security we're committing American lives and treasure to defend. While this resolution only endorses the beginning of a membership process, it sets the stage for expanding vital American security concerns. At a time when some Americans are questioning our growing security commitments around the globe, should we be moving to ensure Ukraine and Georgia's security?

We must be realistic about the state of NATO. The organization is not well. In Afghanistan, most NATO member states haven't answered the call, choosing not to provide troops or to provide troops only for very limited missions. One observer noted that, ''The inability or unwillingness of certain nations to shoulder the burden of NATO's obligation in Afghanistan is ripping the heart out of the alliance . . .'' I'm not convinced that adding new members, each with diverse interests, aids in rebuilding NATO's consensus. Expansion doesn't always mean strengthening.

Sure, these countries have committed troops in dangerous areas, for which they should be commended. But a hard headed analysis must ask whether those commitments would be maintained once NATO membership was achieved?

Expansion is divisive among some of the longest-standing NATO members. This week in Bucharest, Germany has objected to the process this resolution endorses, effectively stopping it. Chancellor Merkel's government cited concerns over political unrest in Georgia, and the lack of support for joining NATO among Ukrainians. Others ask, rightly, ''What's the rush?''

First and foremost, we should ask ''What's in our national security interest?'' Secondarily, we should ask ''What's in the best interest of NATO?'' I am not convinced that expanding NATO to these two countries advances those causes. That's why I reluctantly oppose this resolution backed by my colleagues and friends.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 997, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING SENSE OF HOUSE REGARDING CREATION OF REFUGEE POPULATIONS

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 185) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the creation of refugee populations in the Middle East, North Africa, and the Persian Gulf region as a result of human rights violations, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 185

Whereas armed conflicts in the Middle East have created refugee populations numbering in the millions and comprised of peoples from many ethnic, religious, and national backgrounds;

Whereas Jews have lived mostly as a minority in the Middle East, North Africa, and the Persian Gulf region for more than 2,500 years;

Whereas the United States has long voiced its concern about the mistreatment of minorities and the violation of human rights in the Middle East and elsewhere;

Whereas the United States continues to play a pivotal role in seeking an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East and to promoting a peace that will benefit all the peoples of the region;

Whereas United States administrations historically have called for a just solution to the Palestinian refugee problem;

Whereas the Palestinian refugee issue has received considerable attention from countries of the world while the issue of Jewish refugees from the Arab and Muslim worlds has received very little attention;

Whereas a comprehensive peace in the region will require the resolution of all outstanding issues through bilateral and multilateral negotiations involving all concerned parties;

Whereas approximately 850,000 Jews have been displaced from Arab countries since the declaration of the State of Israel in 1948;

Whereas the United States has demonstrated interest and concern about the mistreatment, violation of rights, forced expulsion, and expropriation of assets of minority populations in general, and in particular, former Jewish refugees displaced from Arab countries as evidenced, inter alia, by—

(1) the Memorandum of Understanding signed by President Jimmy Carter and Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan on October 4, 1977, which states that ''[a] solution of the problem of Arab refugees and Jewish refugees will be discussed in accordance with rules which should be agreed'';

(2) after negotiating the Camp David Accords, the Framework for Peace in the Middle East, the statement by President Jimmy Carter in a press conference on October 27, 1977, that ''Palestinians have rights . . . obviously there are Jewish refugees . . . they have the same rights as others do''; and

(3) in an interview after Camp David II in July 2000, at which the issue of Jewish refugees displaced from Arab lands was discussed, the statement by President Clinton that ''There will have to be some sort of international fund set up for the refugees. There is, I think, some interest, interestingly enough, on both sides, in also having a fund which compensates the Israelis who were made refugees by the war, which occurred after the birth of the State of Israel. Israel is full of people, Jewish people, who lived in predominantly Arab countries who came to Israel because they were made refugees in their own land.'';

Whereas the international definition of a refugee clearly applies to Jews who fled the persecution of Arab regimes, where a refugee is a person who ''owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country'' (the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees);

Whereas on January 29, 1957, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), determined that Jews fleeing from Arab countries were refugees that fell within the mandate of the UNHCR;

Whereas United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 of November 22, 1967, calls for a ''just settlement of the refugee problem'' without distinction between Palestinian and Jewish refugees, and this is evidenced by—

(1) the Soviet Union's United Nations delegation attempt to restrict the ''just settlement'' mentioned in Resolution 242 solely to Palestinian refugees (S/8236, discussed by the Security Council at its 1382nd meeting of November 22, 1967, notably at paragraph 117, in the words of Ambassador Kouznetsov of the Soviet Union), but this attempt failed, signifying the international community's intention of having the resolution address the rights of all Middle East refugees; and

(2) a statement by Justice Arthur Goldberg, the United States' Chief Delegate to the United Nations at that time, who was instrumental in drafting the unanimously adopted Resolution 242, where he has pointed out that ''The resolution addresses the objective of 'achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem'. This language presumably refers both to Arab and Jewish refugees, for about an equal number of each abandoned their homes as a result of the several wars.'';

Whereas in his opening remarks before the January 28, 1992, organizational meeting for multilateral negotiations on the Middle East in Moscow, United States Secretary of State James Baker made no distinction between Palestinian refugees and Jewish refugees in articulating the mission of the Refugee Working Group, stating that ''[t]he refugee group will consider practical ways of improving the lot of people throughout the region who have been displaced from their homes'';

Whereas the Roadmap to a Permanent Two-State Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, which refers in Phase III to an ''agreed, just, fair, and realistic solution to the refugee issue,'' uses language that is equally applicable to all persons displaced as a result of the conflict in the Middle East;

Whereas Israel's agreements with Egypt, Jordan, and the Palestinians have affirmed that a comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict will require a just solution to the plight of all ''refugees'';

Whereas the initiative to secure rights and redress for Jews who were forced to flee Arab countries does not conflict with the right of Palestinian refugees to claim redress;

Whereas all countries should be aware of the plight of Jews and other minority groups displaced from countries in the Middle East, North Africa, and the Persian Gulf;

Whereas an international campaign is proceeding in some 40 countries to record the history and legacy of Jewish refugees from Arab countries;

Whereas a just, comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace cannot be reached without addressing the uprooting of centuries-old Jewish communities in the Middle East, North Africa, and the Persian Gulf; and

Whereas it would be inappropriate and unjust for the United States to recognize rights for Palestinian refugees without recognizing equal rights for Jewish refugees from Arab countries: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That—

(1) for any comprehensive Middle East peace agreement to be credible and enduring, the agreement must address and resolve all outstanding issues relating to the legitimate rights of all refugees, including Jews, Christians, and other populations, displaced from countries in the Middle East; and

(2) the President should instruct the United States Representative to the United Nations and all United States representatives in bilateral and multilateral fora to—

(A) use the voice, vote, and influence of the United States to ensure that any resolutions relating to the issue of Middle East refugees, and which include a reference to the required resolution of the Palestinian refugee issue, must also include a similarly explicit reference to the resolution of the issue of Jewish refugees from Arab countries; and

(B) make clear that the United States Government supports the position that, as an integral part of any comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace, the issue of refugees from the Middle East, North Africa, and the Persian Gulf must be resolved in a manner that includes recognition of the legitimate rights of and losses incurred by all refugees displaced from Arab countries, including Jews, Christians, and other groups.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I would first like to commend my distinguished colleague, the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER), for introducing this important resolution.

When the state of Israel was founded in 1948, more than 150,000 Jews lived in Iraq. Iraq was truly a cradle of Jewish civilization, a site of Jewish learning from which one of Judaism's holiest books, the Talmud, emerged. For more than two millennia, as history books will attest, Jews also made vital contributions to wider Iraqi society.

Indeed, like Jews throughout the Arab world, Iraqi Jews for most of that long era enjoyed a quality of life far better than that of most Jewish communities in Europe.

That all changed for good in 1948, and in the years immediately preceding 1948, when the state of Israel declared its independence. Throughout the Arab world, Jews then became the objects of official scorn and often were fired from their jobs en masse. In many places, violence ensued against Jewish communities. Continuing to use Iraq as an example, that 150,000-strong community by 1952 had shrunk to a mere 30,000. The rest, the other 120,000, had effectively been forced out.

Overall, approximately 850,000 Jewish residents of the Arab world were expelled or otherwise forced to leave their homes, abandoning possessions and patrimony, in the years following Israel's creation in 1948. Vibrant, generations-old communities withered to near-negligible numbers.

That Iraqi community of 150,000 Jews in 1948 has dwindled to about ten today. In Egypt, a community of 75,000 in 1945 now numbers 50 to 100. In Aden, Yemen, a community of 63,000 in 1948 has shrunk to about 200 today. And 140,000 Jews lived in Tunisia in 1948; fewer than 100 remain. In Morocco, which is hailed today as the bastion of Jewish-Arab coexistence in the Arab world, a thriving community of more than a quarter million Jews lived their lives in peace before 1948. Today, there are perhaps 5,000 Jews residing in Morocco. Some left willingly; most felt they had no choice.

For centuries, long before the advent of Islam and long after it, Jewish communities lived peacefully and often prosperously and productively in Arab lands, among Arab people.

Their forced relocation and the material value they lost when they were compelled to abandon their homes and other property in Arab countries has never been redressed. Not one Jew from the Arab world has been compensated for his losses. Each one had to start over from scratch in his new land.

Compare the Jewish refugee experience with the Palestinian refugee experience. Neither Jewish refugees themselves, nor Israel, which was an underdeveloped country at the time it hosted most of these refugees, sought international aid from United Nations organizations or other international organizations. Both refugees and hosts envisioned and sought full integration into the larger society. The Arab world, in contrast, demanded the international community foot the bill for the refugees, who were to be kept in camps that, to this day, breed frustration, hatred and dependence.

The result of these contrasting approaches is this: While the plight of Palestinian refugees is well known throughout the world, has been the subject of numerous U.N. resolutions, and has been a major element in every Arab-Israeli peace plan, the plight of Jewish refugees is rarely mentioned.

Nevertheless, the rights and redress of Jewish refugees deserve recognition in any peace settlement. And, indeed, numerous international agreements pertaining to the Arab-Israeli conflict have been codified with the rights of Jewish refugees in mind.

U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 calls for a ''just settlement to the refugee problem,'' without limiting that problem to Palestinians. Presidents Carter and Clinton each explicitly stated that the issue of Jewish refugees must be part of any comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace agreement.

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And lest there be any doubt about their status, let me point out this very important fact: The United Nations High Commission on Refugees in 1957 mandated that Jewish people who fled Arab countries are, indeed, ''refugees.''

The right of Jewish refugees from Middle Eastern lands to seek redress does not in any way conflict with the right of Palestinian refugees to seek redress, and the resolution before us states this explicitly. This resolution merely expresses the sense of Congress that Jewish refugees also should not be denied their legitimate rights.

We are simply seeking to ensure that any comprehensive Middle East settlement is just and fully just to all the parties. That sentiment of basic fairness is one I fully embrace.

I strongly support this resolution. And I again congratulate my colleague, Mr. NADLER, for offering it.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Resolution 185 regarding the creation of refugee populations in the Middle East, north Africa, and the Persian Gulf region resulting from human rights violations.

Discussions of Middle Eastern refugees invariably focus exclusively and short-sightedly on the plight of those of Palestinian descent. Few are aware of the injustices faced by hundreds of thousands of Jews, Christians and others who fled from Arab lands and Iran either as a direct result of the Arab-Israeli conflict or from persecution associated with that conflict.

Perhaps the most telling example, Madam Speaker, is the case of the Jewish refugees from Arab lands. Many Jews saw their communities, which had existed vibrantly for centuries even before the advent of Islam, systematically dismantled. Their populations throughout the Arab world and Iran was reduced from over 1 million to just several thousand. They lost their resources, their homes, and their heritage sites fleeing in the face of persecution, pogroms and brutal dictatorships.

Jewish refugees who fled Arab countries and Iran left behind what today amounts to billions of dollars in assets. Not only have they received not one thin dime of compensation to this day, but their plight has not even received recognition by the United Nations nor similar international institutions.

While countless U.N. resolutions have been adopted focusing on the Palestinian refugee issue, no conferences have been held on the Jewish refugees. No U.N. agencies nor international human rights organizations address their fate. Failure to recognize their plight, Madam Speaker, along with the plight of the Christian communities throughout the region, only serves to perpetuate their suffering. Therefore, in past Congresses, I have sponsored resolutions similar to the one before us today, House Resolution 185. This resolution urges greater recognition of the plight of these often overlooked refugees, it emphasizes that any comprehensive Middle East peace agreement can only be credible, can only be enduring if it resolves all issues related to the rights of all refugees in the Arab world and Iran, including Jews, Christians and others.

I am proud to be the lead Republican cosponsor of this resolution. And I thank my good friend and my colleague from New York, Congressman JERRY NADLER, for having the insight to introduce it.

I urge the House to adopt this very important resolution.

And with that, Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to the sponsor of the resolution, the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER).

Mr. NADLER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution which I introduced, along with Representatives ROS-LEHTINEN, CROWLEY and FERGUSON. I am proud to stand alongside of them, as well as Chairman BERMAN and Representative ACKERMAN, who have been strong leaders on the issue of Jewish refugees from Arab lands, in this historic moment of recognition of these refugees.

I would also like to take a moment to commend the leadership of our late chairman, Tom Lantos, whose leadership on this issue and on all human rights issues has been critical to opening this debate and to recognizing the rights of refugees throughout the world.

This resolution is not just about a forgotten chapter of history. For centuries, long before the advent of Islam and long after it, Jewish communities lived peacefully and often prosperously and productively in Arab lands among Arab people. Their forced relocation and the material value they lost when they were compelled to abandon their homes and other properties in Arab countries has never been redressed. For example, in Iraq, a community of 150,000 in 1948 dwindles to around 10 today. In Egypt, a community of 75,000 in 1945 became between 50 and 100 today. In Yemen and Aden, 63,000 in 1948 became 200 in 2003. 140,000 Jews lived in Tunisia in 1948, less than 100 remained in 2004.

In Morocco, which is hailed today as a bastion of Jewish-Arab coexistence in the Arab world, a thriving community of more than a quarter million Jews lived their lives in peace by 1948; by 2003, only 5,500 remained. Some left willingly, most did not.

While the plight of Palestinian refugees is well known throughout the world and has been a major element in every Arab-Israeli peace plan and negotiation, the plight of these Jewish refugees is rarely mentioned these days. Nevertheless, numerous international agreements pertaining to the Arab-Israeli conflict have been codified with the rights of the Jewish refugees in mind. U.N. Security Council resolution 242, passed on November 22, 1967, after the Six Day War, calls for a just settlement to the refugee problem without limiting that problem to Palestinians. In fact, the Soviet Union tried to limit that resolution to Palestinians and it was rejected.

Presidents Carter and Clinton stated explicitly that the issue of Jewish refugees must be a part of any comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace agreement. And lest there be any doubt about this status, the U.N. High Commission on Refugees in 1957 ruled that Jewish people that fled Arab countries were, indeed, ''refugees.''

This principle is reaffirmed in the Camp David Accords and in the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty. The treaty states, ''The parties agree to establish a Claims Committee for the mutual settlement of all financial claims.'' And it also states, ''Jewish refugees have the same rights as others do.''

These Jewish refugees, Madam Speaker, were expelled systematically under official regime policies, which included state-fostered anti-Jewish decrees, pogroms, murders and hangings, anti-Semitic incitement and ethnic cleansing. They were done in accordance with an Arab League 1947 decree that provided a formula to promote state-sanctioned discriminatory measures that were replicated in many Arab countries in a deliberate campaign to expel the entire Jewish population from their home countries. And unlike the Palestinians, the Jewish refugees, having been expelled from the Arab countries, were absorbed into their host countries, mostly by Israel. About 600,000 refugees went to Israel, and the remaining 300,000 fled to other countries, such as France, Canada, Italy and the United States. In Israel today, the majority of the population consists of Jews from Arab countries and their children and grandchildren.

The right of Jewish refugees from Middle Eastern lands to seek redress does not in any way conflict with the rights of Palestinian refugees to seek redress, and resolution states this explicitly. This resolution merely expresses the sense of Congress that Jewish refugees, many of whom were so effectively absorbed by the State of Israel, should not be denied their legitimate rights and compensation for the property of which they were deprived.

The resolution further states that a comprehensive Middle East peace agreement can be credible and enduring only if it achieves legitimate rights of all refugees, ''including Jews, Christians and other populations'' displaced from Middle East countries. Importantly, it also resolves that the President should instruct the U.S. Representative at the U.N. and all U.S. representatives in bilateral and multilateral fora to use their voice, their vote and the influence of the United States to ensure that any resolutions relating to the issue of Middle East refugees which include a reference to the required resolution of the Palestinian refugee issue must also include a similarly explicit reference to the resolution of the issue of Jewish refugees from Arab countries, and to make clear that the United States Government supports the position that as an integral part of any comprehensive and much to be desired Arab-Israeli peace, the issue of refugees from the Middle East, north Africa and the Persian Gulf must be resolved in a manner that includes recognition of the legitimate rights of and losses incurred by all refugees displaced from Arab countries, including Jews, Christians and other groups.

There is broad bipartisan support for this resolution, which was passed with unanimous consent from the Foreign Affairs Committee. Many Jewish groups have endorsed the resolution, including the American Jewish Committee, Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, Hadassah, the Union for Reform Judaism, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, the Anti-Defamation League, and the Orthodox Union, among others. I must particularly acknowledge the work of B'nai B'rith International and the strong leadership of Justice for Jews from Arab Countries, which has led the International Rights and Redress Campaign. As of September 2007, this coalition to secure the rights of Jewish refugees from Arab lands includes 72 organizations and 20 countries.

It is important to deal with this issue now while some of the original refugees are still alive. Justice for Jews from Arab Countries has organized a campaign to conduct public education programs on the heritage and rights of former Jewish refugees from Arab countries, to register family history narratives, and to catalogue communal and individual losses suffered by Jews who fled from Arab countries.

By adopting this resolution and urging that the rights of Jewish refugees be recognized in any future comprehensive Middle East settlement, we are simply seeking to ensure that any such agreement is just, fully just to all parties. As a member of the Quartet, and in light of the United States' central and indispensable role in promoting a just Middle East peace, the U.S. must reaffirm that it embraces a just and comprehensive approach to the issue of Middle East refugees. I urge strong report for this resolution.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlelady from Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY).

Ms. BERKLEY. I thank the gentleman for yielding and for his leadership on this important issue.

Madam Speaker, when Israel declared its independence in May, 1948, seven Arab nations immediately attacked the fledgling country and sought to drive Israel into the sea. Simultaneously, many of the same Arab nations forced their own Jewish citizens to leave their ancestral homes, making refugees out of nearly one million people.

The issue of Jewish refugees from Arab lands speaks to one of the fundamental problems of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Many Arab countries have refused to accept the existence of Israel,

while cynically exploiting the Palestinian refugees in their war against Israel. Arab leaders willingly agree to confine the Palestinians to squalid camps where terrorism and extremism and hate are bred instead of resettling them and welcoming their Palestinian brothers to their own oil rich lands. They claim a ''right of return'' for Palestinian refugees in the hope that they will flood Israel in order to undermine and ultimately destroy the Jewish State of Israel.

Madam Speaker, this resolution begins to set the record straight, while setting out a balanced approach to address the refugee issue, all refugees.

Any peace plan must look at both sides of the refugee issue in an equal way. We must acknowledge the Jewish refugees from Arab lands, be aware of the hidden agenda behind a Palestinian ''right of return'' and expose the obstructive role played by both the Arab nations and the United Nations in the refugee issue. We must find just solutions for all refugees in this conflict, redressing the grievances of all sides while retaining Israel's integrity as a Jewish state.

Mr. WEXLER. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Resolution 185, expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the creation of refugee populations in the Middle East, North Africa, and the Persian Gulf region as a result of unacceptable human rights violations and blatant anti-Semitism.

For over 2,500 years, Jewish communities have resided throughout the Middle East, North Africa, and the Gulf region in large numbers. Unfortunately these vibrant Jewish communities have often been considered second-class citizens under onerous rulers. In the 20th century, widespread persecution and mass violations of human rights against Jewish minorities in Arab countries became unfortunately commonplace.

Upon the declaration of the State of Israel's independence in 1948, the difficult status of Jewish minorities was greatly exacerbated as Arab nations declared war or supported the destruction of the nascent state. In response, many members of the Jewish community were forced to flee their countries of birth or faced becoming a political hostage. Jewish properties were unlawfully seized and confiscated without any compensation or just redress. While there were once nearly a million Jews living in these regions, today there are only a few thousand Jews remaining in these Arab countries.

Unconscionably, the story of the Jewish refugees from Arab countries has been neglected by the United Nations and the international community for far too long. While Palestinian refugees from Israel have been one of the focal points of the international community, Jewish refugees from Arab states have been forgotten, if not intentionally ignored. This resolution recognizes the over 850,000 Jewish refugees from Arab states and expresses the sense of Congress that the international community should acknowledge the Jewish refugee issue as a part of any settlement of the Middle East conflict.

It is clear that the violations of human rights against Jewish refugees from Arab countries have never been adequately addressed by the international community. As a cosponsor of H. Res. 185, I believe it is essential that Congress work with the administration to rectify this black mark on history. To this end, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution, which sheds light on the plight of Jewish refugees throughout the Middle East.

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 185. I commend this body for recognizing the rights of Jewish refugees displaced from Arab countries. I agree that a resolution that addresses the legitimate rights of all refugees is inherent to establishing enduring peace in the Middle East.

The resolution draws its strength by including all refugees in the Middle East, including Jews, Christians, minority communities, Iraqis, and Palestinians. A lasting peace in the Middle East must abate feelings of hostility throughout all refugee populations. As the resolution suggests, this includes recognition of Jewish, Palestinian, and Christian refugee populations but must also encompass all Middle East refugee populations ''numbering in the hundreds of thousands and comprised of peoples from many ethnic, religious, and national backgrounds.''

As such, I urge this body to continue to be mindful of and work toward peaceful, enduring solutions for all refugee populations in the Middle East. Currently the two largest refugee populations in the world are Iraqi and Palestinian refugees. The United Nations has estimated that there are approximately 2,000,000 Iraqi refugees currently displaced from their homes (and another 2,200,000 internally displaced). These Iraqi refugees endure deprivation of food, shelter, and medical care. The United States must be mindful of the role of our foreign policy in the creation of this refugee population and our continuing role in addressing this humanitarian crisis.

United Nations-recognized Palestinian refugees currently constitute an approximate 3,700,000-person population. According to the United Nations Relief and Work Agency, UNRWA, of these refugees, approximately 1,300,000 Palestinian refugees continue to live in 58 recognized refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip. Moreover, ongoing Israeli policies like settlement expansion, which contravene the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention as well as the basis of Palestinian-Israeli peace agreements, create new refugee populations today.

I support H. Res. 185 for recognizing the displacement, human rights, suffering and loss of all refugees. I encourage this body to do so in a way that brings us closer to establishing a just and long-lasting Arab-Israeli peace. To make this dream a reality we must truly rise to become the ''honest broker'' of peace in the Middle East.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, so I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 185, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING ALEXANDER LITVINENKO

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 154) expressing the sense of Congress that the fatal radiation poisoning of Russian dissident and writer Alexander Litvinenko raises significant concerns about the potential involvement of elements of the Russian Government in Mr. Litvinenko's death and about the security and proliferation of radioactive materials, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 154

Whereas Russian dissident and writer Alexander Litvinenko, a citizen and resident of Great Britain, suddenly fell ill on November 1, 2006, and died three weeks later in a London hospital;

Whereas British health officials concluded, following an autopsy, that Mr. Litvinenko died of radiation poisoning caused by ingestion of the radioactive element polonium-210, and British law enforcement officials have announced that they are treating Mr. Litvinenko's death as a murder;

Whereas polonium-210, according to the Health Physics Society, radiates alpha particles that cannot penetrate paper or human skin but, if ingested through eating, drinking, or breathing, are extremely toxic, with the ability to destroy cells, damage vital organs such as the liver, kidneys, and bone marrow, cause cancer, and result in human death;

Whereas according to the Health Physics Society, just one millionth of a gram of polonium-210 can be fatal, an amount invisible to the naked eye;

Whereas 97 percent of the world's legal production of polonium-210 occurs at the Avangard nuclear facility in Russia, and Russia is the world's leading exporter of polonium-210 for commercial purposes;

Whereas polonium-210 is presently neither produced in nor commercially exported to Great Britain;

Whereas polonium-210, being especially dangerous to public health and safety if improperly handled, may attract the attention of terrorists because it can be easily and safely concealed and transported and is not usually detectable by radiation detectors;

Whereas this instance of poisoning by use of polonium-210 could serve as a model for future use of the radioactive element to assassinate individuals, poison and kill large numbers of people, or spread general panic and hysteria amongst the public;

Whereas Mr. Litvinenko was a former agent and official in the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation during the period when present Russian President Vladimir Putin ran that agency;

Whereas in 1998 Mr. Litvinenko was fired from the Federal Security Service and subsequently arrested and briefly incarcerated without conviction for a criminal act after publicly accusing high-level officials of the Federal Security Service of crimes that included plotting assassination attempts;

Whereas Mr. Litvinenko fled Russia and successfully sought asylum in Great Britain,