

**Statement of Representative Mike Pence**  
**Committee on Foreign Affairs**  
**Subcommittee on Middle East and South Asia and Subcommittee on Europe**  
**July 9, 2008**

**Joint Hearing on “Europe and Israel: Strengthening the Partnership”**

Mr. Chairmen, both, thank you for calling this important hearing, and I welcome our distinguished witnesses, PhD’s all.

Chairman Ackerman, I know you and I have both returned from trips to Israel in the last week. I saw a vibrant and flourishing modern country, but one that is geographically small, and almost surrounded by a sea of hostility. Given this state of the region, Israel’s relations with the EU are all the more critical.

It seems like our witnesses today are in general agreement on some key issues—that cooperation and collaboration between the EU and Israel is progressing and should continue, with an eye to adding Israel to NATO; that economic interaction proceeds apace—the EU is Israel’s largest trading partner, and its leading import source; and that that the EU sees, at least in theory, the threat posed by Iran.

On a less positive point, the problem of Hezbollah persists, and the EU has not taken the principled approach as it has with Hamas, that is, utterly isolating an obviously terrorist organization. I also find Germany’s huge amount of commerce with Iran troubling; Dr. Gardiner cites the study that some *five thousand* German companies do business in Iran. Germany’s fragile coalition government is thus reluctant to get too far out in front on this issue.

I’m struck by Dr. Lesser’s point that jihadists regard Europe, Israel, and the US as “the far enemy.” We all clearly have common interests, and we face a common threat. I hope the EU doesn’t discover this too late. I’m in agreement with Dr. Gardiner’s emphatic statement, “The West must be prepared to use force against Iran in addition to wielding economic and political pressure” against “a fundamentally evil and barbaric regime.” This view is not widely held in Europe although it should be. Europe is ominously closer in Iranian missile range than we are.

The EU’s sanctions adopted last month on Iran’s major bank—freezing the assets of and prohibiting transactions with Bank Melli—and the sanctions on 38 other Iranian entities and individuals are a welcome development. But, since German (and Russian) economic interests are so deeply intertwined with Iran, it is hard to see the EU going much further right now. Here, I would make another plug for H. Con. Res. 352, the Ackerman- Pence resolution (with 235 cosponsors and counting). It specifically calls for the President to impose sanctions on: Iran’s Central Bank and any Iranian bank engaged in proliferation activities or the support of terrorist groups; international banks that conduct transactions with outlawed Iranian banks; energy companies investing \$20 million or more in Iran’s petroleum or natural gas sector; and all companies conducting business with Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

In this vein, I also highlight the House's efforts one year ago, when we passed H. Con. Res. 21 by a vote of 411-2, calling on the United Nations Security Council to charge Iranian President Mahmoud Ah-ma-din-e-jad with violating the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and the United Nations Charter because of his repeated calls for the destruction of Israel.

Indeed, the sad reality, as Dr. Gardiner testifies, is that Israel "remains the most persecuted nation in modern history." The deeper problem is that NATO expansion toward or EU integration with Israel would not be controversial if the Islamic world accepted Israel's right to exist. Sixty years into its life, only two (of 22) Arab neighbors have recognized Israel. Israel's mere existence remains a stumbling block to most of its neighbors. The European Community knows better and yet, gives far too much deference to this point of view. It's as if some leaders want to "triangulate" between terrorists and Israel, without offending either side. Given the threat posed by Iran and the forces of jihad generally, highlighted by Dr. Bardají, this is simply unacceptable.

Mr. Chairmen, both, thank you for calling this hearing. I look forward to a stimulating discussion on strengthening the partnership between Europe and Israel and what steps we can take to facilitate that.