

prison? Or the young boys on the slave block in southern Sudan?

I know these are harsh thoughts. But we are dealing with harsh dictators and regimes. What we do here matters. What we say and the content of legislation we pass have real consequences. In this case, innocent people, clear on the other side of the world, pay an enormous price.

Please think about this. Did these companies mean to give Anne Wexler this much power? If you are a government official working on these matters, do you think about what your actions mean to those who have no one looking out for them? And if you are a Member of Congress, do you remember when Anne Wexler and company stops by, that no one is speaking for those on the other end—those in Sudan, in Iraq and in China? Just because Anne Wexler is the only voice, she shouldn't be the loudest voice.

Perhaps the worse thing they have done with their access is to deliberately misstate the moderate nature of the Wolf-Specter Freedom from Religious Persecution bill. At its root it calls for withdrawal of non-humanitarian taxpayer subsidies to hardcore persecuting countries and gives the president total discretion to maintain the subsidies.

In the end, however, Members will read the bill and understand its moderate character and people in the pews will hear that this bipartisan effort gives the persecuted people of the world a needed voice.

CITY NEWS 100 MOST INFLUENTIAL AWARD

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 4, 1998

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, May 7, 1998, the City News Publishing Company of Plainfield, NJ will present the City News 100 Most Influential. According to the parameters of the 100 Most Influential, the awards are presented for the purpose of "honoring individuals for their tireless efforts in furthering the progress of black people in New Jersey and rebuilding New Jersey's urban communities."

Mr. Speaker, City News is the largest African American newspaper in New Jersey. It created the 100 Most Influential Award to honor and celebrate the efforts of people and corporations that have supported efforts to infuse economic, social, cultural, scientific, spiritual and political vitality into New Jersey's urban centers. Individuals are honored for their work in the following categories; civil rights; corporate community involvement; community development; community service; education; economic development; entertainment and sports; health, science and technology; media, arts and culture; minority business enterprise; politics, law and government; and religion. Nominations for the 100 Most Influential are received from former nominees and honorees, the corporate community and from the readers of City News. While honorees are notified of their awards, the names are kept confidential until the night of the award ceremonies.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor for me to salute the City News Publishing Company for their

ongoing service to the community, and, particularly for their recognition of outstanding citizens of our state for their contributions in many walks of life. With the support of numerous corporate sponsors, particularly event co-sponsors PSE&G and Dun & Broadstreet, City News is continuing its fine tradition of leadership. I anxiously await to hear the names of the winners, all of whom I am sure will be very well deserving of this great honor.

TO COMMEMORATE MONSIGNOR JOHN A. BURNS ON HIS 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD

HON. CHARLES E. SCHUMER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 4, 1998

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in sending warm wishes to Monsignor John A. Burns on the occasion of his 50th Anniversary of Ordination to the priesthood.

Monsignor Burns was ordained as a priest on May 22, 1948. He celebrated his first Mass at Incorporation Parish, where he had previously served faithfully as an alter boy for over a decade. Msgr. Burn's first assignment was to St. Ephrem's in Bay Ridge. He spent 17 years there. After that the Monsignor spent four years at the Guardian Angel Parish and five years at St. Sebastian's in Woodside.

Then in June 1974 Monsignor Burns received his first pastorate at Mary Queen of Heaven. Over the next 23 years he helped create many social as well as spiritual groups, including strong senior citizen groups, a sports program for children from grammar school through high school, a drama club, travel group, and an arts and ceramic group. On May 22, 1988 Msgr. Burns was elevated to Monsignor on the same day he celebrated his fortieth anniversary of priestly ordination. Over the years of his priestly endeavors as pastor of Mary Queen of Heaven Church have been spent in unceasing efforts to imbue the community with a rich spiritual life, as well as beautify the church.

I would like to take this time to say that we should not let this anniversary be a celebration of how many years Monsignor has served. Rather it should be a celebration of the events and actions that the Monsignor has been a part of over the years. He has been an inspirational figure to us all.

Congratulations, Monsignor Burns, on the occasion of your 50th anniversary of ordination to the priesthood.

TRIBUTE TO THE NATIONAL YOUTH SPORTS PROGRAM AT BRONX COMMUNITY COLLEGE

HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 4, 1998

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, it is with joy that I rise to pay tribute to the National Youth Sports Program at Bronx Community College, which is dedicated to improving the lives of young people in the Bronx.

Under the leadership of Dr. Joyne Bloom, Administrator, and Mr. Guy Hughes, Activity Director, over four hundred boys and girls annually have benefited from their participation in this program, which assists economically disadvantaged young people through summer educational and sports experiences on the College's campus.

The curriculum consists of comprehensive team and individual lifetime sports instruction as well as aquatics, dance and martial arts. There is an academic component of the instruction in drug and alcohol abuse prevention, nutrition and personal health, career goals and opportunities, and job responsibilities.

A healthy meal and snack are offered on a daily basis. Students learn the values of teamwork, sharing group cohesion, respect and citizenship. Awards are given for exemplary achievement. Boys and girls ages ten through sixteen learn to become contributing members of their communities.

In 1994 this program received a proclamation from the Bronx Borough President's office and in 1994 and 1995 the Office of the Mayor of the City of New York also presented the program with a proclamation.

And, today, Mr. Speaker, it is an honor and a privilege for me to ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Dr. Joyce Bloom, Mr. Guy Hughes and the National Youth Sports Program at Bronx Community College.

SENSE OF CONGRESS ON 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF FOUNDING OF MODERN STATE OF ISRAEL

SPEECH OF

HON. MICHAEL P. FORBES

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 28, 1998

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, on May 14th, 1948 the modern state of Israel was proclaimed, creating a homeland for the worldwide Jewish diaspora from the ancient land of Abraham and David. In the life of any country, a 50th anniversary is a notable milestone of historical achievement. In the case of Israel, a half-century of life exemplifies nothing less than an enduring miracle.

The Jewish people, drawn to their country by a sacred relationship and a divine promise, flourished in ancient times. Their history is a seemingly never-ending succession of miracles, punctuated by the painful sting of suffering. A poor, enslaved people in the Land of Egypt, the Israelites were led by God out of Egypt and into the desert and freedom. It was there in the barren desert that their leader, Moses, went up to Mt. Sinai and came down with the Torah, the word of God. In the midst of their escape and suffering in the barren wilderness, the Jewish people provided the world with the Ten Commandments, the foundation of all western morality.

Back in their own country, the Jewish people ultimately realized the greatness that the Lord had promised. From King David, the poet warrior, to Solomon, the model of wisdom, the Jews gave us heroes that stir our hearts and souls still.

Sadly, though, Jewish suffering was not at its end. IN 722 B.C.E. the Assyrians vanquished ten of their twelve tribes and sent the

Israelites into exile. Only two small groups remained, fortified only by an undying faith in God and a refusal to surrender to the fate their enemies planned for them. They refused to give up hope. They refused to give up their faith.

In 586 B.C.E., this small remnant was captured. Their temple, built by Solomon, was destroyed. Forced into exile to Babylonia, again the Jewish people thrived. Without a temple, they developed houses of worship—the historical beginning of synagogues. Unable to offer sacrifices, their religious leaders developed prayers as a way to reach the Almighty. Forbidden to publicly worship or have priests, they developed a new way of thinking of religious leaders as teachers. This was how the title rabbi came to be.

Miraculously returning from their exile, the Jewish people rebuilt their Temple in Jerusalem. They wanted nothing more than simply to live under the grace and peace of God.

But then in the year 70 of the Common Era, the Second Temple was destroyed by the Romans. During a final revolt against the Romans, at Masada, the sheared plain that stands in the Judean desert, brave Jews sacrificed their lives rather than endure as slaves. The Romans forced Jews to leave and even re-named the country "Palestine" named after the Phoenicians, the enemies of the Jews. The Jewish people had lost their country and would not recover for nearly two millennia.

By any realistic view of history, the Israelites, few in number, robbed their homeland and set apart by the cruelest of persecutions, should have disappeared.

But history is not able to reckon with the Jewish people. Instead of disappearing, the Jews flourished under the Lord's protective eye, developing a vast treasure of religious literature and a way of life that stressed lifelong learning and a striving to lead a moral life.

Through inquisition and torture, through religious coercion and unendurable pain, the Jewish people held firm to their religious foundations. Here, in our own century, occurred

the Holocaust, the most monstrous and inhuman evil that mankind has ever inflicted upon itself. Six million Jews, one and a half million of them children, were systematically murdered. One-third of the Jewish people in the world died during the Holocaust.

Even during these darkest hours of the Holocaust, when all hope for the Jewish people seemed to have disappeared, when their very future hung on the edge of despair, they persevered. Then came Israel.

The modern vision of a Jewish state, nourished by an historic attachment to the land of Israel, was given expression by the Viennese journalist Theodor Herzl, who organized the First Zionist Congress in 1897. When the Congress was ended, Herzl noted in his diary that the Jewish state would come into being in 50 years. It was exactly 50 years later that Israel was born.

On May 14, 1948, David Ben Gurion announced the birth of the modern Jewish nation. A day later, Arab armies attacked in full force, in an attempt to kill it before it had a chance to be born. After a bitter struggle for its very life, against overwhelming odds and trained armies, Israel prevailed. Their nation would not die. Masada would not fall again. David Ben-Gurion, the first Prime Minister and Menachem Begin, who would later become Prime Minister, both contributed mightily to Israel's birth. The number of heroes in Israel's birth is innumerable.

Over the course of the past 50 years, Israel has had to continually fight for its survival. In both 1956 and 1967, Israel had to defend itself against the attacks of its antagonistic neighbors. The Six Day War of '67 was particularly difficult for Israel. When the war was over, Israel gained control over all of Jerusalem including the Western Wall, the most sacred site in Jewish life because it is the last remaining part of the Second Temple. The Jews had returned to their land and to their holy city. In many ways, they returned to history itself.

Still, wars followed, though some Arab nations have come to see the need for peace.

However, to this day, many Arabs have not reconciled themselves to the permanent existence of Israel. Terrorists, rogue nations, and bitter and implacable enemies continue to threaten Israel. Yet at 50, Israel has never been stronger.

Perhaps, especially for the Jews, but finally for all decent people, the very existence of Israel remains a symbol. Israel's historic return as a nation offers hope and reassurance for people the world over who are struggling to realize their own homeland. Israel's refusal to surrender to enduring horrors provides a model of courage for those in need of strength. Israel's commitment to democracy and religious freedom is a wonderful example for those who believe that nations can be both strong and decent.

Israel will always possess a special place in the heart and mind of the United States. Israel is, of course, a vital military ally, paramount in its support of the U.S. in the United Nations, and a dependable military source of information and support. Beyond these prudential reasons, however, Israel means much more to us. Sentinels of democracy, both nations were founded in pursuit of the righteous cause of liberty and human dignity. Citizens of both great nations have sacrificed their own lives in defense of freedom and in battle against tyranny. Neither America nor Israel is willing to accept the exploitation and oppression of innocent people by despotic rulers.

The truth is that Israel is not just another nation; it is part of our family. As one brother to another, we in the United States rejoice as we celebrate Israel's 50th birthday. Let us use this moment to vow to stand forever by Israel's side. Let every enemy of Israel know that the United States stands firmly beside Israel. We will never be silent when Israel is in danger. We will never let Israel's enemies win.

We stand with Israel. We wait in excitement to witness the miraculous achievements that Israel will have in the next 50 years.