

Congresswoman Susan A. Davis
Statement for the Record
H.Con. Res. 322

I rise in strong support of the contribution of the State of Israel as it celebrates its 60th anniversary as a vibrant and open democratic society.

Madam Speaker, my colleagues have already gone into detail about the accomplishments of the State of Israel, and how Israel has gone through an astonishing evolution since 1948.

I echo many of their remarks.

I had the great privilege to live and work in Israel in the mid-1960's and celebrated Israel's 22nd anniversary by taking part in a three-day walk from the shores of Tel Aviv to the hills of Jerusalem.

Now I marvel with every visit at the extraordinary changes that have taken place.

With every visit to Israel and each article I read about events on the ground, I am reminded of the enormous complexities and challenges Israel faces- internal as well as external.

So we must ask ourselves, what will the future bring for Israel?

How can Israel reconcile the great contradictions that its victories from the 1967 war delivered and address the occupation of Palestinian territories that now threatens Israel's very existence as a democratic state with a Jewish majority?

Israel has sought peace with its neighbors and made some progress toward peace with neighboring Arab states.

Today, with Gaza controlled by HAMAS and the West Bank by the Palestinian Authority, Israel still lacks a real partner for peace.

However, this does not mean efforts for peace should not continue.

...and this does not mean that the United States should not play an active leadership role in the region.

We must continue our strong support for Israel's very right to exist while continuing to bring life to the peace process between Israel and its neighbors.

Our assistance must be a sustained diplomatic effort, on the ground in both Israel and the territories, so we can maximize every effort for dialogue and concrete negotiations.

Addressing these concerns will not be easy, but I remain hopeful that Israel, her neighbors and the U.S. can get the peace process back on track and that Israel will continue to thrive as a vibrant and open democratic society.

I join my colleagues in recognizing Israel's 60th Anniversary and yield back the balance of my time.