanon, but Hezbollah responded with terrorism. These terrorist organizations are killing innocent Israelis despite every attempt to demonstrate their genuine commitment to peace. I hope that this crisis ends soon. In fact, I think it would be beneficial if the United States helped to arrange a cease fire, but Israel will and should maintain control of her own security. The experience of the last weeks reaffirms the right of nations to defend themselves against acts of terrorism, especially by organizations that are part of sovereign governments. But there are other lessons for those who do not live in the Middle East.

First, when there are opportunities to support moderate governments, we must do so. Part of the reason Hezbollah is still in south Lebanon is because it is backed by Iran and Syria, while the government of Lebanon was left without similar strong backing from the international community, including the United States.

Second, we must also remember the fact that extremism incubates in societies ravaged by poverty, hopelessness and humiliation. We cannot eliminate terrorism simply by suppressing terrorists. We must also lift up the societies and groups upon which terrorists rely for their recruitment.

And third, when confronting terrorists, every effort must be made to protect the civilians around them and prevent destruction to civilian communities. We cannot win the battle of ideas and prevail in the fight against extremism if the people we are trying to lift up are reduced to living in rubble.

Madam Speaker, the bible recounts many miracles performed by God. And miracles seemingly have helped Israel flourish since its independence. As the first Prime Minister David Ben Gurion once said, "in Israel, in order to be a realist you must believe in miracles." I still strongly believe in the dream that has become the wonderful reality of Israel.

I urge my colleagues to support Israel and to support this important resolution.