



ACTION ALERT



Ask Senators to Support Resolution 321 on Israeli-Palestinian Peace

September 27, 2007

BACKGROUND: Last week Senate Resolution 321 was introduced by Senators Feinstein, Lugar, Dodd, Hagel, Akaka, Baucus, Bingman, Brown, Byrd, Burr, Cantwell, Casey, Craig, Durbin, Feingold, Harkin, Hutchinson, Kennedy, Kerry, Klobuchar, Kohl, Leahy, Levin, Lott, Nelson of Florida, Reed, Snowe, Sununu, Voinovich, Webb, Whitehouse, Wyden, Smith, Specter, Murray and Stabenow . It was referred to the Foreign Relations Committee. Senate Resolution 321 reaffirms the Senate's dedication to a two-state solution with "the State of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security." The Senate Resolution renounces violence and terror, reaffirms an unwavering commitment to Israel's security, and calls on Hamas to recognize Israel, renounce terrorism, and accept past agreements. It calls on both Israeli and Palestinian leaders to work for peace and to refrain from "any actions that would prejudice the outcome of final status negotiations."

In addition, Senate Resolution 321 states that "American diplomatic presence on the ground is critical to bringing Israelis and Palestinians together;" thus, it urges the Administration "to pursue a robust diplomatic effort" and to make a two-state solution "a top priority." The Senate Resolution calls for President Bush to engage the State of Israel and the Palestinian Authority in negotiations, as well as to appoint a Special Envoy for Middle East Peace. Also, Senate Resolution 321 welcomes the Arab League Peace Initiative and encourages Arab states in the region to become involved in this intensified diplomatic effort.

USCCB/CRS POSITION: Bishop Thomas Wenski, Chairman of the USCCB Committee on International Policy, has sent a letter to the Senate, in support of an earlier version of this Resolution (S. Res. 224). For many years the USCCB has worked with key national Jewish, Christian, and Muslim religious leaders to support strong U.S. leadership for peace in the region, and has spoken out on the human and moral dimensions of the continuing crisis in the Middle East. Peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors and the establishment of a viable Palestinian state living in peace alongside a secure Israel would contribute greatly to stability in the region. Ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict should be central to U.S. Policy. CRS has an extensive presence providing humanitarian and development assistance in the Holy Land and supports a two-state solution based on this experience.

ACTION REQUESTED: Urge your Senators to cosponsor Senate Resolution 321. (To find your Senator's number, visit www.senate.gov or call 202-224-3121.) Emphasize these points:

- Urge your Senators to support Senate Resolution 321 (or thank them if they have already co-sponsored the Resolution).
- Indicate your support for a two-state solution and a just and comprehensive Israeli-Palestinian peace.
- Urge the Senate to support continued and robust U.S. diplomatic efforts to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a top priority for U.S. policy.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: Visit this website for recent USCCB and Church leaders' statements: <http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/international/israelpalestine.shtml> or contact Dr. Stephen M. Colecchi, Director, Office of International Justice and Peace, USCCB, 202-541-3196 or scolecchi@usccb.org.