

Ten years ago, April 29, 1988, the federal debt stood at \$2,502,100,000,000 (Two trillion, five hundred two billion, one hundred million).

Fifteen years ago, April 29, 1983, the federal debt stood at \$1,247,917,000,000 (One trillion, two hundred forty-seven billion, nine hundred seventeen million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$4 trillion—\$4,265,041,788,432.21 (Four trillion, two hundred sixty-five billion, forty-one million, seven hundred eighty-eight thousand, four hundred thirty-two dollars and twenty-one cents) during the past 15 years.

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF ISRAEL

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I join my colleagues in congratulating the people of Israel on the 50th anniversary of their independence.

Fifty years ago, Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, declared the establishment of the State of Israel, ending a centuries-old struggle by the Jewish people to return to their rightful ancestral homeland. The modern dream of a Jewish state had been reborn over 50 years earlier, when Theodore Herzl shared his vision of such a nation during the First World Zionist Conference in Switzerland. Our predecessors in the U.S. Congress supported this vision when they passed a resolution in 1922, calling for the founding of a Jewish nation.

Tragically, the Jewish people were unable to achieve that great goal during the early years of the modern Zionist movement. They were forced to endure the most brutal and systematic repression of a people that humanity has ever witnessed. The six million Jewish men, women, and children who lost their lives during the Holocaust had committed no crime. They were killed, not because of anything they had done, but because of who they were, as part of an inhuman, racist policy that robbed its victims of both life and dignity. The extraordinary courage with which the Jewish people bore this tragedy is a timeless tribute to their enduring faith, and we owe the victims and the survivors a commitment that such persecution and prejudice will never occur again.

From its beginning 50 years ago, the nation of Israel has had a very close and special relationship with the United States. In a perennially turbulent and unpredictable region of the world, Israel has always been a bulwark of stability. It is our closest ally not only in the Middle East, but also in the United Nations. And during times of crisis and conflict in the region, this bond has only been strengthened.

It was no coincidence that America was chosen as the site for the historic Declaration of Principles agreement between the Israeli and the Palestinian people in 1993, since we have always worked with great dedication and commitment to achieve a lasting peace in the Middle East. The Israeli people know that we will continue to work

with them and support them during this long and difficult peace process.

No other ethnic or religious group in human history had endured so much pain and prejudice and overcome so many enormous difficulties in establishing a nation of their own. No other new nation faced so great a threat to its immediate survival as did Israel during its first year of existence. They have created a thriving democracy in a region known for its dictatorships. They have generously opened their land to Jews from all over the world. As we celebrate this inspiring Golden Anniversary of the birth of Israel, we also honor and commend the Israeli people for their courage and commitment in achieving their dream of a homeland and in building the strong and vital democracy and friend that Israel is today.

REPORT CONCERNING THE AUSTRALIA GROUP AND THE CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE DEVELOPMENT, PRODUCTION, STOCKPILING AND USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT—PM 118

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, adopted by the Senate of the United States on April 24, 1997, I hereby certify in connection with Condition (7)(C)(i), Effectiveness of Australia Group, that:

—Australia Group members continue to maintain an equally effective or more comprehensive control over the export of toxic chemicals and their precursors, dual-use processing equipment, human, animal and plant pathogens and toxins with potential biological weapons application, and dual-use biological equipment, as that afforded by the Australia Group as of April 25, 1997; and

—The Australia Group remains a viable mechanism for limiting the spread of chemical and biological weapons-related materials and technology, and that the effectiveness of the Australia Group has not been undermined by changes in membership, lack of compliance with common export controls and nonproliferation measures, or the weakening of common controls and nonproliferation measures, in force as of April 25, 1997.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.
THE WHITE HOUSE, April 29, 1998.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

AT 2:21 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by

Ms. Goetz, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate.

H.R. 3546. An act to provide for a national dialogue on Social Security and to establish the Bipartisan Panel to Design Long-Range Social Security Reform.

H.R. 3717. An act to prohibit the expenditure of Federal funds for the distribution of needles or syringes for the hypodermic injection of illegal drugs.

At 6:02 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Hays, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House agrees to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 3579) entitled "An Act making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1998, and for other purposes."

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bill, without amendment:

S. 1502. An act entitled "District of Columbia Student Opportunity Scholarship Act of 1997."

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and second times by unanimous consent and referred as indicated:

H.R. 3546. An act to provide for a national dialogue on Social Security and to establish the Bipartisan Panel to Design Long-Range Social Security Reform; to the Committee on Finance.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, which were referred as indicated:

EC-4672. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting, a notice relative to a retirement; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-4673. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Mental Health Wraparound Demonstration Project; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-4674. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition and Technology), transmitting, pursuant to law, a notice relative to the annual Counterproliferation Review Committee Report; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-4675. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition and Technology), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on the Commercial Operations and Support Savings Initiative; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-4676. A communication from the Office of the Judge Advocate General, Department of the Navy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Shipbuilding Capability Preservation Agreements" received on April 27, 1998; to the Committee on Armed Services.