

unprecedented fiscal crisis as a result of deficit spending and mountains of federal debt. The good news is that the Export-Import Bank not only creates jobs, it does so without adding the federal debt.

Unlike the failed “stimulus” spending, which cost taxpayers trillions of dollars, the cost to the American taxpayers for the Export-Import Bank’s job creation is nothing. The Bank generates enough fees to offset its costs and actually contributes the remaining surpluses to the United States Treasury. Indeed, over the last five years, the Bank has returned \$3.4 billion to the United States Treasury.

The Export-Import Bank has been an important tool for global competitiveness, especially for small businesses. Small businesses are the engines that drive job creation in the American economy, and more than 85 percent of the Export-Import Bank’s transactions directly supported small businesses.

The Export-Import Bank does not compete with private lenders. Instead the Bank is a “lender of last resort.” The Bank helps to level the playing field for U.S. exporters by matching the financing that other governments provide to their exporters. The Export-Import Bank also fills important gaps in trade financing by assuming credit risks and country risks that other private sector actors are unable or unwilling to do. They have done so with amazing success—supporting more than \$456 billion of United States exports of the last 77 years.

The Export-Import Bank’s charter expired in 2011 and it is currently operating on an extension that is set to expire on May 31st of this year.

On Friday night, a compromise was reached in the House. Under the bipartisan agreement the Export-Import Bank’s charter will be extended through September 2014 and its loan exposure cap will be raised 40 percent to \$140 billion.

The bank will be required to keep default rates below 2 percent. Additionally, the Treasury Department would be required to initiate talks with U.S. trading partners toward “substantially reducing” and ultimately ending the practice of export financing subsidies.

Despite the bipartisan agreement, some are still opposed to re-authorization.

Opponents of re-authorization have called the Export-Import Bank “corporate welfare.” While such accusations may make for good talk radio fodder, they do not represent the reality of the long and successful history of the Export-Import Bank. The Bank has a 77 year track of making investments in American companies that have created millions of jobs.

Failure to re-authorize the bank has rightfully been compared to “unilateral surrender”—American companies and manufacturers will immediately be placed at a strategic disadvantage in the global marketplace.

Re-authorization should be passed with wide bipartisan majorities—indeed, when we were in Congress that is exactly what happened. The American people want their representatives in Washington to get this economy moving again, they want to see economic growth that creates much needed jobs. Members on both sides of the aisle should have job creation as their number one priority and re-authorizing the Export-Import Bank is an important part of any job creation effort.

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I strongly support H.R. 2072, the “Securing American Jobs Through Exports Act of 2011” which reauthorizes the Export-Import (Ex-Im) Bank for three years. Last year the Export-Import Bank supported nearly 300,000 American jobs; 300,000

American jobs. This reauthorization is a no brainer.

The Export-Import Bank provided \$32 billion in financing last year—all at no cost to the taxpayer. More than 80% of those transactions directly supported small businesses in 2011. The Ex-Im Bank provides support for small business owners who may be less familiar with the global economy, but want to grow their business, create jobs, support their community, and make it in America.

In my home state of South Carolina, the first Boeing 787 Dreamliner rolled out of the production facility at the Charleston Airport just two weeks ago. The Export-Import Bank fills an important financing gap for Boeing that helps level the global playing field and encourages foreign companies to buy American-made products like the Dreamliner. Reauthorizing the Ex-Im Bank will protect jobs in South Carolina and all around the country.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of our Nation’s small businesses and manufacturers, and call on this House to vote in favor of H.R. 2072, the Securing American Jobs Through Exports Act of 2011.

This legislation will reauthorize the Export-Import Bank of the United States, or Ex-Im Bank, for three years and raise its lending authority to \$140 billion.

Founded during the Great Depression, the Ex-Im Bank, has served American businesses for nearly 80 years through its financial support of our Nation’s exporters—both large and small. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce has found that small businesses make up 87 percent of Ex-Im Bank transactions.

In Fiscal Year 2011, the Ex-Im Bank supported 290,000 export-related American jobs by providing more than \$32 billion in financing to more than 3,600 U.S. companies nationwide.

Since 1934, Ex-Im Bank has provided assistance to more than \$474 billion of U.S. exports. Over the past five years, the Ex-Im Bank has provided businesses in the 29th District of Texas with over \$407 million in export financing alone.

It is important to note that the work of the Bank is done at no cost to the taxpayer. It is self-sustaining and covers all of its operating expenses and loan loss reserves through fees the Bank charges users. In fact, the Bank normally makes a profit and has returned nearly \$2 billion to the Treasury since 2008.

During this time of economic uncertainty and growing international competition, it is imperative that Congress pass H.R. 2072 and reauthorize the Ex-Im Bank. To do otherwise would unnecessarily endanger tens of thousands of American jobs.

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2072, the bipartisan Securing Jobs Through Exports Act.

Other nations are aggressively supporting their businesses’ exports, making it more important than ever to help American manufacturers secure the financing they need to compete in foreign markets.

The Export-Import Bank helps make this happen, creating middle class jobs here at home and boosting our economic competitiveness by investing in a strong manufacturing sector that builds and exports products around the world.

Just last year, the Bank provided \$32 billion in financing to thousands of companies, which

supported nearly 290,000 American jobs. Over 80 percent of those transactions directly supported small businesses.

In my district alone, the Bank supported over \$36 million in sales over the last five years, helping innovative Central Coast businesses like Mafi-Trench and CoreSulphur grow and hire.

The Securing Jobs Through Exports Act will provide the necessary tools and resources for the Bank to continue this important work.

It reauthorizes the Bank for three years, giving U.S. businesses the certainty they need, and incrementally increases the exposure limit to \$140 billion by fiscal year 2014 in response to the growing demand for Ex-Im financing.

The bill will also make Ex-Im more effective and accountable by funding technology upgrades and requiring additional reporting to Congress.

This bipartisan legislation has broad, bipartisan support from both labor and business groups, including the Chamber of Commerce, International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, NAM, and Business Roundtable.

Mr. Speaker, as our fragile economy continues to recover, we must ensure American businesses have the tools they need to compete in the global market place and create jobs for workers here at home.

This bipartisan legislation will help do exactly that.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2072. The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. GARY G. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2072, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

□ 1320

UNITED STATES-ISRAEL ENHANCED SECURITY COOPERATION ACT OF 2012

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4133) to express the sense of Congress regarding the United States-Israel strategic relationship, to direct the President to submit to Congress reports on United States actions to enhance this relationship and to assist in the defense of Israel, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4133

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “United States-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act of 2012”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Since 1948, United States Presidents and both houses of Congress, on a bipartisan basis and supported by the American people, have repeatedly reaffirmed the special bond between the United States and Israel, based on shared values and shared interests.

(2) The Middle East is undergoing rapid change, bringing with it hope for an expansion of democracy but also great challenges to the national security of the United States and our allies in the region, particularly our most important ally in the region, Israel. Over the past year, the Middle East has witnessed the fall of some regimes long considered to be stabilizing forces and a rise in the influence of radical Islamists.

(3) Iran, which has long sought to foment instability and promote extremism in the Middle East, is now seeking to exploit the dramatic political transition underway in the region to undermine governments traditionally aligned with the United States and support extremist political movements in these countries.

(4) At the same time, Iran may soon attain a nuclear weapons capability, a development that would fundamentally threaten vital American interests, destabilize the region, encourage regional nuclear proliferation, further empower and embolden Iran, the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism, and provide it the tools to threaten its neighbors, including Israel.

(5) Over the past several years, with the assistance of Iran and Syria, Hizballah and Hamas have increased their stockpiles of rockets, with more than 60,000 rockets now ready to be fired at Israel. Iran continues to add to its arsenal of ballistic missiles and cruise missiles, which threaten Iran's neighbors, Israel, and United States military forces in the region.

(6) As a result, the strategic environment that has kept Israel secure and safeguarded United States national interests for the past 35 years has eroded.

SEC. 3. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

It is the policy of the United States:

(1) To reaffirm the enduring commitment of the United States to the security of the State of Israel as a Jewish state. As President Obama stated on December 16, 2011, "America's commitment and my commitment to Israel and Israel's security is unshakeable." And as President Bush stated before the Knesset on the 60th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel on May 15, 2008, "The alliance between our governments is unbreakable, yet the source of our friendship runs deeper than any treaty."

(2) To provide Israel the military capabilities necessary to deter and defend itself by itself against any threats.

(3) To veto any one-sided anti-Israel resolutions at the United Nations Security Council.

(4) To support Israel's inherent right to self-defense.

(5) To pursue avenues to expand cooperation with Israel in both defense and across the spectrum of civilian sectors, including high technology, agriculture, medicine, health, pharmaceuticals, and energy.

(6) To assist Israel with its on-going efforts to forge a peaceful, negotiated settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that results in two states living side by side in peace and security, and to encourage Israel's neighbors to recognize Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state.

SEC. 4. UNITED STATES ACTIONS TO ASSIST IN THE DEFENSE OF ISRAEL AND PROTECT AMERICAN INTERESTS.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the United States should take

the following actions to assist in the defense of Israel:

(1) Provide Israel such support as may be necessary to increase development and production of joint missile defense systems, particularly such systems that defend the urgent threat posed to Israel and United States forces in the region.

(2) Provide Israel assistance specifically for the production and procurement of the Iron Dome defense system for purposes of intercepting short-range missiles, rockets, and projectiles launched against Israel.

(3) Provide Israel defense articles and defense services through such mechanisms as appropriate, to include air refueling tankers, missile defense capabilities, and specialized munitions.

(4) Allocate additional weaponry and munitions for the forward-deployed United States stockpile in Israel.

(5) Provide Israel additional surplus defense articles and defense services, as appropriate, in the wake of the withdrawal of United States forces from Iraq.

(6) Strengthen efforts to prevent weapons smuggling into Gaza pursuant to the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access following the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and to protect against weapons smuggling and terrorist threats from the Sinai Peninsula.

(7) Offer the Israeli Air Force additional training and exercise opportunities in the United States to compensate for Israel's limited air space.

(8) Expand Israel's authority to make purchases under the Foreign Military Financing program on a commercial basis.

(9) Seek to enhance the capabilities of the United States and Israel to address emerging common threats, increase security cooperation, and expand joint military exercises.

(10) Encourage an expanded role for Israel within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), including an enhanced presence at NATO headquarters and exercises.

(11) Support extension of the long-standing loan guarantee program for Israel, recognizing Israel's unbroken record of repaying its loans on time and in full.

(12) Expand already-close intelligence cooperation, including satellite intelligence, with Israel.

(b) REPORT ON ISRAEL'S QUALITATIVE MILITARY EDGE.—

(1) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—It is the policy of the United States—

(A) to help Israel preserve its qualitative military edge amid rapid and uncertain regional political transformation; and

(B) to encourage further development of advanced technology programs between the United States and Israel given current trends and instability in the region.

(2) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate a report on the status of Israel's qualitative military edge in light of current trends and instability in the region.

(c) REPORTS ON OTHER MATTERS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on each of the following:

(1) Taking into account Israel's urgent requirement for F 35 aircraft, actions to improve the process relating to Israel's purchase of F 35 aircraft to improve cost efficiency and timely delivery.

(2) Efforts to expand cooperation between the United States and Israel in homeland security, counter-terrorism, maritime security, energy, cybersecurity, and other appropriate areas.

(3) Actions to integrate Israel into the defense of the Eastern Mediterranean.

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term "appropriate congressional committees" means—

(A) the Committee on Appropriations, the Committee on Armed Services, and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives; and

(B) the Committee on Appropriations, the Committee on Armed Services, and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate.

(2) QUALITATIVE MILITARY EDGE.—The term "qualitative military edge" has the meaning given the term in section 36(h)(2) of the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2776(h)(2)).

SEC. 5. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE LOAN GUARANTEES TO ISRAEL.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 5 of title I of the Emergency Wartime Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2003 (Public Law 108 11), as amended, is further amended in the item relating to "Loan Guarantees to Israel"—

(1) in the matter preceding the first proviso, by striking "September 30, 2011" and inserting "September 30, 2015"; and

(2) in the second proviso, by striking "September 30, 2011" and inserting "September 30, 2015".

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section take effect on the date of enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the United States-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act of 2012, of which I am an original cosponsor; and I thank the distinguished majority leader and minority whip for sponsoring this important legislation.

The democratic Jewish State of Israel is our closest and most important ally. We share the same interests. We share the same values. And, lamentably, we share the same threats.

Today, 64 years after Israel's founding, these same shared threats to both of our nations are stark and they are growing—particularly the threat posed by the Iranian regime, which continues racing towards nuclear-weapons capabilities, and by Iran's partner in crime, the Assad regime in Syria. Israel continues to face the danger of Iranian-sponsored violent extremists, including Hamas and Hezbollah, which continue to expand their capabilities to threaten Israeli civilians and its infrastructure with tens of thousands of rockets, mortars, and missiles.

As a result of our shared commitments, the United States and Israel have worked together to advance technologies and policies to keep both of our countries safe and secure. Israel's proximity to the Iran-Syria-Hamas-Hezbollah nexus eliminates any room for error in Israel's defense capabilities.

We are here today to reaffirm our unequivocal support for Israel's right to

defend herself. And even beyond affirming Israel's right to defend herself, we aim to expand Israel's ability to protect her citizens against the dangers which they are subjected to day after day.

This bill expresses the sense of Congress that our country should support an increase to the totality of our bilateral security relations—from joint missile defense systems, intelligence cooperation, military exercises between the United States and Israel, to increasing Air Force training as well as providing increased excess defense articles and munitions to Israel.

This legislation also seeks to counter the Israel bashing that has become commonplace in international forums such as the United Nations. The United States must not allow Israel to be isolated and demonized in international organizations and must work together to withdraw U.S. participation in and funding from organizations that do so.

This legislation also extends the authority to provide loan guarantees to the Israeli Government that provide the Jewish state with a cushion of support in times of need at no cost to the American taxpayer.

As the United States and Israel work together to stop the challenges posed by the Iranian and Syrian regimes, and by violent extremists like Hezbollah and Hamas, the U.S.-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act, the bill before us today, marks the triumph that we have achieved through our existing cooperation and advances our alliance to new levels.

I want to again thank my colleagues from both sides of the aisle for their strong support for this measure.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 4133, the United States-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act of 2012, and I yield myself 3 minutes.

I would like to thank my friends, the majority leader, Mr. CANTOR, and minority whip, Mr. HOYER, for bringing this important bill to the floor. Their cooperation on this legislation is an outstanding example of Congress' bipartisan support for the United States-Israel relationship.

Mr. Speaker, since its founding, Israel has faced innumerable challenges to its survival, but the serious threats it faces today are unprecedented. Only weeks ago, a massive barrage of rockets was fired from Gaza at Israeli population centers by Islamic jihad and other terrorists. But unlike previous incidents where terrorists targeted Israel, the Iron Dome anti-missile system—funded in part by the United States—changed the rules of the game. In fact, Iron Dome intercepted a remarkable 90 percent of the incoming rockets aimed at once-defenseless population centers.

Currently, there are only three Iron Dome batteries operational in Israel, with two more on the way, but more

are needed in order to protect all of Israel's 8 million citizens.

I'm pleased to say that H.R. 4133 incorporates language from the Iron Dome Support Act, bipartisan legislation that the chair and I recently introduced and which now has nearly 90 cosponsors, expressing support for providing Israel assistance to produce additional Iron Dome batteries.

The bill also pledges to assist Israel with its ongoing efforts to forge a peaceful, negotiated settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that results in two states living side by side in peace and security. Despite all of the obstacles to achieving this goal, we can't give up trying, as peace is profoundly in Israel's strategic interest. I applaud Prime Minister Netanyahu's willingness to negotiate anywhere, anytime. The Palestinians should take him up on that offer instead of pursuing a campaign to delegitimize Israel at the U.N. and elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps the greatest threat to both American and Israeli security today is that posed by Iran's nuclear weapons program. I hope fervently that this can be solved diplomatically. But as we all know, only massive pressure from the United States and our allies has any chance of persuading Iran to give up its quest for nuclear arms. This bill makes clear that the U.S. Congress will continue to help Israel meet the Iranian threat.

Gaza-based terrorism, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the Iranian nuclear problem are not the only threats faced by Israel. Recent events in Egypt and Syria, along with the presence of Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon, require Israeli vigilance against danger from all directions. To that end, this bill reaffirms our determination to support Israel's qualitative military edge against any possible combination of regional threats.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. BERMAN. I yield myself 30 additional seconds.

And reinforcing that commitment to Israel's security, this bill extends for 4 years a loan guarantee program for Israel that was initiated in 2003, an extension based on legislation that Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN and I introduced in March.

Our relationship with our ally Israel is one of the most important, and closest, that we have with any nation in the world. We face many of the same threats, and we share the same values.

Israel's Defense Minister Ehud Barak recently said that he can hardly remember a better period of U.S. support and cooperation and common U.S.-Israel strategic understanding than the current one. Passage of this bill will help ensure that this cooperation continues into the future. I encourage all of my colleagues to support the legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Mem-

bers may have 5 legislative days to submit remarks and include extraneous material on the legislation under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT), who has the honor of chairing our Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia.

Mr. CHABOT. I thank the chair for yielding time to me. She is doing an exemplary job as chairman of the very important Foreign Affairs Committee, and we thank her for that.

I rise in strong support of this resolution. As we approach the 64th anniversary of Israel's declaration of independence, we must confront the unfortunate reality that all is not well in the Middle East. Just over a year and a half ago, a street vendor set off a wave of popular revolution which continues to shake the region's core foundations. And although I hope that the so-called Arab Spring will usher democracy and human rights into a region where both have been exceptions rather than the rule, and a year and a half in, the picture is starting to look—let's face it—bleak.

Times like this make us especially aware of who our friends are, and I am proud to support this and any resolution which strengthens the United States-Israel relationship.

□ 1330

For 64 years, the bonds of friendship between our two countries, reinforced by both shared interests and shared values, have remained strong and continue to grow stronger. Today, Israel faces unprecedented threats to its security, some of which, like the Iranian nuclear program, have loomed on the horizon for some time; and some, like the current regional instability that we've seen, are relatively new. At this time of heightened danger and profound change, it is incumbent on us to do everything in our power to help to secure Israel. It's our strongest ally in the region, has been for many years, and will continue to be in the future.

The administration is fond of trumpeting its undying support for Israel, as Vice President BIDEN did just yesterday, but the proof of the pudding is in the eating. If the administration is truly serious about Israel's security, it can start by stating loudly and clearly that it will not allow Iran to acquire a nuclear weapons capability—not just the weapon, but the capability to produce one. That would be far more meaningful than another of the dozens of generic statements we frequently read about in the newspapers.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would remind Members not to traffic the well while a Member is under recognition.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 2 minutes to my friend from New York (Mr. ISRAEL).

Mr. ISRAEL. I thank my friend from California.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to have worked on both sides of the aisle in the leadership of advancing U.S.-Israeli relations; proud of what I have done on a bipartisan basis to maintain Israel's qualitative military edge; proud of taking a tough line on Iran; proud of the meeting that I convened with the distinguished gentlewoman from Florida just several weeks ago with United Against a Nuclear Iran, a bipartisan meeting with the group United Against Nuclear Iran to make sure that we're taking the toughest actions possible with all the tools in our toolbox against a nuclear Iran; proud to have called publicly for the arrest of the madman Ahmadinejad on charges of inciting genocide; proud yesterday to have joined with the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTCH) in calling for an investigation of whether U.S. taxpayer dollars have been used towards the Palestinian Investment Fund; and today I'm very proud to rise in support of the U.S.-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes certain fundamentals get lost in the shuffle. Here are the fundamentals:

Israel is the most important ally that we have in the world. Israel is the most important ally that we have in the world in the most dangerous region of the world. The bonds between Israel and the United States are unshakeable, can never be minimized, and will never be weakened for as long as both sides of the aisle continue to work side by side to advance that partnership.

Of all the things we do here, one of the things I'm most proud of is our bipartisan support for Israel. And we will continue in that spirit—not only because a strong Israel is critical, but because a strong Israel means a more secure America.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE), a member of our Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Judiciary.

Mr. POE of Texas. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, America's support for Israel is not new. Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin both wanted the likeness of Moses leading the children of Israel to serve as the Great Seal of the newly independent United States of America. In fact, in the center of this Chamber, in the relief portrait that is directly in front of me looking down on this House, is the portrait of the great lawgiver Moses. John Adams wrote that he really wished the Jews had in Judea an independent nation.

So in 1948, when Israel finally became a modern, independent Jewish state,

the United States recognized Israel in just 11 minutes. Today, our support for Israel cannot waiver, it cannot wane, and we cannot grow weary in proclaiming the absolute right of Israel to defend itself.

Israel's interests are America's interests. They are on the front lines against terrorists like Hezbollah and Hamas. They are surrounded by nations that do not like them. And Israel is opposed to the tiny tyrant from the desert—Ahmadinejad—in his pursuit of nuclear destruction of Israel.

Our troops train together, and our cooperation in developing military technology has saved Israeli and American lives.

The United States has no greater ally in the Middle East than the nation of Israel. The United States must let the world know that Israel has the absolute right to be left alone.

So I support this suspension and urge its passage, and that's just the way it is.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 3 minutes to the very distinguished member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, the ranking member of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee, on a resolution that does not affect—well, it does affect the Western Hemisphere because it affects us, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL).

Mr. ENGEL. I thank the gentleman from California, and I rise in strong support of this resolution.

I want our colleagues to hear what's been going on here on the House floor. At a time when Congress has been derided as not being able to get its act together, when people say Democrats and Republicans cannot agree on anything, when people say that Congress doesn't know how to work together and meet in the middle, what are we hearing? We're hearing Democrats and Republicans alike expressing strong bipartisan support for Israel, expressing strong bipartisan support for the U.S.-Israel relationship.

We know that the United States and Israel have so much in common. We have common feelings of democracy. We have common mores. We have common people who understand what democracy is all about.

Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East and faces threats from terrorist groups like Hezbollah and Hamas. Israel is willing to sit down and negotiate with the Palestinians with no preconditions. Prime Minister Netanyahu has said that many, many times, and he has been rebuffed by the Palestinians, who want all kinds of preconditions before they will even sit down and talk with Israel.

And of course Iran looms large. Iran must never be allowed to have a nuclear weapon. Iran is not only a threat to wipe Israel off the face of the Earth, as that lunatic Ahmadinejad has said, but Iran is a threat to the West, to the United States, and to NATO as well.

So, what are we doing here this afternoon? We're rising in strong support of

H.R. 4133, the United States-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act. This important bill reaffirms that Congress stands shoulder to shoulder with Israel as it faces numerous challenges in the weeks and months ahead. It restates U.S. policy that America must provide Israel with the capability to defend itself and preserve its qualitative military edge. It increases military and civilian security cooperation between our two nations in order to prevent Iran from achieving nuclear weapons capability. It supports a negotiated settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on a two-state solution. It encourages Israel's neighbors to recognize the Jewish state, and Israel must be recognized as a Jewish state.

As importantly, though, I think this bill also shows that, even as partisanship runs through Congress, support for Israel remains rock solid and bipartisan. Democrats and Republicans, as I said before, are here on the floor together saying that we need to support the U.S.-Israel relationship and defending Israel's inherent right to self-defense.

With more than two-thirds of Congress cosponsoring this legislation, I think the message to Israel's detractors is clear: The United States will stand with the Jewish state for now and forever.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, what an honor it is to yield 1 minute to our esteemed majority leader, Mr. CANTOR, the coauthor of this important legislation.

Mr. CANTOR. I thank the gentle lady from Florida.

Mr. Speaker, today the House will vote on the bipartisan U.S.-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act. This bill reaffirms Israel's right to defend itself against threats and puts the Congress on record about America's longstanding commitment to the U.S.-Israel strategic relationship, a unique and special relationship founded on shared interests and shared democratic values.

□ 1340

My friend, Democratic Whip STENY HOYER, and I introduced this legislation to ensure that, during a time of such instability, threats to Israeli and American security will be answered with strength and resolve.

Unfortunately, even during periods of calm, Israel lives in a tough neighborhood; and because our national interests are so often linked, Israel is often at the front lines of responding to threats to both of our security. This is true when it comes to a shared fight against radical Islamist terrorism, and it is certainly true when it comes to Iran. This bill reiterates that our investment in Israel's security is an investment in our own security.

I want to thank Mr. HOYER as well as Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN and Ranking Member HOWARD BERMAN, who joined us in drafting this legislation. I thank them for their hard work and for their

steadfast leadership as defenders of our great ally in the Middle East.

The strong bipartisan support for this bill speaks to the importance and the urgency with which we must address and enhance Israel's ability to defend itself during a period of profound transition and instability.

Mr. Speaker, nearly 300 members of both parties have sponsored this bill, and we hope to have many more in the final count. The House has always demonstrated a bipartisan commitment to the U.S.-Israel relationship, and today we say again, we refuse to send mixed messages when it comes to America's support for Israel. Today we demonstrate congressional support for important steps to make Israel and America more secure.

Among other things, the bill encourages the President to provide additional assistance to support U.S.-Israel joint missile defense efforts, such as Iron Dome, David's Sling, and Arrow; allocate additional weaponry and munitions to the forward-deployed U.S. stockpile located in Israel; strengthen multilateral efforts to prevent weapons smuggling into Gaza and to protect against terrorism from the Sinai Peninsula; expand already close intelligence cooperation between the U.S. and Israel; protect Israel's Qualitative Military Edge and ensure that Israel remains the preeminent military power in the region; lobby against and veto the outrageous parade of one-sided, anti-Israel resolutions at the United Nations every year. The bill also extends the long-standing loan guarantee program for Israel, recognizing its perfect record of repaying its loans on time and in full.

Mr. Speaker, this could be a very hot summer in the Middle East:

Egypt is likely to elect an Islamist government. While we all hope Egypt's new government keeps the peace that has held for 30 years, the future is uncertain;

Syria is consumed by civil war, with a vicious dictator backed by Iran and Hezbollah, murdering his own citizens, fueling sectarian tensions, and giving rise to radicalism;

Iran continues its decades-long effort to acquire a nuclear weapons capability. Sanctions may be hurting Iran's economy, but Iran's leaders thus far remain wedded to pursue their dangerous goal. Iran continues to support terrorism, providing lethal support to Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Taliban.

The United States and Israel share an important strategic goal: preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability and combating its terrorist proxies.

Mr. Speaker, this bill recognizes the profound threats the U.S. and Israel face in the region and reiterates our commitment to standing side by side with Israel during this pivotal and dangerous period of transition and instability, and I urge its passage.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 4 minutes to the

gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), the other main cosponsor of this legislation, our Democratic whip, a leader for so many years on the issue of the U.S.-Israel relationship.

Mr. HOYER. I thank my friend for yielding.

I've known Mr. BERMAN for almost half a century. He has been an extraordinary leader, as a young person, as chairman of this committee, as ranking member on this committee, and I want to thank him for his leadership on this issue. He has been instrumental.

I want to thank my dear friend in whose district I used to live so many years ago, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, thank her for her leadership and her commitment. She has been a stalwart.

Mr. Speaker, at a time when there is great disagreement on a number of important issues, we are reminded today that Democrats and Republicans stand together when it comes to supporting our friend and ally Israel.

I am proud to be a lead cosponsor of the U.S.-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act, along with my friend, the Republican leader, Mr. CANTOR, who just spoke.

This bill enshrines in law the deeper military and security cooperation that the Obama administration has forged with Israel and made a very high priority. President Obama's predecessor, President Bush, responsible for forging and continuing that relationship, as were his predecessors.

Today, with greater uncertainty in the Middle East and the continued pursuit of nuclear weapons by Iran, close security cooperation between the United States and Israel has never been more important.

I have visited Israel 12 times, and I've seen firsthand how Israelis have achieved so much with so little. Investment in Israel's security and Israel's success yield real benefits to the United States through shared intelligence, technological exchange, and trade. Investments in Israel also strengthen our security because our countries share, not just values, but strategic interests, including preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

Iran, as we all know, has been a destabilizing force in a volatile part of the world so closely linked with global energy supplies and where American troops are stationed. In response, this administration has coordinated with our European allies to impose the strongest sanctions Iran has ever faced.

This bill will enable even closer military and security ties with Israel so we can further deter Iran from developing nuclear weapons capability and work together—work together—to recreate and to combat terrorism that threatens both of our countries.

I want to recognize, in particular, the hard work of my friend and colleague, as I said earlier, HOWARD BERMAN, the

ranking Democrat on the Foreign Affairs Committee. He and ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN have been a real team, real partners in this effort, as I and Mr. CANTOR have been. Mr. BERMAN has been instrumental in securing funding for the Iron Dome antimissile defense system that was jointly developed and will be deployed on Israel's borders to protect against short-range missiles Iran provides to terrorist groups like Hamas and Hezbollah, thousands of those missiles.

As Israel continues its pursuit of secure peace, we in Congress will continue to stand together in support of Israel and in recognition of the values and ideas our countries share.

This resolution, in part, is so that there will be clarity, that there will be no confusion. There needs to be a clear understanding of all those who would threaten Israel, that the United States stands with her, because it is in our, the United States', security interest to do so, and because it is morally and ethically the right thing to do as well.

We all hope for two states, living side by side peacefully, with families secure, that they can raise their children in a future that will bring peace and prosperity and tranquillity in a troubled neighborhood of the world.

I urge my colleagues to enthusiastically support this resolution.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY), an esteemed member of our Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Mr. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the resolution. Having had the opportunity to visit Israel last summer, I think that Netanyahu put it best when he says: In this region of the world, we are you and you are us.

We not only share the same value systems, we share the same beliefs and the same threats that Israel faces, not just from time to time but every day. So it is absolutely critical for this partnership that we have, the relationship between the United States and Israel, to go forward.

And the message needs to come from this House that from today and forever more, the United States will always be standing strong with Israel, standing with Israel in every issue. And in the neighborhood which has been referred to by our colleagues that Israel exists in, the most dangerous and unstable area in the world today, it is absolutely critical that we reaffirm our relationship with Israel and our support for Israel.

□ 1350

The Iron Dome is actually the most critical piece of defense that Israel has. It protects it from a neighborhood that wishes to destroy it and annihilate it.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I thank my good friend from California. We just have a few more speakers.

Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Dr. MURPHY, a member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Israel is our friend and our ally. Israel is an island of democracy that supports freedom and religious tolerance. It is where a Christian church, a mosque, and a synagogue will peacefully exist on the same street. In neighboring countries, Christians are prohibited from building churches or are prohibited from assembling to worship, and in some cases their churches are burned down.

Israel respects and preserves the rich history of many faiths and cultures. Israel promotes invention, creativity, and economic development. Neighboring countries, like Iran, are committed to developing nuclear weapons and the missiles to deliver them, and it avows to annihilate Israel and to commit genocide against its people. Israel is fighting terrorist groups, like Hamas and Hezbollah, and has suffered real attacks and the threats of future attacks of tens of thousands of rockets rained down upon its people. Israel needs and has every right to develop defenses such as the Iron Dome, David's Sling, and the Arrow missile to defend itself from these very real threats.

Israel has been there for us during times of threat and times of peace, and we will be there for them. Israel has been a partner in medical, scientific, and technological innovations. Israel has stood with us to fight terrorist threats against our Nation and other freedom-loving nations. For these reasons and more, there are several facts which we must recognize and support:

Israel has a right to defend itself. We will stand firm with them. We will not turn a deaf ear to the anti-Semitic language and to those nations who speak it. We cannot and will not be a part of the dangerous indifference of nations and people to say it is not our problem. We will not be a part of the denial among those who refuse to see the hatred and threat from Syria, Iran, Lebanon, and other nations. We will support Prime Minister Netanyahu's call for negotiated peace with the Palestinian Authority of a two-state solution.

So let us approve H.R. 4133, and let us show that when we say "never again" that we mean it, because the cost of passivity—the cost of doing nothing—is far too expensive in lives and money.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DUNCAN), who is a member of our Foreign Affairs Committee and also a member of the Homeland Security and Natural Resources Committees.

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. I thank the chairwoman for giving me this opportunity to talk about the reason the United States should stand with Israel.

I brought my oldest son with me. He is in the gallery today. His name is

Graham. I wanted him to hear, and people of his generation to hear, and to understand that America stands with Israel, that we were there at the beginning of the foundation of that nation.

We understand the threats that exist in the world today and that, when you have an ally, you never abandon the ally, and you never try to change that ally to meet your vision of the world. You stand with them unconditionally. America stands with Israel in the defense of that nation. We stand with Israel in the prosperity of that nation. We stand with Israel in the good times and in the bad times. We've been there from the beginning. We will be there today, and we will be there tomorrow.

It is important for this generation to understand that America plays a very vital role in standing with someone who has stood with us time and time again.

May God continue to bless America, and may God continue to bless the State of Israel.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded that they are not to refer to occupants of the gallery.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I am proud to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Human Rights.

(Mr. SMITH of New Jersey asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. I thank the distinguished gentlelady, the chairwoman of our committee, for her great leadership on all things related to the Middle East, especially in the defense of Israel. I thank my good friend and colleague Mr. BERMAN. These two individuals work so hard every day for the peace and security of Israel, and I congratulate them.

I also thank ERIC CANTOR, the author, along with the distinguished gentlelady and Mr. BERMAN and Mr. HOYER, for bringing before the House the United States-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act of 2012. This bill reaffirms and modernizes the U.S. commitment to and cooperation with our great friend and ally Israel. This is a must-pass bill because our commitment is—and it must be perceived to be—unequivocal.

I would say to my friends and colleagues that, because of the dangerous and escalating threats, including genocide, that are facing Israel today, we must reiterate unanimously in this body today our support for the nation of Israel.

Freedom House's annual report on the world, which assesses the political and civil liberties of nearly every nation in the world, shows that Israel is surrounded by nations that profoundly disrespect the political and civil liberties of their own citizens, often using torture and all kinds of means of hate against their own people, and of course they foment that hate towards Israel.

This includes Iran, Syria, and many in the Gaza that have human rights records that are among the worst in the world.

As we all know, some of Israel's neighbors openly question Israel's right to exist. Iran's anti-Semitic leader, Ahmadinejad, has repeatedly threatened to wipe Israel off the face of the Earth. I would note parenthetically that Iran is a signer of the Genocide Convention and that it has been since it ratified it back in 1956.

Where is the United Nations, especially with regard to those who enforce the Genocide Convention, when those kinds of barbaric statements are made by the likes of Ahmadinejad? With this bill, Mr. Speaker, the United States underscores and reiterates our unshakable commitment to Israel. With this bill, the U.S. reaffirms—in word and in deed—our commitment to the defense of the Jewish state. Specifically, the bill enhances Israel's ability to defend itself.

Superior deterrence remains among the best guarantors of peace, and that has certainly been the case in the Middle East. When Israel's military superiority was unclear in the eyes of its enemies soon after it was created, soon after Israel became a state, Israel was tested repeatedly with war. Of course, Israel won those wars decisively. Since then, Israel's military superiority has been clear and compelling. So in response, Israel's enemies have relied on the tactics of the bully and of the coward, especially with their use of terrorism. They have attacked with Gaza rockets, with the intifada, with the flotilla; and Israel's task has been to overcome those deadly aggressions.

Again, this bill provides a clear commitment by the United States to our great friend and ally, the State of Israel.

Overcoming aggression is a daunting task—particularly for a country so small and vastly outnumbered—but Israel has been up to the task. And it's our country's moral obligation to give them every assistance. With this bill, Israel will be better equipped for any scenario as it fulfills its solemn duty to protect its own people from harm.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4133 also specifies further assistance for several programs where it will be most effective in deterring attack and defending Israel, including for the Iron Dome, Israel's successful means of defending against missiles, rockets, and other projectiles targeting Israeli homes and businesses.

H.R. 4133 also expands U.S. military and civilian cooperation with Israel, including an offer to the Israeli Air Force for additional training opportunities in the United States to compensate for Israel's limited air space, and other enhanced cooperation on intelligence sharing.

Israel has shown itself to be a good friend to the United States, not only setting the standard for democracy and human rights in the region, but by being trustworthy with loans—always repaying loans on time and in full. This bill recognizes Israel's dependability with an extension of the long-standing loan guarantee program for Israel.

Finally, this bill reaffirms that the only viable option for peace and security in the region is an Israeli state and Palestinian state existing side-by-side. The Palestinian Authority and surrounding nations should take note. H.R. 4133 makes crystal clear the United States will not stand for terrorist threats or political shenanigans at the UN attacking Israel and attempting to bypass the hard work of forging a nation.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4133 makes our country's alliance relationship an even more effective agent for deterring war and defending Israel in the tragic event of war. I am proud to support this bill, and thank my good friend Mr. CANTOR for introducing it.

Mr. BERMAN. I am very pleased to yield 1 minute to my friend from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN).

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. I thank the chairman; I thank the ranking member; and I thank all who support this piece of legislation.

This is but a reaffirmation of our support to our ally Israel. I think that it gives us an opportunity to make it clear that Israel has the complete support of the United States of America.

Israel has been one of the beacons of democracy in the neighborhood. It does have elections, and it does have opportunities for government to change. These are the kinds of things that we value in this country: the rights of people to make a difference in their own lives.

Aside from this, we have a duty, when one country has been threatened with complete elimination, to do what we can to prevent this. I think that this is a part of that prevention that will help make a difference.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT), a member of the Judiciary and Natural Resources Committees.

□ 1400

Mr. GOHMERT. Thank you, Madam Chair.

I appreciate the wonderful work our chair has done to work with the ranking member on this issue.

It is critical that the world know how united this Congress is behind our ally Israel. It's a maxim in history, it's a truth that when a nation's enemies see their strongest ally turning against them, that is when their enemies move against that nation.

We saw a couple of years ago when this administration voted with Israel's enemies to require that Israel disclose certain of its weapons. It was shortly after that that a flotilla challenged the blockade at the Gaza Strip. That's how it works. When a nation's enemies see an ally that may be turning against a nation, they move against that nation.

This is what is so important, that we show the world that when it comes to this issue, we may bicker back and forth about all kinds of things, but when it comes to support for Israel—the analogy could be applicable here, that it is a miner's canary. When Israel is under attack, it's a potential attack on all of the rest of those who love liberty as well.

I agree with Mr. HOYER, our friend from Maryland, when he says that Israel's enemies need to know that when it comes to support for Israel, we have solidarity and complete support for our friend. Israel's enemies need to know that, and the world needs to know that. And I'm very grateful for leadership on both sides for making that clear to the world and to Israel's enemies.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

We've had a group of speakers come down to the floor, including the majority leader, the Democratic whip, the chair of the committee, and a number of other Members to talk about our solidarity with Israel, the U.S.-Israel relationship, the bipartisan nature of it.

To the extent there was an implication—which I heard—from the last speaker that this is not a view shared by this administration, I just want to rise and indicate how wrong such an implication is. The President of the United States has indicated that these bonds are unbreakable. He has raised the level of security cooperation and intelligence sharing to unprecedentedly high levels between the United States and Israel. He is leading the international effort to get Iran to abandon its nuclear weapons program. He has stood with Israel in the wake of the Goldstone Report, in the wake of the efforts of the Human Rights Commission to demonize and delegitimize Israel, and in the context of vetoing resolutions which unfairly single out Israel on a number of issues. Any implication to the contrary is unfounded and seeks to undercut the very bipartisan nature of the support that is so essential to this relationship.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the remaining time, and I thank my good friend from California (Mr. BERMAN) for his leadership role in bringing this bill to the floor today. I thank our majority leader, Mr. CANTOR, as well as the minority whip, Mr. HOYER.

This bill before us, Madam Speaker, the United States-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act, is an important one. It sends a clear signal and a clear message throughout the world, to our friends and to our enemies, that the United States stands foursquare with our indispensable ally, the democratic Jewish State of Israel. This bill is a reaffirmation of our staunch commitment to Israel's security, its right to self-defense, and its right to exist. It is a testament to our friendship with Israel that has served us so well for the last 64 years, and will continue to serve us well for many generations to come. And it is a pledge that the United States and Israel, continuing to work together, will address the challenges to our common security so that we can ensure a safe, prosperous, and free future for both of our Nations.

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, H.R. 4133, the United States-Israel Security Cooperation Act expresses the sense of Congress that the U.S. take actions to maintain Israel's qualitative military edge with advanced missile defense systems and "specialized munitions" to protect Israel in a time of significant change in the region, as well as to respond to the threat posed by Iran. I strongly support Israel's security and believe that the United States has an important role to play in ensuring regional peace. I am concerned that the language in this bill could pave the path for war with Iran.

At a time when the United States and Iran are making significant progress in their first direct negotiations in years, legislation that draws the line at a nuclear capable Iran undermines the talks. Indeed, as Trita Parsi, a leading expert on Iran points out, it is likely that a negotiated deal with Iran under the framework of the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty will allow for enrichment for peaceful purposes on Iranian soil under strict inspections. Preventing a disastrous war and a nuclear-weapons free Iran will require that the United States and the international community fully support such negotiations.

Many experts agree that a preemptive military strike on Iran would only delay their nuclear program. Top U.S. military officials such as Defense Secretary Leon Panetta have plainly stated that Iran has not acquired a nuclear weapon. Even former Israeli intelligence officials, including the former heads of the Shin Bet and the Mossad, have joined the chorus of top U.S. military brass in opposing a preemptive military strike against Iran.

Sustained, diplomatic engagement with Iran is the only way to achieve transparency and a nuclear-weapons free Iran. Any Congressional effort to limit or undermine the President's authority to pursue diplomacy with Iran and to encourage the use of military force against Iran must be opposed.

Mr. CAPUANO. Madam Speaker, I rise to offer clarification of my views regarding H.R. 4133, the United States-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act of 2012. I voted in favor of this legislation, but I feel it is important to note some specific points.

First, I agree with the finding that highlights recent instability in the Middle East-North Africa region in the wake of the Arab Spring. When protests started 14 months ago, I spoke about my hopes for peaceful transitions to democracy, but I also cautioned that history teaches it is often difficult to establish the rule of law and respect for human rights after authoritarian governments are overthrown. We all hoped that the desire for democracy would bring both peace and justice to a troubled region, and I am saddened to see that political instability and, too often, a lack of respect for the rights of individuals and of minorities, are beginning to have far-reaching effects.

That said, I must note that while I am a staunch supporter of Israel's right to defend itself, H.R. 4133 ought to be more precise in its statement that it is U.S. policy to "provide Israel the military capabilities necessary to deter and defend itself by itself against any threats." The bill does not specify which party—the U.S. or Israel—makes the decision regarding which capabilities may be necessary. The United States should always

maintain the final say when considering sale or provision of its military capabilities. It is good that the bill states that Israel will “defend itself by itself,” which makes plain that no one is asking for U.S. troops to be committed to the region through this bill. Hopefully, the time will never come when that might be necessary. If it does, America will make that decision based on the situation at the time.

In addition, Sec. 4(a)(3) contains the Sense of Congress that the U.S. should “allocate additional weaponry and munitions for the forward-deployed United States stockpile in Israel.” I want to be clear that by no means do I interpret this as an endorsement of forward-deployed American nuclear weapons in Israel. Such an action would require the explicit authorization of Congress under separate legislation.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4133, as a cosponsor of the bill and to encourage my colleagues to support this important piece of legislation.

Since the Truman Administration, we as a Nation have worked with the people of Israel to establish and support a close economic, cultural and strategic partnership based on a common respect for democracy and a commitment to the goal of creating a lasting peace in the Middle East. Today, that partnership is among the strongest shared by any two countries.

Israel exists in a geographical region of paramount economic and strategic importance to the United States and the American people recognize that ensuring a safe and secure Israel is in the long-term national security interests of our country.

In support of the Israeli Government's efforts to protect its people, the U.S. has helped Israel develop a missile defense system; we have committed ourselves to the task of preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons; and the U.S. has led the way against attempts to use international forums to delegitimize the State of Israel.

It is in a similar vein that we consider H.R. 4133 today.

Among other things, this measure would allocate additional weaponry and munitions for Israel in the wake of the withdrawal of United States forces from Iraq; expand Israel's authority to make purchases under the Foreign Military Financing program on a commercial basis; encourage an expanded role for Israel within NATO; and require the President to submit a report on the status of Israel's qualitative military edge in light of current trends and instability in the region.

By expressing our support for the economic and strategic security of Israel at this critical time in its history, we send an unambiguous message about our unshakable commitment to the security of Israel.

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 4133, the United States-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act, which unfortunately is another piece of one-sided and counterproductive foreign policy legislation. This bill's real intent seems to be more saber-rattling against Iran and Syria, and it undermines U.S. diplomatic efforts by making clear that the U.S. is not an honest broker seeking peace for the Middle East.

The bill calls for the United States to significantly increase our provision of sophisticated weaponry to Israel, and states that it is to be U.S. policy to “help Israel preserve its qualitative military edge” in the region.

While I absolutely believe that Israel—and any other nation—should be free to determine for itself what is necessary for its national security, I do not believe that those decisions should be underwritten by U.S. taxpayers and backed up by the U.S. military.

This bill states that it is the policy of the United States to “reaffirm the enduring commitment of the United States to the security of the State of Israel as a Jewish state.” However, according to our Constitution the policy of the United States Government should be to protect the security of the United States, not to guarantee the religious, ethnic, or cultural composition of a foreign country. In fact, our own Constitution prohibits the establishment of any particular religion in the U.S.

More than 20 years after the reason for NATO's existence—the Warsaw Pact—has disappeared, this legislation seeks to find a new mission for that anachronistic alliance: the defense of Israel. Calling for “an expanded role for Israel within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), including an enhanced presence at NATO headquarters and exercises,” it reads like a dream for interventionists and the military industrial complex. As I have said many times, NATO should be disbanded not expanded.

This bill will not help the United States, it will not help Israel, and it will not help the Middle East. It will implicitly authorize much more U.S. interventionism in the region at a time when we cannot afford the foreign commitments we already have. It more likely will lead to war against Syria, Iran, or both. I urge my colleagues to vote against this bill.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise to express my strong support for H.R. 4133, a simple bill that will demonstrate our ongoing commitment to Israel, and will enhance our efforts to strengthen Israel's own defensive capabilities. Our goal, like Israel's own, is that Israel can defend itself, by itself. This objective of self-reliance is one of the elements that makes Israel stand out.

Israelis, from the very beginning, have understood that it is their own efforts that will ultimately determine the future of their state. It is this realization and an absolute determination to provide a better, safer future for their children that has enabled the Jewish state to succeed so magnificently in a region choked with hatred and violence reserved for them alone.

Israel's military superiority is a necessity because so many of Israel's neighbors still will not accept Israel's sovereignty and the right of the Jewish people to self-determination in their own historic homeland. Israel's security need not come at the expense of the Palestinian people's legitimate aspirations for independence and sovereignty. But those dreams of independence and sovereignty absolutely must not come at the expense of Israel's security.

As Iran continues to move toward a nuclear capability—that it must never, ever achieve—it is more critical than ever that we demonstrate our support and commitment to Israel's security, which this bill does.

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of this legislation.

As a life-long supporter of our most important ally in the Middle East, Israel, I am pleased that the United States and Israel have built a strong, unique and special relationship. I have had the pleasure of traveling to Israel on many occasions, and I clearly understand

Israeli concern about Iran's nuclear ambitions. These visits have only reinforced my strong conviction that the world needs Israel to survive and thrive for all that Israel represents and that Israel has the right to defend her citizens. The bill before us will do that by strengthening existing channels of security cooperation between America and Israel, as well as creating some new ones.

The political changes that are sweeping through North Africa and the Middle East are creating new uncertainties for the United States and Israel. The revolutions that are underway may not produce the much-hoped for democratic “Arab Spring”. Even now in Egypt, extremists are fomenting inter-religious and ethnic hatreds that have sparked fresh violence. And we know that conventional weapons formerly in the late Colonel Qaddafi's arsenal have made their way into the hands of extremists in the region. H.R. 4133 is another reminder to the region and the world that America will stand by Israel during these increasingly chaotic and uncertain times.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Madam Speaker, once again the U.S. House is acting on legislation, this time H.R. 4133, to restate what has been stated frequently in Congress, by President Obama, and by virtually every candidate running for federal office in the United States: that the U.S. and the State of Israel have a special bilateral and a very important strategic relationship. Congress strongly supports the State of Israel and we demonstrate our support annually by providing many billions of dollars in direct taxpayer funded assistance to ensure Israel's security. As a former member of the State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee, I have helped to pass funding, often in excess of \$3 billion in foreign aid, to ensure Israel's security.

While Congress is ever mindful of Israel's security, we have a Constitutional duty to first and foremost protect and defend the security of the United States. No one is more aware of this than President Obama. Over the past year, the Obama Administration has been leading a coalition of nations to peacefully prevent Iran—through tough economic sanctions—from starting down the path to developing a nuclear weapon. These sanctions are working and they must be allowed to continue to work. I fully support the efforts of the Obama Administration and our allies to keep the pressure on Iran.

The Government of Israel has also been focused on Iran and has articulated repeatedly that a unilateral military strike against Iran is a possibility. According to the Washington Post on February 2, 2012:

“U.S. officials fear being blindsided by an Israeli strike that could have widespread economic and security implications and might only delay, not end, Iran's nuclear pursuit.

“The Obama administration is concerned that Israel could attack Iranian nuclear facilities this year, having given Washington little or no warning,” said Cliff Kupchan, a former State Department official who specialized in Iran policy during the Clinton administration and recently returned from meetings with Israeli officials. He said Israel has refused to assure Washington that prior notice would be provided.”

“Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta is one of several administration officials to express concern publicly that Israel is positioning itself for a surprise attack. Last month, the administration dispatched the Joint Chiefs chairman,

Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, to the Israeli capital for high level discussions about the possibility of a unilateral Israeli strike. 'Israel has indicated they're considering this, and we have indicated our concerns,' Panetta told reporters."

While Israel's prime minister has not been shy about the possibility of an Israeli military strike, the consequences of such action would be significant for the U.S. According to the New York Times on February 29, 2012, "American officials who have assessed the likely Iranian responses to any attack by Israel on its nuclear program believe that Iran would retaliate by launching missiles on Israel and terrorist-style attacks on United States civilian and military personnel overseas."

Despite the strong belief that Israeli military action against Iran would result in direct attacks on Americans and American interests, many right-wing politicians seem to believe that Americans and members of our armed forces, after eleven years of war in Afghanistan and nine years of war in Iraq, are desirous of a war with Iran precipitated by unilateral Israeli military action. As one Middle East expert stated, "Israel can commence a war with Iran, but it may well take U.S. involvement to conclude it."

Let me be clear, I do not want U.S. forces engaged in a war with Iran. My constituents do not want a war with Iran. Clearly, I do not want to see Iran developing nuclear weapons, but the Obama Administration and the international community are working to keep the pressure on the leadership in Tehran.

In February and March of 2012, the neo-conservative "go to war with Iran" echo chamber was appallingly reminiscent of 2002 when the Bush Administration (along with many of the same conservative pundits who are supportive of an Israeli attack on Iran today) declared the definitive presence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq a threat to U.S. national security. The result of their deception is now well known. We have seen this same march to war before, built on a foundation of half-truths, distorted intelligence, and politically motivated deceit.

President Obama has called out those who would send other peoples' sons and daughters to war, but never put themselves in harm's way. Addressing the annual AIPAC conference in Washington on March 4, 2012, the New York Times reported President Obama as saying, "Already, there is too much loose talk of war. Over the last few weeks such talk has only benefited the Iranian government by driving up the price of oil, which they depend on to fund their nuclear program. For the sake of Israel's security, America's security and the peace and security of the world, now is not the time for bluster."

To be clear, an Iran armed with nuclear weapons would be a serious threat to the stability of the Middle East and to the security of the United States and our allies. America's top intelligence analysts, however, have repeatedly stated that there is no concrete evidence that Iran has yet decided to build a nuclear bomb. In his January 2012 testimony before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Director of National Intelligence James Clapper stated that "they are certainly moving on that path, but we don't believe they have actually made the decision to go ahead with a nuclear weapon."

Yet today, the House of Representatives is voting on H.R. 4133 which calls upon the U.S.

to provide Israel with "defense articles and defense services through such mechanisms as appropriate, to include air refueling tankers, missile defense capabilities, and specialized munitions." By providing this specialized military capacity—all required by Israel for an airstrike on Iran—the U.S. would be removing the very limiting factors that may be preventing Israel from launching an attack that could draw the U.S. into another war.

The Director of the Central Intelligence Agency from 2006 to 2009, Michael Hayden, has been quoted as saying that airstrikes capable of seriously setting back Iran's nuclear program were "beyond the capacity" of Israel, in part because of distance that aircraft would have to travel and the scale of the task, according to a February 19, 2012 New York Times article entitled, "Iran Raid Seen as a Huge Task for Israeli Jets."

The same Times article states, "Israel has American-built F 15I and F 16I fighter jets that can carry bombs to the targets, but their range—depending on altitude, speed and payload—falls far short of the minimum 2,000 mile round trip. . . Israel would have to use airborne refueling planes, called tankers, but Israel is not thought to have enough."

The same article identifies "another major hurdle is Israel's inventory of bombs capable of penetrating the Natanz (nuclear) facility, believed to be buried under 30 feet of reinforced concrete, and the Fordo site, which is built into a mountain. Assuming it does not use a nuclear device, Israel has American-made GBU 28 5,000 pound 'bunker buster' bombs that could damage such hardened targets, although it is unclear how far down they can go."

By supplying air refueling tanks and bunker buster bombs to Israel that would then be used in a military strike against Iran, the U.S. would be explicitly supporting the military action in the eyes of the Iranians and the world, even if Israel never notified the U.S. of its actual intent to strike. Such a level of vulnerability and exposure on the part of the U.S. is not tolerable. Israel is an ally, but their primary interest is their own national security, not the security of the U.S.

On a final note, the fact that the New York Times referenced that Israel has the option of using a "nuclear device" against the Iranian targets should be cause for tremendous alarm for Americans. Even the consideration of using a nuclear weapon against Iran to prevent it from pursuing a nuclear weapons program should be categorically rejected by Israel, the U.S., and all nations committed to nuclear non-proliferation. The worst kept secret in the world is that Israel possesses nuclear weapons. The U.S. and this Congress should be guaranteed that our ally, Israel, will never use those weapons as a first-strike capability.

Israel's security is important and I have voted dozens of times to provide funds, weapons, and support. H.R. 4133 is more than "a sense of Congress," more than feelings. It sends a signal to the world that Israel should be provided with the military capacity by the U.S. to strike Iran. That I do not support.

Out of respect for the importance of the U.S.-Israel relationship I intend to vote "present" on H.R. 4133, but I must express my strong opposition to endorsing any actions by a foreign power that could potentially drag the U.S. into a military conflict with Iran.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, I will be voting today for H.R. 4133

because I agree with its two basic premises. The alliance between the United States and Israel, including military support, is of critical importance. And we must prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons capability.

I cast this vote, however, with serious reservations about both the bill's timing and its content. There is no question that a nuclear-capable Iran poses a grave threat not only to Israel, but to the United States and other nations. We must ensure that we have every tool available at our disposal to dissuade if possible and prevent if necessary the Iranian regime from developing nuclear weapons or the capability to produce such weapons from stockpiled materials and components.

Among these vital tools are a combination of diplomatic and economic mechanisms of the sort that I have frequently supported in the past—including the Iran Threat Reduction Act, which also passed with overwhelming bipartisan support earlier in this Congress—that have often exerted effective pressures on Iran, hindering and deterring the development of nuclear capabilities. Military attacks on Iranian facilities by American or Israeli forces must be regarded as absolutely a last resort, fraught with potentially disastrous consequences, some quite predictable, some not yet imagined.

Yet this bill gives little weight or emphasis to critical diplomatic and economic measures and at points comes perilously close to signaling intent or support for the military option. In fact, the timing of this legislation risks being interpreted as a vote of "no-confidence" in our ongoing efforts to engage diplomatically with Iran. Developments such as the so-called "P5+1" meetings between the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, Germany, and Iran—the next meeting of which is scheduled to be held in Baghdad two weeks from today—are critically important steps toward renewed engagement, with a lengthened roster of partners and a tighter sanctions regime. One can hope that the resolve expressed in H.R. 4133 might strengthen these efforts, but I fear that the bill's timing and some of its provisions may also threaten their devaluation.

Mr. REYES. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my strong support for H.R. 4133.

I am a proud co-sponsor of the United States-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act which states it is the policy of the United States to aid Israel, specifically with the preservation of Israel's qualitative military edge amid rapid and uncertain regional political transformation and the development of advanced technology programs between the United States and Israel. The bill expresses the sense of Congress that the United States should equip Israel with the necessary military capabilities, in order to deter and defend itself against any threats; veto any one-sided anti-Israel resolutions at the United Nations Council; support Israel's right to self-defense; and promote peaceful negotiations between Israel and Palestine.

Israel sets the example for the nations of the Middle East, as the only true democracy in that region. For the past 63 years, Israel has been a sanctuary of democracy and pluralism in a region dominated by authoritarian regimes. Israel is the only country in the Middle East with free elections, a free press, freedom of religion, protection for minority rights and other safeguards typical of a free society. The

Middle East is experiencing rapid changes. These rapid changes bring hope for the expansion of democracy but also great challenges to the national security of the United States and our allies in the region, particularly Israel. H.R. 4133 reaffirms the United States commitment to Israel and the establishment of a peaceful relationship between Israel and Palestine.

I urge my colleagues to vote for this bill, which expresses support for our strongest Middle Eastern ally and is a matter of national security for both Israel and the United States.

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I am an unwavering supporter of Israel, therefore I speak today more in sorrow than in anger. I first want to express my esteem for my friend, the gentleman from Maryland Mr. HOYER. I would like to support his legislation, H.R. 4133, the United States-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act of 2012, but it is impossible for me to do so. As one who has consistently supported the freedom, independence and security of the State of Israel since I was first sworn into this great body, I am deeply saddened at the way this matter is being handled.

There is much in this legislation which is good but there is much which is unwise and could lead us down a dark and difficult road. I fear this legislation is drawn so that it could be considered as a blueprint for going to war with Iran. What are the limits on U.S. commitments under this legislation? I can find none in H.R. 4133, and this troubles me greatly. How would this impact our diplomatic efforts, and our negotiations to halt Iran's nuclear program? Would this result in increased strife and instability in the Middle East?

The answers to these questions remain unclear because there have been no legislative hearings on this matter, no factual record, and no committee report to consider. Everyone in this chamber agrees that allowing Iran to obtain a nuclear weapon is unacceptable and that we should take every action to prevent such an outcome. However, this does not mean that we should rush to vote on this legislation, which has never been considered in committee and could have grave consequences for our national security, especially as our diplomats are engaged in the most delicate of negotiations.

Experience comes from learning from one's mistakes. I made a blunder when I voted for the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, which was hurried and rushed through the House, and I vowed never to make the same error again. Many members of this body also made a similar mistake when this Congress voted to go to war with Iraq based on faulty intelligence. The international community is scheduled to have direct discussions and negotiations with Iran on the nuclear issue at the end of the month. At the very least we should wait to see the progress of those talks before issuing the edicts contained in this legislation today.

Matters of war and national security should be considered in all due diligence, and not be rushed to the floor without the proper consideration. I urge everyone to take a step back and consider what we are voting on, hold the proper hearings, and have a truly deliberative process before we rush off to another war which our Nation can ill afford.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4133, the United States-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act. This bipartisan resolution reaf-

firms the American people's enduring and close relationship with the State of Israel, our partner in peace and prosperity in the Middle East.

This bill performs three main functions:

One, expresses the sense of Congress that the U.S. should take actions to assist the defense of Israel with advanced missile defense systems and intelligence sharing to improve counterterrorism and to protect it against Iran's growing nuclear threat.

Two, requires the President to submit reports to Congress on the status of Israel's military edge in light of current trends and political instability in the region.

Three, extends the Administration's authority to provide loan guarantees to Israel through FY2015. The current loan guarantee program, begun in 2003, has served both nations well. Israel has never defaulted on its loans and the Congressional Budget Office has scored this provision at no cost.

Madam Speaker, I have been to Israel on many occasions, most recently last summer. Every time I have an opportunity to visit, I am reminded of the close ties between our two nations and the strong affinity and appreciation the Israeli people have towards the American people's friendship and support.

My time in Israel has also served as a reminder of the dangerous world that the people of Israel face on a daily basis, from rocket attacks from Hezbollah and Hamas, to threats of nuclear attack by Iran, to suicide bombings within their own cities and neighborhoods.

It is important that this Chamber say with a strong, unified voice that we stand with Israel during these difficult times.

As co-chair of the Democratic Israel Working Group, I call on Members from both sides of the aisle to vote in support of this bipartisan resolution.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, the United States-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act, embodied in H.R. 4133, is another expression of the American commitment to our friend and ally, Israel. This commitment is already clear and unequivocal. No ally receives stronger assurances of support or more money over a sustained period of time.

This resolution, however, is a missed opportunity for Congress to show support for a comprehensive and balanced approach to Middle East Peace and Israeli security. No amount of American military assistance will fully compensate for the lack of a productive and effective peace process.

A true statement of enhanced security and cooperation would at least reference the United States' long standing expectation that Israel commit to dealing with their illegal settlements. Omissions such as these do no one a service because, ultimately, they will have to be a part of any lasting solution.

The Obama administration has succeeded in creating an unprecedented coalition to impose the most aggressive sanctions on Iran, ever. The increasing impact of these sanctions and the significance of this broad coalition is a critical development and is a critical part of our security endeavors on which H.R. 4133 is strangely silent.

This fixation on a military response, ignoring some serious deficiencies in the Israeli approach, and not recognizing the important developments on Iran has turned this bill into another missed opportunity.

As much as I agree with some of the resolution overall, I fear it was inadequate and not

particularly helpful towards building a stronger and more secure Israel in the long-term. There is no excuse for Congress not doing better and as a result, I voted "present" on H.R. 4133.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER of Michigan). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROSS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4133, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

—

HOOR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow.

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

There was no objection.

—

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.R. 2072, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 4133, by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. The remaining electronic vote will be conducted as a 5-minute vote.

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EXPORT-IMPORT BANK REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2012

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2072) to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank of the United States, and for other purposes, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. GARY G. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 330, nays 93, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 224]

YEAS—330

Ackerman
Aderholt
Alexander
Altmire

Amodel
Andrews
Austria
Baca

Bachus
Baldwin
Barletta
Barrow