



Support US Engagement in Middle East Peace

On February 8, **Congresswoman Susan Davis** (D-CA) introduced **H. Res. 143**, a resolution "**urging the President to appoint a Special Envoy for Middle East Peace**," and, specifically, for the United States to support the creation of a lasting peace in Palestine and Israel.

Discussion points:

- A just resolution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is in the national security interest of the United States
- Active engagement and diplomacy will begin to repair U.S. credibility in the region
- The U.S. is at its best when it pursues a foreign policy which projects American values abroad

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Whereas peace and stability inside the Middle East have a direct and immediate impact on the national security of the United States and our allies around the world; (Introduced in House)

HRES 143 IH

110th CONGRESS
1st Session
H . RES . 143

Urging the President to appoint a Special Envoy for Middle East Peace.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

February 8, 2007

Mrs. DAVIS of California (for herself, Mr. PATRICK J. MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Mr. SNYDER, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. KLEIN of Florida, and Ms. SCHWARTZ) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Urging the President to appoint a Special Envoy for Middle East Peace.

Whereas peace and stability inside the Middle East have a direct and immediate impact on the national security of the United States and our allies around the world;

Whereas diplomacy must be made a central component of United States policy in the Middle East;

Whereas the situation in Israel and the Palestinian territories has substantially deteriorated since 2000;

Whereas it is directly in the national interest of the United States to reengage both sides of this dispute in an urgent manner;

Whereas the creation of a lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians will reduce tension in the region and help repair America's image in the international community;

Whereas a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian dispute will have a positive influence on the overall Arab-Israeli conflict and help reduce Iranian influence in the region;

Whereas if the United States is unwilling to take a lead in facilitating real sustained negotiations, powers hostile to the United States and our interests may seek to fill the leadership vacuum; and

Whereas the United States must be proactive in this endeavor: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that the President should appoint a Special Envoy for Middle East Peace.

COSPONSORS(20), ALPHABETICAL [followed by Cosponsors withdrawn]: (Sort: [by date](#))

[Rep Baldwin, Tammy](#) [WI-2] - 3/29/2007
[Rep Blumenauer, Earl](#) [OR-3] - 2/8/2007
[Rep Capps, Lois](#) [CA-23] - 2/27/2007
[Rep Capuano, Michael E.](#) [MA-8] - 2/16/2007
[Rep Ellison, Keith](#) [MN-5] - 2/8/2007
[Rep Fattah, Chaka](#) [PA-2] - 2/27/2007
[Rep Kaptur, Marcy](#) [OH-9] - 3/5/2007
[Rep Klein, Ron](#) [FL-22] - 2/8/2007
[Rep Kucinich, Dennis J.](#) [OH-10] - 3/12/2007
[Rep Lewis, John](#) [GA-5] - 3/12/2007
[Rep Lofgren, Zoe](#) [CA-16] - 3/5/2007
[Rep McCollum, Betty](#) [MN-4] - 2/8/2007
[Rep Moore, Gwen](#) [WI-4] - 2/8/2007
[Rep Moran, James P.](#) [VA-8] - 3/29/2007
[Rep Murphy, Patrick J.](#) [PA-8] - 2/8/2007
[Rep Price, David E.](#) [NC-4] - 2/8/2007
[Rep Schiff, Adam B.](#) [CA-29] - 2/8/2007
[Rep Schwartz, Allyson Y.](#) [PA-13] - 2/8/2007
[Rep Snyder, Vic](#) [AR-2] - 2/8/2007
[Rep Tauscher, Ellen O.](#) [CA-10] - 2/27/2007



**Four Years Later:
Arab Opinion Troubled By Consequences of Iraq War
By Dr. James Zogby, AAI President
March 28, 2007**

Four years after the start of the U.S.-led war in Iraq, the Arab world is deeply worried about the consequences of that conflict. Of particular concern is the degree to which the war has emboldened neighboring Iran and the heightened danger that Iraq, as a country, may unravel in a civil war that could spill over into the broader region.

These are a few of the highlights of the Zogby International (ZI)/Arab American Institute (AAI) poll conducted between Feb. 26 and March 10, 2007. The poll, which surveyed 3,400 Arabs in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, United Arab Emirates and Lebanon, had a margin of error of +/-3.5% in Egypt and Saudi Arabia and +/- 4.1% in Jordan, the United Arab Emirates and Lebanon.

I. U.S. and Iranian Roles in Iraq Compared (Tables 1&2)

U.S.'s Role in Iraq	Egypt	Saudi Arabia	Jordan	UAE	Lebanon
Positive	15	31	3	25	21
Negative	<u>83</u>	68	<u>96</u>	70	76

Iran's Role in Iraq	Egypt	Saudi Arabia	Jordan	UAE	Lebanon
Positive	37	19	19	14	31
Negative	66	<u>78</u>	73	71	69

When asked to evaluate the roles of the U.S. and Iran were playing in Iraq, there was broad consensus that neither country's role was positive.

The U.S. role was most disturbing to Egyptians and Jordanians, while the Iranian role was of greater concern in Saudi Arabia. Lebanese and Arabs in the Emirates gave equally negative ratings to both the U.S. and Iran.

II. Who Benefited Most (Table 3)

Who Benefited from War	Egypt	Saudi Arabia	Jordan	UAE	Lebanon
Iran	21	<u>51</u>	19	<u>41</u>	<u>51</u>
Iraq	6	9	16	3	6
U.S.	<u>62</u>	36	<u>41</u>	<u>40</u>	18
Saudi Arabia	1	2	5	4	13

When asked which country benefited most from the war, over one half of Saudis and Lebanese cited Iran. (Note: the Lebanese, deeply divided internally over the role of Iranian-supported Hezbollah, reflected this division in most of their responses.) Egyptians and Jordanians, on the other hand, see the U.S. as the major beneficiary of the war, while Arabs in the Emirates were near evenly divided, saying that the both Iran and the U.S. gained from the war.

III. Greatest Worry (Table 4)

Biggest Worry	Egypt	Saudi Arabia	Jordan	UAE	Lebanon
U.S. Permanence	38	23	47	16	15
Iraq Split in 3	12	16	14	8	16
Iran	10	20	5	16	10
Iraqi Civil War	39	39	33	<u>53</u>	<u>57</u>

As to their greatest fear: over one-half of the respondents, in all five countries, pointed to the danger of civil war in Iraq spilling over into the broader region and/or the danger of Iraq splitting into three parts. A substantial subgroup of Egyptians and Jordanians worried most about the prospect of a permanent U.S. occupation of Iraq.

IV. What Should the U.S. Do? (Table 5)

What U.S. Should Do	Egypt	Saudi Arabia	Jordan	UAE	Lebanon
Immediate Withdrawal	<u>71</u>	41	<u>75</u>	38	41
Withdraw After Unity	15	19	9	31	30
Withdraw Troops	3	10	2	5	6
Keep As They Are	3	12	2	-	1
Diplomacy	8	16	12	22	20

When asked what the U.S. should do next, majorities or pluralities in all five countries responded that the U.S. should withdraw immediately from Iraq. However, only in Egypt and Jordan was this option preferred by an absolute majority of 70% or more. In Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, where concern over Iran's role is greatest, withdrawal was favored by only two out of five respondents. The same was true in Lebanon, again a reflection of that country's internal division.

Four years into this war and the Arab world is deeply torn both by the conflict and its consequences. It is worth noting that the governments of all five countries polled are close allies of the U.S., and each, in different ways, have long been concerned with the political ambitions of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Thus, with no pun intended, all find themselves between a rock and a hard place.

The war which remains unpopular in Arab public opinion still looms large. So too do the dangers posed by an emboldened Iran and an Iraqi civil war – both of which may be hastened by an early U.S. withdrawal.

Thus it is that the bind the Bush Administration has created for itself by entering into this conflict without a clear understanding of its consequences has created an equally difficult bind, with even more troubling options, deeply felt by most Arabs.



Arab and U.S. Public Opinion Show Similar Concerns on Iraq War

By AAI President James J. Zogby, April 9, 2007

By invading Iraq without a plan and with no clear understanding of the consequences that would result from this war, the Bush Administration has created a bind for itself and for the Middle East as well.

Significant majorities of Iraqis and Americans now want U.S. forces to leave that country, arguing that the American presence provokes the insurgency. Countering this, however, is a sense that should the U.S. forces leave Iraq prematurely, the country could disintegrate into a more deadly civil war which could spill over into the broader region. This, it is argued, would further embolden Iran, which is already seen as the major beneficiary of the war, leaving the entire Gulf region open to the ambitions of the Islamic Republic.

These concerns, expressed by many in the U.S., appear to be shared in the Arab world as well. A recent poll in five Arab countries (Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan and Lebanon) found hostility to both U.S. and Iranian roles in Iraq. The poll, conducted by Zogby International for the Arab American Institute surveyed 3,400 people in the five countries, all of which are allies of the U.S.

In each of the five countries, substantial majorities gave negative ratings to the roles played by the U.S. in Iraq, ranging from 96% negative in Jordan and an 83% negative rating Egypt to 68% negative in Saudi Arabia. Iran's role fared no better with 78% of Saudis and more than two-thirds of Jordanians, Emiratis, Lebanese and Egyptians giving that country's role in Iraq a negative rating.

When asked what worried them the most about Iraq, almost 50% in each of the five countries pointed to the prospect of Iraq disintegrating into three parts or into a civil war that would spill over into the broader region. The next greatest concern among most of those surveyed was the prospect of a permanent U.S. occupation of Iraq. This view was felt by 47% in Jordan, 38% in Egypt and a quarter of Saudis.

Given this, what should the U.S. do? About three quarters of Egyptians and Jordanians say "withdraw immediately," a view shared by a 40% plurality in all the other countries. U.S. pursuance of diplomatic options and work for unity in Iraq were the preferred options in Saudi Arabia, the U.A.E. and Lebanon. There was no significant support for the current "surge" policy advocated by the Bush Administration in any of the five countries in our survey.

What is significant in these findings is not only the degree to which the failure of the U.S. approach in Iraq, but also the degree to which Arab opinion is cognizant of the potential dangers down the road: namely, a greater role for Iran and an Iraqi civil war. This is most acute in those countries that are allies of the U.S. and rely, in part on U.S. security cooperation.

What is so troubling is that the Bush Administration strode along as if unaware of the damage done, not only in Iraq, but to longstanding U.S. relations in the region.

Given all of this, the better course of action is that proposed by the Iraq Study Group. While many thought that the Iraq Study Group had been forgotten, it was given new life last week in legislation passed by the U.S. House of Representatives. Most press accounts focused only on the date for withdrawal of U.S. troops set by the House bill. But an amendment added to that legislation introduced by Congressman James Moran (D-VA) called on the Administration “to pursue the diplomatic strategy... recommended by the Iraq Study group...” which “calls upon the United States to pursue a comprehensive ‘New Diplomatic Offensive’ designed to build an international consensus and support structure for stability in Iraq and the surrounding region. The ‘New Diplomatic Offensive’ is to engage all of Iraq’s neighbors, and address all the ‘key issues’ in the Middle East, including not just the situation in Iraq, but also in Lebanon, Syria and Iran, as well as the Israel-Palestinian conflict.... The Committee supports this recommendation of the Iraq study group and urges the President to pursue it aggressively.”

This is the sound approach we should take. Neither a unilateral “surge” nor a precipitous withdrawal will undo this mess. Working with allies and neighbors of Iraq to achieve a degree of stability and political reconciliation is the only way forward out of this morass we have made for ourselves and our friends in the region.



King Abdullah II's Challenge to Congress

By AAI President James J. Zogby, March 12, 2007

By any reasonable measure, [King Abdullah II of Jordan's speech](#) before a joint session of Congress was both smart and courageous. He took advantage of being only the fourth Arab leader given this opportunity and chose to do the unexpected.

Some observers anticipated that he would focus his remarks on Iraq or on an appeal for more U.S. aid to his country now providing refuge to almost one million Iraqis. He did not. Nor were his remarks designed to pander or secure frequent applause. Instead, he focused his speech on a thoughtful and passionate appeal: the urgent need to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

His arguments were compelling. Iraq is of course a critical issue, but it is not, King Abdullah noted, the core issue that roils the region. "The wellspring of regional division," he observed, "the cause of resentment and frustration far beyond, is the denial of justice and peace in Palestine." This, he concluded, is the "core issue...producing severe consequences for our region... and for our world."

Throughout his remarks he spoke evocatively of Palestinian rights using words rarely heard in the halls of Congress. Speaking "as a friend who cannot be silent," he told of "sixty years of Palestinian dispossession" and "forty years under occupation," creating a "bitter legacy of disappointment and despair." He called on Congress to support efforts "to restore Palestine, a nation in despair and without hope."

King Abdullah infused his remarks with a moral and political challenge, reminding Americans of their precarious standing in world public opinion. He noted that Arabs and Muslims often ask "whether the West really means what it says about equality and respect and equal justice" and continued by observing that "nothing can assert America's moral vision more clearly, nothing can teach the world's youth more directly than your leadership in a peace process that delivers results not next year, not in five years, but this year."

King Abdullah went on to describe the Arab nations' collective commitment to peace as expressed in the Beirut Declaration of 2002, which supported a comprehensive resolution to the conflict that included two states at peace with normalized relations amongst all countries in the region. [This commitment is born out in the results of a recent Zogby International poll conducted in six Arab nations which found that well over 90 percent of Arabs support a two-state solution to the conflict].

The King spoke with a sense of urgency, making it clear that the clock was running out for peace to become a reality.

As I said, the thrust and content of the speech were unexpected. There was, of course, applause, and a number of standing ovations. But during long stretches you could hear a pin drop in the crowded chamber. From my vantage point in a box overlooking the assembled lawmakers, I saw many members in deep reflection, frequently nodding in agreement with the King's observations.

Some members of Congress with whom I spoke were deeply moved by King Abdullah's appeal. Of course, there were those who were not. Comments both critical and banal were issued by some who have been long opponents to a just resolution to the conflict. They will, no doubt, continue to find ways to obstruct the search for peace.

But there can be no doubt that the King's speech made an important contribution. It has empowered and invigorated Arab Americans and American Jews who want peace and has provided both with important leverage with which to press their case. The speech also provided food for thought for the still small but growing caucus of legislators who are convinced that the King is right – that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a core issue of concern, creating extremism in the Middle East and dividing the U.S. from the Arab world. They believe that the time for a solution is now, before “facts on the ground” and despair and more violence make such an outcome all but impossible.

There will be those who will find fault with the King's speech. Some will say it wasn't balanced enough, while others will argue it was too balanced. But the critics are wrong. King Abdullah used an extraordinary opportunity to deliver an important message. He is to be commended for doing so. The search for an Israeli-Palestinian peace is the core issue, and time is running out. He gave the search for peace his best shot. This is his challenge, to which all of us must now respond.