

Washington, DC (May 24, 2011) – Rep. Gus Bilirakis (FL-09), a member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Middle East and South Asia, issued the following statement after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's address to Congress:

"Israel is our single most important and strategic ally in the Middle East, serving on the front lines in our joint battle against terrorism and weapons proliferation. Since 1948, Israel has not only survived under the most horrific of circumstances, but flourished to become the only prosperous, democratically-elected nation in the Middle East. It is a testament to the strength of Judaism and the sheer will and determination of Jewish people worldwide.

"I wholeheartedly support the basis for a negotiated Arab-Israeli peace that Prime Minister Netanyahu outlined. Israel's peace must first and foremost be based in security, therefore, there cannot be a return to the borders of 1967. Additionally, Palestinian refugees should have the right to return to a demilitarized Palestinian state established through a negotiated peace – not the Jewish state. And more importantly, Jerusalem must be the eternal undivided capital of the State of Israel.

"I will continue to work hard to assure that Israel has the means necessary to resist threats from her hostile neighbors, and remains a beacon of freedom and liberty in the Middle East."

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