



Policy statement on H.Res.326
Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding United States efforts to
resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a negotiated two-state solution

October 21, 2019

American Muslims for Palestine (AMP) applauds the intent of Reps. Lowenthal, Bass, and Connolly to put forward a constructive resolution to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian issue in a just and lasting manner by introducing [H.Res.326](#).

This type of congressional initiative is much-needed as a response both to the Trump administration and the Israeli government adopting policy positions inimical to the establishment of a just and lasting peace.

AMP, however, does have concerns about the resolution, articulated below, especially the [text](#) of the resolution as amended in the nature of a substitute (ANS) and adopted by voice vote by the Committee on Foreign Affairs on July 17, 2019.

This version of the resolution was reported by the committee ([H.Rept.116-242](#)) and placed on the House Calendar (No. 47) on October 17, 2019.

As an organization whose mission is to educate the public about the just cause of Palestine and the rights of self-determination, liberty and justice, and which takes no [position](#) on whether Palestinian self-determination should be exercised through a one- or two-state resolution, **AMP makes no vote recommendation on H.Res.326 should it come to the floor.**

However, should H.Res.326 be brought to a vote, **AMP encourages Representatives who support the resolution to supplement their yes vote with media releases, social media posts, and floor statements** explaining how they will leverage US influence with Israel to achieve the policy goals articulated in the resolution of ending Israeli settlement expansion, opposing Israel's unilateral annexation of territory, and supporting the right of self-determination for the Palestinian people, including by conditioning future US military aid to Israel on the achievement of these policy objectives.

Passage of H.Res.326 without concomitant commitments by Representatives to hold Israel accountable to these policy goals would represent yet another platitudinous, empty gesture by Congress in the never-ending “peace process” which has served to entrench Israeli military occupation and settlement of Palestinian land rather than enable the Palestinian people to exercise their right of self-determination.

Conversely, **AMP calls upon Representatives who oppose the resolution because they support Israel’s indefinite separate-and-unequal rule over the Palestinian people to supplement their no votes with media releases, social media posts, and floor statements** forthrightly acknowledging their opposition to Palestinian self-determination.

Finally, **AMP commends Representatives who oppose the resolution because of their principled view that a two-state resolution is not the only policy outcome for a just and lasting Israeli-Palestinian peace and encourages them to supplement their no votes or abstentions with media releases, social media posts, and floor statements** articulating their positions.

Below, please find some of AMP’s concerns about the resolution as amended in the nature of a substitute and reported by the committee.

False equivalency. The resolution contains false equivalencies between occupier and occupied, colonizer and colonized. The resolution states that “the leadership of both parties must negotiate in good faith in order to achieve peace.” This statement ignores the fact that the Palestinian leadership has steadfastly supported negotiations for a two-state resolution for more than 25 years. Israel, however, as the Occupying Power, has used the cover of these negotiations as a pretext to entrench its military occupation of Palestinian territory and expand its illegal colonization of Palestinian land while opposing true Palestinian sovereignty.

Diluted opposition to Israeli occupation and colonization. The original text of the resolution called for “an end to the [Israeli] occupation” and opposed Israeli “settlement activity.” The ANS as adopted and reported by the Committee on Foreign Affairs strips out all language referring to ending Israel’s occupation and, instead of opposing all Israeli settlement activity, merely opposes “settlement expansion,” thereby attempting to legitimize Israel’s previous settlement activity. Since 1967, the United States has opposed Israel’s illegal colonization of Palestinian land (even as all administrations turned a blind eye toward it and refused to pressure Israel to stop), and since 2001 the United States has explicitly [called](#) for an end to Israeli occupation. The ANS is therefore a significant dilution of previous US policy positions.

Incongruous with facts on the ground. The resolution correctly opposes Israeli “moves toward unilateral annexation of territory.” However, it ignores the concrete steps that Israel has already taken toward illegally annexing territory and, perhaps more importantly, how the Trump administration has backed those efforts. For example, Israel has illegally annexed portions of Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan Heights that it occupied in 1967. The Trump administration’s

decision to move the US Embassy to Jerusalem provides implicit recognition of Israel's claims to administer the totality of the city and its explicit recognition of Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights gave Israel a US imprimatur for this illegal act of annexation.

Major Israeli political parties do not support Palestinian statehood. Neither the Likud Party led by current Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, nor the Blue and White Party led by Benny Gantz, support Palestinian sovereignty. In fact, Netanyahu campaigned on a pledge to annex the Jordan Valley and other choice areas of the Palestinian West Bank, precluding the possibility of a Palestinian state. Meanwhile, Gantz, while not explicitly endorsing annexation, nevertheless supported perpetual Israeli control over the Jordan Valley and the maintenance of Israel's status quo of military occupation. Significant support for Palestinian sovereignty does not exist in Israeli politics. Passing hortatory resolutions calling on "both sides" to negotiate for a two-state resolution ignores this reality and, in the absence of a commitment by the United States to hold Israel accountable to this policy goal, does not to advance it.

Pigeonholing and conditioning Palestinian self-determination. The ANS condemns "efforts to achieve Palestinian statehood status outside the framework of negotiations with Israel," thereby conditioning Palestinian self-determination on Israel's acquiescence. Self-determination is not a gift bestowed by an occupying power on an occupied people; it is their inherent right under international law to exercise self-determination. The Palestinian people are entitled to seek self-determination outside the framework of negotiations with Israel and Congress has no business telling them otherwise. The resolution is also problematic in that it pigeonholes Palestinian self-determination into a statelet in parts of the West Bank and Gaza, whereas the Palestinian people have made clear that their self-determination also involves equality for Palestinian citizens of Israel and the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes in Israel.