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PENCE: BURDEN FOR MIDEAST PEACE ON PALESTINIANS

Washington, Jun 4, 2003 - Washington, D.C.- U.S. Congressman Mike Pence today expressed encouragement about the progress of Middle East peace talks but said that the burden for peace is on the Palestinians.

Below are Pence's remarks on the floor of the House this morning:

"Mr. Speaker, today is a day of history and opportunity for the world and for the war-torn region known as the Middle East.

"I pray for the peace of Jerusalem, and was yesterday greatly encouraged when five Arab leaders pledged to actively fight what they called the culture of extremism and violence in the region.

"I'm also encouraged by Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas, who has called for an end to violence against Israeli citizens.

"But I was astounded this morning when the network television shows were all stressing what our President today in Jordan must demand of our ally Israel.

"Truth is, as we welcome this day of history and opportunity we must be clear that any progress towards peace must require that Palestinians first: recognize Israel, second: renounce terrorism, and third: dismantle the infrastructure of murder within their midst.

"Then, and only then, can our nation ask our ally Israel to make the concessions necessary for the advancement of peace."

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