

Washington, D.C. - Congressman David Price (NC-04) submitted the following remarks today during debate of a resolution recognizing the 40th anniversary of Israel's victory in the Six-Day War. Price joined his colleagues in commemorated Israel's important victory, which "helped secure [its] continuing existence as a sovereign nation."

But Price expressed his disappointment that the resolution could undermine American efforts to broker a peaceful solution to the crisis in Israel and the Palestinian Territories. He noted that provisions in the legislation supported an "obsolete notion" of an undivided city of Jerusalem under sole Israeli control, an idea that "has not been part of any serious peace proposal...in the last several years," and which "fails to reflect the present reality in Jerusalem."

The text of Price's statement follows.

"Mr. Speaker, I rise to address H. Con. Res. 152, recognizing the 40th anniversary of Israel's victory in the Six-Day War. This resolution will pass by a large majority, but I fear that it will become the latest in a series of missed opportunities for this body to support a viable peace process in the Middle East.

"This resolution has several positive features. It is appropriate to commemorate Israel's victory in the Six-Day War. Its overwhelming military victory helped to secure Israel's continuing existence as a sovereign nation, something that was very much in doubt on the eve of the conflict.

"I particularly support the third clause of the resolution, which commends Egypt and Jordan for their bold and brave decisions to reach peace with Israel. Their leadership has been a critical, if often underappreciated, guarantor of Israel's security and survival, and I continue to hope that other nations in the region will follow their lead.

"It is also important to affirm that Jerusalem is the rightful capital of Israel, while acknowledging that the Palestinian people also have a claim to Jerusalem as a capital and as a sacred city.

"Nevertheless, I am concerned that this resolution, while calling for peace negotiations, actually undermines U.S. efforts to secure the trust of all sides in the search for peace. The resolution pursues an obsolete notion, put forth as if the last decade of peace negotiations simply had not occurred.

"The idea of an undivided Jerusalem under sole Israeli sovereignty has not been part of any serious peace proposal--proffered by Israelis, Palestinians, or the international community--in the last several years. Israel's 2000 Camp David proposal and the Clinton compromise proposal, the 2002 Road Map for Middle East Peace, the 2003 Geneva Initiative, the 2003 "People's Voice" Initiative offered by Ami Ayalon and Sari Nuseibeh: none of these plans envision an undivided Jerusalem under sole Israeli sovereignty.

"And this idea is not just outdated in theory; it fails to reflect the present reality in Jerusalem. Israel's security barrier is rapidly creating a physical barrier between already segregated neighborhoods of East and West Jerusalem.

"Recognizing Jerusalem as the undivided capital of Israel under sole Israeli sovereignty does not help to bring peace to Jerusalem or Israel, nor does it help achieve the vision the resolution espouses. In fact, the only thing likely to fully guarantee Jerusalem as the permanent capital of Israel is the official, international recognition of Israel's neighbors and the entire international community--and this recognition is unlikely so long as Palestinian claims to their own capital and sacred city are denied.

"As Christians, Jews, and Muslims, we can best honor our holy city by helping it become a model of peace, unity, and reconciliation. Doing so requires sustained, courageous, and open-minded efforts to promote negotiations, stand against violence, and find solutions. Congress and our Administration must play a much more effective role, returning our nation to active and sustained engagement in seeking peace.

"I just returned from a brief visit to Jerusalem, now divided, threatened, strained by the anxiety of constant conflict. It is my great hope to one day visit a revitalized Jerusalem, undivided and

shared as the capital of Israel and an independent Palestinian state, where Jews, Muslims, and Christians live together in peace and mutually honor the sites sacred to all of us. I can only wish that the resolution before us more adequately expressed this aspiration."

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