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Congress's Shameful Support for Israeli Bombing

By Matthew Rothschild
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Here's a two-part quiz for you.

Late last week, Congress weighed in on Israel's bombing of Gaza.

Question Number One: How many House members voted to condemn that bombing?

Question Number two: How many members of the Senate voted to condemn it?

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If you guessed anything but zero and zero, you flunked the quiz.

Both the House and the Senate passed an identical resolution (pasted in at bottom), by a unanimous vote, that said that each chamber “strongly supports” Israel’s “inherent right to act in self-defense to protect its citizens against acts of terrorism.”

The only violence the resolution condemned was the violence from Hamas.

Not a peep about Israel’s violence.

Not a word about Israel’s assassination of Hamas’s military leader.

Not a word about Israel’s illegal blockade of Gaza.

Not a word about the suffering the Palestinians are enduring, or have endured, under Occupation.

You can’t get any more lopsided than this.

In fact, the lopsidedness led to some gruesome gloating on the part of JTA.org, which describes itself as “The Global News Service of the Jewish People.”

“Unlike statements of support for Israel's actions from the Obama administration, the resolutions do not call on both sides to exercise restraint or express regret at casualties on both sides,” said the JTA article.

To date, more than 90 people in Gaza have been killed, many of them children, and more than 700 Gazans have been wounded. Israel has lost three people to rocket attacks from Hamas.

Benjamin Netanyahu loves to come to speak before Congress. And no wonder: He has them in his pocket.

But this unconditional support for brutal Israeli actions won’t make Israel any safer. Killing and wounding so many civilians in Gaza only further incites hatred against Israel, and any military advantage gained by these bombings will quickly evaporate as Hamas regroup.

As Israeli peace activist Uri Avnery says, “The real remedy is peace. Peace with the Palestinian people.” Avnery recognizes that the rocket attacks from Hamas had become intolerable. But he notes that Hamas has already agreed to peace if there’s a Palestinian state along the 1967 borders that is approved in a Palestinian referendum.

But Israel and the U.S. Congress don’t seem to want to give peace a chance.

They vote time after time for war.

Here is the text of the resolution that unanimously passed the House. An identical one passed the Senate:

Whereas Hamas was founded with the stated goal of destroying the State of Israel;

Whereas Hamas has been designated by the Secretary of State as a Foreign Terrorist Organization;

Whereas Hamas refuses to recognize Israel's right to exist, renounce violence, and accept previous agreements between Israel and the Palestinians;

Whereas Hamas has launched thousands of rockets and missiles since Israel dismantled settlements and withdrew from Gaza in 2005;

Whereas terrorists in the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip have fired approximately 900 rockets and missile shells into Israel this year, an increase from roughly 675 attacks in 2011 and 350 in 2010;

Whereas Hamas has increased the range of its rockets, reportedly with support from Iran and others, putting additional large numbers of Israelis in danger of rocket attacks from Gaza;

Whereas, on November 14, 2012, President Barack Obama condemned the rocket fire from Gaza into Israel and reiterated Israel's right to self-defense; and

Whereas Israel, a fellow democracy, has an inherent right to self-defense in the face of terrorist attacks: Now, therefore, be it *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives--

(1) expresses unwavering commitment to the security of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state with secure borders, and recognizes and strongly supports its inherent right to act in self-defense to protect its citizens against acts of terrorism;

(2) reiterates that Hamas must end Gaza-linked terrorist rocket and missile attacks against Israel, recognize Israel's right to exist, renounce violence, and agree to accept previous agreements between Israel and the Palestinians;

(3) urges the United Nations Security Council to condemn the recent spike in Gaza-linked terrorist missile attacks against Israel, which risk causing civilian casualties in both Israel and Gaza; and

(4) encourages the President to continue to work diplomatically with the international community to prevent Hamas and other Gaza-based terrorist organizations from retaining or rebuilding the capability to launch rockets and missiles against Israel.

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