

have decidedly proven. It is a demonstration of what can be accomplished when a people are determined to overcome every obstacle to freedom and self-determination. Although young—50 years is but a moment in the long history of the Jewish people—Israel is today a vibrant, thriving democracy whose achievements in science, technology, agriculture, industry, and trade are a match for any nation centuries older.

Yet while the land of Israel is the land of the Jewish people, it is also the land of us all—as the more than two and a half million tourists who visit Israel every year will attest. Few places on earth have been as cherished and as loved by so many millions throughout the world as the places of Israel. It is, as one writer described it, “a symphony of voices, heard by all the people of the world.”

Today, Mr. President, I know all those whose hearts have been touched by the music of Israel, join me in wishing her well. Together, we congratulate her on her remarkable achievements, we thank her for her friendship, and we pray for the day when all who dwell within her boundaries will, as St. Augustine prayed,

“... live in such delight,
such pleasure and such play
As that to them a thousand years
Doth seem as yesterday.”

ISRAEL REACHES ITS 50TH YEAR RISING OUT OF THE ASHES OF WORLD WAR II

• Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, like the Phoenix, the nation of Israel rose out of the ashes of the Holocaust 50 years ago and the 2000 year search for a Jewish homeland ended. But, the birth of Israel was far from easy on that day. Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion made his first radio broadcast from an air raid shelter as the precarious new nation came under immediate attack.

Israel's founding father took the time to remind the first citizens of Israel what had been accomplished and what it would take to defend their dream. Ben-Gurion said, “whatever we have achieved is the result of the efforts of earlier generations no less than our own. It is also the result of an unwavering fidelity to our precious heritage, the heritage of a small nation that has suffered much, but at the same time has won for itself a special place in the history of mankind because of its spirit, faith, and vision.”

In January of this year, I went to Israel for an international conference of Jewish legislators from around the world. In our discussions of the faith that we shared and Israel's 50th anniversary, I saw and heard the achievements of the “spirit, faith and vision” of which David Ben-Gurion spoke. That same ethos that was also embraced by such visionary leaders as Moshe Dyan, Golda Meir, Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Rabin has helped Israel become a dynamic democracy with a

thriving economy. I came away from the conference secure in the knowledge that Israel's faith and fortitude remain as strong today as they were when the dream was realized five decades ago.

I believe it is also important to acknowledge the role the United States has played in the development of Israel over the past 50 years. President Harry S. Truman, the first head of state to grant Israel diplomatic recognition, expressed its special place in the hearts of Americans as he declared, “I had faith in Israel before it was established, I have faith in it now. I believe it has a glorious future before it—not just another sovereign nation, but as an embodiment of the great ideals of our civilization.”

This special partnership which began with Israel's creation has been repeatedly tested since 1948. The United States has been unwavering in our commitment to helping the people of Israel develop their own economy and secure their own peace. We have helped give them the time that their founding fathers knew would work in their favor. Mr. President, it is for these reasons that I was delighted to be a co-sponsor of House Joint Resolution 102, which the Senate unanimously passed last night. The resolution acknowledges the 50th Anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel and reaffirms the bonds of friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel. This is a fitting tribute to the history of Israel and I am proud that today we can celebrate this special, half century milestone together. •

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF ISRAEL

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, it is my honor today to offer my congratulations to the State of Israel on the 50th anniversary of its independence. I am a great supporter and admirer of our close friend and ally, and I am proud it has survived and prospered to see this momentous day.

In 1948, the modern State of Israel was created as a symbol of hope for the Jewish people—a people who had suffered through the horror and pain of the Holocaust. We will never forget the terrible evil the Nazis inflicted on the world and we will always remember the dangers of ignoring and appeasing fanatic leaders who climb the ladder by trampling on the innocent.

What emerged from 3,000 years of persecution and the nightmare of the Holocaust is the greatest tribute to the perseverance of the Jewish people, the State of Israel. Israel has persevered through war, through the murder of its citizens by cowardly terrorists, and through the assassination of its leaders.

I am proud to say that the United States has helped Israel survive and become the strong nation it is today. The United States has a special relationship with Israel. As two of the world's leading democracies, we share many of

the same values: promoting democracy, personal freedom, and human rights throughout the world. We owe the Israeli people our moral support, for weathering as a free state under the most dangerous conditions. As Americans, we must admire their tenacious dedication to the principles of freedom articulated in our own country so long ago.

Fifty years ago, Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, broadcast this statement to the Israeli people:

Something unique occurred yesterday in Israel, and only future generations will be able to evaluate the full historical significance of the event. It is now up to all of us, acting out of a sense of Jewish fraternity, to devote every ounce of our strength to building and defending the State of Israel, which still faces a titanic political and military struggle.

Now is not the time for boasting. Whatever we have achieved is the result of the efforts of earlier generations no less than our own. It is also the result of unwavering fidelity to our precious heritage, the heritage of a small nation that has suffered much, but at the same time has won for itself a special place in the history of mankind because of its spirit, faith and vision.

To me, the spirit, faith and vision of the Israeli people is what makes this celebration of Israel so special and remarkable. I congratulate Israel on the 50th anniversary of its founding. •

ISRAEL'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

• Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate the people of Israel and all my friends in the American Jewish community on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the creation of the State of Israel.

This significant milestone in Israel's history offers all of us an opportunity to reflect on what makes that country so special. Israel remains the most important U.S. ally in the Middle East and the only multiparty democracy in the region. The strong and stable friendship between our two countries, built on a solid foundation of shared values, mutual support and trust, is in the fundamental interest of both nations. Ensuring the security of Israel will remain one of our most important foreign policy priorities.

Transcending political considerations, however, are the profound ties with Israel and pride in its accomplishments felt by Jews worldwide. The State of Israel was created in the wake of the Holocaust and the tragic deaths of more than 6,000,000 Jews. Israeli society and its democratic institutions have been forged under the most difficult historical circumstances imaginable. Israel continues today to embody the aspirations of Jews from the northernmost villages of the Newly Independent States of the former Soviet Union to the tip of South America. The struggle of all Jews helped to create the State of Israel, and all Jews have reason to celebrate the country's 50th birthday.

It is my hope that Israel's next 50 years will see the establishment of a

permanent and secure peace in the Middle East, with Israel and its Arab neighbors working together to build a better future for all the citizens of the region. This would truly fulfill Israel's promise and its destiny.●

ISRAEL'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

● Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, there is a notable chorus of Senators congratulating the people of Israel and their government on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Israel's birth. There are few things that have not been said on the subject of Israel—friend, ally, democracy. The Congress has spoken on countless occasions about Jerusalem, our commitment to Israel's security, and to peace in the Middle East.

In the end, however, all these expressions, as heartfelt as they are, pale beside the real miracle of the Jewish people, in exile for 2000 years, having returned to the land of Israel. And on that tiny piece of land, smaller than the State of New Jersey, an incredible nation has been built—a nation that has survived five wars, untold numbers of terrorist attacks, and the hostility of most of its neighbors.

Israel has absorbed millions of immigrants, providing homes, and jobs, and schools and freedom. Year to year, day to day, Israel may not look precisely like a land of milk and honey, but for the Jews of Europe who survived the Holocaust, and the Russians who survived Communism, it is the Promised Land.

Israel is great, not merely because its creation is the fulfillment of a biblical promise, or because it is a faithful friend to the United States. It is great because the people of Israel are great people. I congratulate my friend, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and all the people of Israel.●

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL

● Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN. Mr. President, today is the 50th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel. I would like to take a moment to reflect upon the significance of this historic event.

For the nearly two millennia that preceded the founding of Israel, Jews across the globe had experienced unrelenting persecution, culminating in the previously unimaginable apocalypse of the Holocaust. In the wake of Adolph Hitler's effort to exterminate all of the Jews of Europe, and his success murdering six million of them, the moral imperative of establishing a Jewish state became clear. And so the Jewish people battled to create that which had only been dreamed of for 19 centuries: a nation of their own.

Their triumph marked the beginning of one of the most inspiring stories of the 20th century. That Israel would survive to see today's anniversary was far from certain. It's founding brought

about the first of four wars in which outnumbered Israeli forces somehow managed to defeat or hold off the armies of its hostile neighbors. Israel's courage and ingenuity in the face of overwhelming odds is, quite simply, unparalleled in the modern world.

Despite the constant threat to its security, out of the desert, Israel has created a flourishing, democratic society, home to innovative science, cutting-edge technology, and rich culture. Today, its economy rivals that of Western Europe in terms of per capita wealth.

I am proud of the role that the United States has played in helping to keep this brave nation alive. To this day, the preservation and maintenance of Israel's national security remains the foundation upon which U.S. policy in the Middle East rests. Israel remains one of America's most trusted allies—a nation with which we have cooperated to resolve a variety of regional and global issues. Time and again over the last 50 years, Israel and the United States have demonstrated that we share a special relationship that transcends parochial and short-term policy objectives.

I have always believed that there can be no real peace in the Middle East unless Israel's security is guaranteed. That is why, throughout my career, I have supported strong U.S. economic and military support for Israel. As the greatest democratic nation on the planet, I believe that the United States must do everything in its power to ensure that Israel—the only multi-party democracy in the Middle East—survives.

Currently, the best way for the United States to ensure the future security and prosperity not only of Israel but of the entire region is for it to play a strong role in keeping the Middle East Peace Process alive. If further strife and sorrow in the region is to be avoided, dialogue between Israel and her historic enemies must be maintained. Although the Peace Process has stalled recently, I believe that it can be revived if the United States remains committed to serving as an honest intermediary between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Key to the effort to see the participants through this difficult period is President Clinton's commitment to provide financial and technical assistance to Israel to help fight terrorism and to monitor the Palestinian Authority's compliance with the Oslo Accords.

Mr. President, the Israeli people have demonstrated countless times that they are willing to take risks for peace. That is why I am confident that they will face the challenges of implementing the Oslo Accords and the Declaration of Principles with fortitude and creativity. The United States must stand shoulder to shoulder with them as they make this effort. Working together, I am confident that we can forge a peace that will guarantee that Israel will live to celebrate its centennial in 2048.●

ISRAEL'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

● Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, 50 years ago the State of Israel proclaimed its independence as a homeland and beacon of hope to Jews around the world. At 4:06 p.m. on April 30, 1948, David Ben-Gurion declared that the establishment of Israel would be effective at midnight the same day. Eleven minutes into the next day, the United States became the first country to extend recognition to the State of Israel when President Truman declared to the American people:

This government has been informed that a Jewish State has been proclaimed in Palestine and recognition has been requested by the provisional government thereof. The United States recognizes the provisional government as the de facto authority of the new State of Israel.

The ensuing rejection of Israel's appeal for peace expressed in its 1948 Declaration of Independence represented a missed opportunity of historic proportions. The Declaration stated: "We extend our hand to all neighboring states and their people in an offer of peace and unity and appeal to them to cooperate with the independent Jewish nation for the good of all." Yet for 50 years, the people of Israel have endured war and violent conflict, including a war of independence, the Six Day War, and the Yom Kippur War, weathered constant challenges to their survival, faced isolation, an economic boycott, and struggled against terrorism.

To build an independent Jewish nation on a small piece of land would have been difficult even under the most ideal conditions. For Israel to have done so while the country's very existence was constantly being threatened is truly a tremendous accomplishment. In the face of hostility and adversity, Israel has persevered and developed into a thriving and diverse nation.

The special relationship between the United States and Israel is fundamentally based on shared values and experiences. As a vibrant democracy like our own, and despite the heavy burdens imposed on the country by war, Israel is a land of immigrants and pioneers whose democratic achievements reflect the hard work, sacrifice, courage, devotion, and self-discipline of its people. Few societies have sustained such pressure and kept their commitment to a strong democracy as Israel has done. In just 50 years the Israeli people have built modern cities and prosperous farms, and established high quality educational and medical institutions. Israel has accomplished this while remaining a refuge for Jews fleeing oppression and persecution around the world, as earlier Israel offered a new life to the survivors of the Holocaust.

In keeping with its earliest hopes, Israel has been successful in forging ties with some of its neighbors and former adversaries, and sought to strengthen its security by ending the cycle of conflict and violence marking its first 50 years. Israel's willingness to take risks for peace has been borne out