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HONORING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL -- (Extensions of Remarks - May 05, 2008)

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SPEECH OF □
HON. JEB HENSARLING
OF TEXAS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
MONDAY, MAY 5, 2008

- Mr. HENSARLING. Madam Speaker, May 14th marks the 60th anniversary of the modern State of Israel. For six decades, America has stood by Israel's side as her partner in peace and defended her as a beacon of democracy in a region dominated by war, authoritarian regimes, and religious conflict.
- In 1948, the United States became the first country to welcome Israel into the community of nations, and we have stood with and supported her as she has defended herself from those who seek her destruction each and every day.
- Israel has been our staunchest ally in the Middle East, as well as a full partner in the global war against radical jihadists--individuals who attack our Nation, our children, our values, and the very existence of Western civilization.
- The Old Testament teaches us the foundation of Israel's storied past. For three thousand years, the Jewish people have created a cultural, religious, and national identity, a connection rooted in their unbroken ties to the Holy Land. When the modern State of Israel was created 60 years ago, that Jewish heritage was renewed.
- Madam Speaker, Israel has a legal, moral, and historical right to exist in peace with secure and defensible borders.
- Make no mistake, Israel's challenges are vast. Each day Israelis face the verbal and physical threat of annihilation looming on the horizon. From Tehran. Damascus, and Hebron come unrelenting calls for the destruction of the State of Israel. Meantime, rockets from Gaza rain down on the homes and schools of Sderot. Ashkelon, and other Israeli cities, all the while the United Nations sits idle and echoes anti-Israel, anti-Semitic proclamations. Israel remains a nation under siege.
- Therefore, Madam Speaker, today I come to this floor, our own altar of democracy, to celebrate a nation that has turned adversity into triumph and took a dispersed population and made them whole. Like America, Israel is a country of immigrants and has opened its doors to every Jewish immigrant to become a citizen. This story has now united people from over 70 countries and has turned Israel into a

society of multi-ethnic communities living side by side with one another.

- As the world's oldest democracy, today we celebrate the success of a democratic relative. Israel exists in a part of the world that knows little democracy, yet Israel has displayed the hope and dignity that accompanies rule by the people and personal freedom. Although blessed with few natural resources, this young nation has seen the fruits of its labor pay off through an incredible amount of economic prosperity and cultural creativity.
- Yet as Israel works for peace with security, we must not forget that peace can never be achieved by asking Israel to put at risk its sovereignty and the safety of its people.
- We must constantly reaffirm our own ties to this democratic society in a part of the world so desperately in need of democracy. This is vitally important to our own security. And we must all realize this.
- Thus, I will continue to support Israel and pray she one day will live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force.
- I am honored to come to the floor today to celebrate the 60th anniversary of our ally, the nation of Israel.

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