

and the elimination of corruption, allowing American companies to compete on a more level playing field.

As the representative from Florida's Third Congressional District, it is important for me to know that north Florida's international businesses can flourish without unnecessary interference. Some 2 years ago, when a north Florida company, Itera International Energy Corp. needed Ukraine to honor business contracts worth many millions of dollars, I wrote to then Secretary of State Christopher requesting his assistance, met with Ukraine's Ambassador in Washington, and wrote several letters to Ukraine President Kuchma.

Later, in December 1996, I traveled to the former Soviet Union to personally examine the business climate for American businesses in the region. It was a tremendously informative and educational experience, meeting with our U.S. Ambassadors, foreign government officials, and U.S. business leaders. I was particularly interested in the energy sectors of these countries because Itera, headquartered in Jacksonville, is actively engaged in the marketing of natural gas to Ukraine and other countries of the former Soviet Union. I also was interested in other areas of trade and development for northern Florida, particularly transportation, agriculture, and tourism. Further, as a representative of the American taxpayer, I wanted to ensure that U.S. foreign assistance was the most cost effective and was used for the purpose for which it was provided.

I learned that the same problems that have plagued Itera have plagued many other American companies. Contractual agreements, accounting methods, and political attitudes are some of the many areas where there is room for differences of opinion, corrupt practices, and a difficult dialog.

All of this made me realize what is most important in the former Soviet Union: for old government institutions to give way to young, private companies that can create new global markets. In the process, business contracts must be fulfilled. When private enterprise is not allowed to flourish, government corruption is often a primary reason.

Itera, for example, despite the odds against it, is an adaptable, entrepreneurial company which has been able to market natural gas to the former Soviet Union by establishing business and personal relationships so necessary for business in the region. I am informed that Itera is not actively engaged in a joint venture with the Government of Armenia and Russia's largest gas company, to provide enhanced natural gas transportation and distribution facilities in Armenia. This will provide strong support for the economic well being for the people of Armenia and the region.

I will continue to work with my constituents to expand commerce around the world—to the benefit of all citizens. This will, I believe, contribute to peace in our time and to peace for future generations.

## RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF BETTY SHABAZZ

SPEECH OF

### HON. LOUIS STOKES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 3, 1997*

Mr. STOKES. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, the gentle lady from the District of Columbia, Representative ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON, for hosting this special order. We join ELEANOR as she pauses to pay tribute to her special friend and one of this Nation's great leaders, the late Dr. Betty Shabazz. It is more than fitting that we acknowledge the passing of this distinguished and gifted individual.

The passing of Dr. Betty Shabazz leaves us to mourn a mother, educator, and human rights leader. Betty was a young mother when she witnessed the brutal assassination of her husband, Malcolm X, in 1965. She moved from the shadows of her husband's life to become a leader in her own right. At a memorial service which was held in her honor, Dr. Betty Shabazz was remembered as an educator, college administrator, child advocate, civil rights leader, keeper of Malcolm X's legacy, and nurturing mother. These words describe an individual who rose above every challenge which confronted her. By doing so, she taught us a valuable lesson about courage, compassion and dignity.

I also had the opportunity to know this great lady during her lifetime. She was intelligent, personable, and someone whom I deeply admired. My wife, Jay, and I both always enjoyed seeing and talking with her, usually at the annual Congressional Black Caucus Annual Weekend here in Washington, DC. Her devotion to her family and the legacy of Malcolm X was something we admired. We also admired the manner in which she persevered and acquired her education and became distinguished in her own right.

Mr. Speaker, President Clinton praised Dr. Shabazz as an extraordinary woman whose life is an inspiration to all of us. We are saddened to lose the remarkable gift and vision of Dr. Shabazz. We also recognize the fact that Betty's family is in need of our prayers in the days ahead. I express my sympathy to her family, ELEANOR, and many others who shared a close personal friendship with Dr. Betty Shabazz. While her death leaves a void, we know that Dr. Shabazz has left a legacy that will stand the test of time.

## FOREIGN OPERATIONS, EXPORT FINANCING, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1998

SPEECH OF

### HON. KEN E. BENTSEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 4, 1997*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2159) making appropriations for foreign operations, export fi-

nancing, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1998, and for other purposes:

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Chairman, I rise to support the fiscal year 1998 foreign operations appropriations bill, especially the \$3.1 billion in aid to Israel.

Especially at this critical juncture of the peace process, the United States must continue to support Israel and help assure its security as it takes the very difficult steps needed to secure peace. Any cuts in foreign aid to Israel now could damage Israel's security, its negotiating posture, and the peace process, as well as other United States interests in the region. As one of the United States strongest allies and the only true democracy in the Middle East, Israel is certainly deserving of this support. This is especially true as Israel faces renewed threats of terrorist attacks such as those on the Mahane Yehuda market place on July 30, 1997 and on the Ben Yehuda pedestrian mall just yesterday. I condemn these cowardly attacks, which underscore the need for continued United States assistance and cooperation in ensuring Israel's security.

I want to emphasize that foreign aid to Israel is in the United States' strategic and economic best interest. Israel is the most reliable ally of the United States in the Middle East and continued foreign aid funding will maintain a solid partnership with the United States. Because of the depth of the United States-Israel relationship and the permanence of Israel's democracy, the United States knows we can depend on Israel in a crisis. By its continued support of Israel, the United States honors a historic commitment to a fellow democracy with which we share unique security, economic, and cultural ties.

I am especially pleased by the growing relationship between Israel and my State of Texas. Texas and Israel are substantial trading partners, sharing economic interests in telecommunications, medical technology, high-technology computers, and agriculture. In 1996, Texas exports to Israel totaled nearly \$580 million in goods and services, which represented an 89 percent increase since 1995. With regard to medical technology, Israel and Texas have established many joint research programs. For example, the Texas-Israel Telemedicine Exchange has brought together the Texas Children's Hospital in Houston and the Rabin Medical Center in Petach Tikvah in developing a telemedicine framework for Israel's hospitals and health care clinics. As this partnership continues to develop, new business opportunities will make the economies of Texas and Israel stronger and more competitive in the 21st century.

The United States has a strong national interest in bringing peace, stability, and economic growth to one of the most strategic and potentially destabilizing regions of the world. The United States can best achieve these goals by continuing its commitment to ensuring Israel's security. I urge my colleagues to continue a proud tradition of support for Israel and to recognize that our Nation's national interests will be reinforced by voting for this appropriation.