

Extension of Remarks

Hon. Nick J. Rahall, II

January 29, 1986

Mr. Speaker:

I would like to bring to the attention of my colleagues an editorial from my hometown newspaper, The Register/Herald of Beckley, West Virginia, January 13, 1986. In it, Walter Massey, the editor, provides a thoughtful insight into the underlying issues of the Middle East controversy. While I have always contended that there are more sides to the dispute in the Middle East than are on a Rubik's Cube, I feel that Mr. Massey takes a good look at the underlying causes of terrorism and some possible steps that might be taken to prevent such heinous acts in the future. I urge all of my colleagues to read it.

The Register/Herald

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Issues behind terrorism

AMERICA WOULD be better able to settle Palestinian grievances if the blame, as Palestinians see it, were against America directly. But it is not. It is against Israel.

Israel has a case for occupying the area which now is the Jewish state. After all, the area is the ancient homeland of the Jewish people, who were driven out centuries ago by ancestors of those who now call themselves Palestinians.

World War II, with its holocaust, brought into sharp focus for the Jewish people their longing to reclaim for themselves the territory of their ancestors. Thus, accomplished by the Zionist movement, Jews did return, following World War II, to the Mideast and did reclaim their land.

However, in the process of reestablishing the state of Israel, the Jews drove out of Palestine people who had lived there for centuries.

Since then, many Palestinians have chosen to live as permanent refugees rather than to settle in any other land and concede to Israel territory which they owned until some 40 years ago.

THE CURRENT terrorism stems from a quarrel that has not been settled, despite several wars and countless acts of violence.

The Arab states are virtually united in opposition to Israel. The Arabs, whose religious roots are intertwined with those of Israel, share the Semitic heritage of the Jews. But they do not recognize the Jewish claim to Israel based on the holy scriptures of the Jewish faith.

If one reads the Old Testament, it's evident that the people of Israel quarreled with their neighbors beginning as long ago as 10,000 years. The modern Mideast quarrel is but a blinking of the eye compared to the duration of the hostilities in what often is called the Holy Land.

Can this quarrel be settled? Is it within the powers of human reason to render decisions which all will recognize as just?

America in modern times has attempted to serve as a broker

Solving the Mideast problem might take a lifetime. The threat of terrorism is immediate.

for peace, even while guaranteeing the survival of Israel. Some in the Arab world might argue that America cannot do both, but that's another story.

THE REAL question is whether American leaders or anyone else can satisfy the Palestinian people, as columnist Mary McGrory suggests should be done, while Israel continues to exist in security.

Some Palestinians are absolutists. They will settle for nothing less than the destruction of Israel. Thus, America cannot oblige them.

Other Palestinians are more moderate. Some wish accommodation with Israel which exchanges their recognition of the Jewish state for territory, perhaps the captured West Bank of the Jordan River.

But some Israelis can be just as intransigent as some Palestinians. Hard-line Israeli leaders have refused even to talk to Palestinian leaders. To the Israeli hard-liners, all Palestinians are terrorists.

Trust is mutually lacking. Hatreds are rampant, both on the part of many Israelis and many Arabs.

When two peoples both believe they legitimately own the same land, and when these peoples hate and distrust each other, obviously this is not a quarrel easily solved. Negotiations could take generations.

THE EFFORT to achieve peace should be ceaseless, and America should do what it can to further the process.

But America cannot unilaterally devise a solution and impose it on any of the parties involved. The parties must come to accord of their own choosing.

A starting point would be face-to-face talks between Israel and leaders of the Palestinians and contiguous Arab states.

The U.S. should pressure Israel to agree in principle to such talks.

Meanwhile, however, America must protect itself from Islamic terrorism. Despite McGrory's good intentions, our country can't depend on negotiations which may take a lifetime to protect Americans in European airports today.

The problem is more immediate. There may be no substitute for force. — W.M.