

a sustained way by the United States Congress. The strong personal bond that members of Congress feel toward Israel has led to consistent support for the state, reaching back to congressional resolutions as early as 1922 that supported a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Congress approved its first package of aid to Israel—\$65 million—in 1951. Congress pressed to maintain Israel's qualitative military edge. It provided emergency military assistance during the Gulf War. Congress approved \$10 billion in housing loan guarantees in order to absorb the flood of Jewish refugees from the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia. It is Congress that enacted legislation in 1955 that requires our government to move its embassy to Jerusalem, finally recognizing the fact that Jerusalem has been Israel's capital for the last 50 years.

As speaker of the United States House, I want to initiate a far more direct relationship with the Knesset and the Congress. Today, Speaker Tichon and I are inaugurating a new U.S.-Israel interparliamentary initiative on strategic cooperation to be pursued by members from the U.S. Congress and Knesset. This effort was conceived by Chairman Uzi Landau of the Knesset's Foreign and Defense Affairs Committee, and Senator Jon Kyl of the U.S. Congress. The initiative will focus on security issues, particularly the crucial question of missile defense. It offers an excellent starting point for broadening and deepening the interaction between the Congress and the Knesset.

The relationship we are establishing between Congress and the Knesset will not be unique. As democracy spreads across the region, as it inevitably will, we should work together to broaden the interaction with other democratic parliaments.

As we celebrate Israel's 50th anniversary, we honor those, both American and Israeli, whose commitment to security and freedom ensured Israel's survival. Today we must draw inspiration for their example.

And let me just close by sharing with you—we've had a wonderful several days. We just had a meeting with your Foreign and Defense Committee that was very direct and very candid on both sides—not quite up to the Knesset standard of bluntness, but we're trying to learn.

I just want to share with you for one brief moment the magic that you represent. One hundred years ago, this was Ottoman, Turkish land; Russia was czarist; Germany was imperial; China had not yet had the revolution that ended the Confucian domination and the Manchu was still there; Japan was Imperial in every sense; and democracy was a strange idea in only a few countries. One hundred years later, we're gaining. It's painful. It costs lives. We make big mistakes. If you go to the Yad Vashem, you're reminded with heart-rending clarity of the cost of being wrong.

And yet, in America, in Israel, in Europe, in more and more of Asia, in Russia, day by day, this thing that we jointly represent—elect people to speak for you, put them in one room and make them fight it out—this thing is slowly spreading across the planet.

I am convinced from our trip here that Israeli democracy has never been more vibrant. It's never had a greater range of potential leaders pushing, shoving, arguing. It's never wrestled more passionately with the future of Israel and its relation with its neighbors.

And as an American, I can tell you how much we gained from these days; how stronger we will going home; how much more grateful that you here in the city of David continue to stand for freedom; and how much we want to reach out to work with each and every one of you to make sure that 50 years

and 3,000 years from now freedom exists in this land.

Thank you for allowing us to visit.

STATEMENT OF HOUSE DEMOCRATIC LEADER RICHARD A. GEPHARDT AT THE GALA DINNER AT THE ISRAELI KNESSET HONORING 50 YEARS OF CONGRESSIONAL-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP, MAY 25, 1998

I am honored to join you this evening in celebrating the 50th anniversary of the founding of the modern state of Israel.

The twentieth century has been marked by the worst cruelty and barbarity the Jewish people have suffered in this long history. Born after the Holocaust, this nation was envisioned by Claim Weizmann as "a resting-place in this terrible world." But it has become far more than that—serving as a beacon of justice, freedom, and hope for Jews of all nationalities.

Your country's democracy and its vibrant economic, cultural, and intellectual life have survived and prospered through nearly half a century of life under a state of war. Served as a source of pride for world Jewry, especially in America, and as a model for many nations.

Despite facing great adversity and hostility, you have been steadfast in your commitment to democracy. In fact, I am proud to stand here in the citadel of democracy in the Middle East.

In some ways, this is the greatest deliberative body in the world—few other assemblies have had the courage to carry on free and open democratic debate while facing so many external threats.

You have had the courage to disagree amongst yourselves. And you have always been united in trying to achieve peace and security in the region. Your dedication to the pursuit of peace in the face of constant threats of war and terrorism—across ideology and across the decades—from David Ben Curion and Chaim Weizmann to Menachem Begin, through Yitzhak Rabin to Binyamin Netanyahu—has garnered admiration and respect from millions around the world.

The American people's affinity and respect for the people of Israel is based on the pioneering spirit which both our people share. This has formed the core of the special bond between our two countries. And this is why the U.S.-Israel relationship is one of the strongest bilateral relationships in the world.

The U.S.-Israel relationship is also a tribute to the American Jewish community, many of whom have worked tirelessly over the years to keep our nation's leaders focused on the importance of this relationship, and some of whom are here tonight.

In fact, the American-Israeli relationship began in part as a result of the efforts of one American Jew who had a very influential friend in the White House.

In his memoirs, Harry Truman described an important moment in the development of his conviction about the creation of the state of Israel. His long-time friend Eddie Jacobsen urged Truman to meet with Dr. Weizmann.

Truman had been putting off the meeting, but at Jacobsen's urging, he relented. According to Truman:

"Dr. Weizmann came on March 18, and we talked for almost three quarters of an hour. He talked about the possibilities of development in Palestine, about the scientific work that he and his assistants had done that would someday be translated into industrial activity in the Jewish state that he envisaged.

"He spoke of the need for land if the future immigrants were to be cared for, and he impressed on me the importance of the Negev area in the south to any future Jewish state.

"Dr. Weizmann was a man of remarkable achievements and personality. His life had been dedicated to two ideals, that of science and that of the Zionist movement . . . He had known many disappointments and had grown patient and wise in them."

At this same time, the U.S. State Department attempted to have President Truman keep the territory under United Nations trusteeship rather than recognize a new Jewish state. George Marshall threatened to quit the Cabinet if Truman were to do this. George Kennan, one of America's most respected foreign policy experts, wrote to Truman:

"Ultimately the U.S. might have to support the Jewish authorities by the use of naval units and military forces . . . It is improbable that the Jewish state could survive over any considerable period of time in the face of the combined assistance which would be forthcoming for the Arabs in Palestine from the Arab States, and in lesser measure from their Moslem neighbors."

I would also note that Truman's approval rating at the time was 36 percent, and an election was looming that November. But despite all this, eleven minutes after Israeli leaders declared the existence of their new state, President Truman took a momentous step in recognizing Israel's security.

So from the beginning, it was in part through the efforts of Jewish-Americans that the relationship was formed and continually strengthened. Every person here tonight should be proud of their work to build on this partnership which has benefitted both the United States and Israel. And your efforts must continue so our children can stand here fifty years from tonight and celebrate once again.

President Truman wrote a letter to Dr. Weizmann six months after the founding of the Israeli state, and its words ring as true today as in 1948. The letter read:

"I want to tell you how happy and impressed I have been at the remarkable progress made by the new State of Israel. What you have received at the hands of the world has been far less than was your due. But you have more than made the most of what you have received, and I admire you for it."

As a fellow Missourian, I can do no better on this occasion than to simply restate to you and the people of Israel Harry Truman's words: "You have more than made the most of what you have received, and I admire you for it." But with a half-century of hindsight that President Truman did not have, I am confident that the best is yet to come for the State of Israel.

RECOGNIZING BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP ON ITS 200TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. MICHAEL PAPPAS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 3, 1998

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct pleasure to send congratulations and best wishes to the citizens of the Bethlehem Township as they commemorate the 200th anniversary of the founding of their community. It is important that we recognize the magnitude of this anniversary and the events that have marked the history of this great township.

This is truly a day in which the citizens of Bethlehem can both rejoice and reflect upon. The township has endured many difficult times in its 200 years and has persevered through

them all. This is a time to celebrate the growth and achievements of the township and the efforts of all those who have paved its path to success. It is a time to remember the sacrifices of the good men and women, past and present, who helped to make Bethlehem what it is today.

Mr. Speaker, on June 6, the township will celebrate its Founder's Day, a day that will feature parades, a picnic, and a ceremony to honor its former mayors and other important residents who have made significant contributions. This is a time to remember all those who have made Bethlehem the prospering community that it is today. The parade is being hailed as a tribute to all citizens of the community. All attendees are encouraged to participate in the festivities as to truly symbolize the spirit of community in this great township.

Through both the remembrance of its history and the celebration of its present, this day promises to be a very special one. In the years to come, I am confident that Bethlehem Township will continue to build on its established foundations and will continue to enjoy the success that it has come to know.

I congratulate Mayor Walter Baumgarten and all of the township's citizens on this great honor. I am proud to have the township in my district.

IN HONOR OF ROBERT L. NOREM

HON. GARY A. CONDIT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 3, 1998

Mr. CONDIT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay honor to the retirement of Robert L. Norem after 30 years of service in probation and corrections with Stanislaus County in California's great Central Valley. Bob has served as the Chief Probation Officer with Stanislaus County Probation since March 30, 1985.

As a friend of mine, I can attest to Bob's commitment and dedication to those he has served. That service cannot go unnoticed. He has worked tirelessly to provide leadership to Stanislaus County and its residents. Bob has the vision to see the importance of the role of probation in our communities and in the future.

While many talk about what could be done, or perhaps what should be done, Bob is the sort of man who rolls up his sleeves and gets the job done. I consider it an honor to call him my friend.

Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a privilege to honor Bob and commend him. I ask that my colleagues in the House of Representatives rise and join me in congratulating Bob Norem on a job well done and in honoring him on his retirement.

MOURNING LOSS OF AIDS ACTIVIST STEVE MICHAEL

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 3, 1998

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, we in the District and many others around the country will mourn the passing of valiant AIDS

activist Steve Michael, who died May 25th at the age of 42. As the founder of ACT UP-Washington and a ceaseless campaigner on behalf of men and women suffering from HIV and AIDS, Steve made an indelible mark on our nation's fight against this disease. We in the District are fortunate that Steve took as his own our fight for full democracy as well.

Steve arrived in Washington from Seattle in 1993, pressuring the Clinton administration on AIDS funding and on the rights of homosexuals. Steve's political career, however, was not limited to activism; he proved to be a staunch advocate of Home Rule, a frequent participant in the local and national political process, and finally a candidate for the District of Columbia City Council. His service on the DC HIV Planning Council as chair of the Fiscal Oversight Committee will not be forgotten by the citizens of Washington.

Steve's untimely death highlights the need for continuing research and funding as we work to find a cure for the scourge of AIDS. As the Washington Times noted, Steve pushed into the AIDS debate with "incredible energy," and his confrontational style broadened the health dialogue beyond the traditional corridors of power.

Steve Michael came to Washington as an angry young man. Until the end, he was angry enough to fight hard for the lives of others and then for his own life. In his activism over the years, Steve mellowed enough to develop a relationship with some public officials that became friendship. I count myself among those friends. I will think first and foremost of Steve this coming Sunday when I march in the annual Capital Pride parade for freedom from all forms of discrimination, including the homophobia that is still reflected in our laws. I will honor Steve's friendship, not with memories alone but with a continuing resolve to continue the fight against AIDS and HIV, against homophobia and for life.

BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS

HON. LOUIS STOKES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 3, 1998

Mr. STOKES. Mr. Speaker, I have great pride in standing before you today to announce that Whitney M. Young Middle School in my Eleventh Congressional District has been awarded the Blue Ribbon School Award. This prestigious award was given to 166 secondary schools this year, 14 of which are in Ohio. The Blue Ribbon School award recognizes schools that have strong leadership, up-to-date curriculum and instruction, provide challenges to the students, high quality teaching and produces a safe environment that is conducive to learning. Other criteria include parent and community involvement, clear vision and mission shared by the entire school, and evidence that it helps all its students achieve the highest standard possible and share these standards and practices with other schools. These schools must also integrate these practices while meeting local, state, and national goals.

The schools are judged on these major requirements by a distinguished panel of some 100 public and private school educators, college and university staff, state and local gov-

ernment officials, school board members, parents, the education press, medical professionals, and business representatives. Whitney M. Young Middle School passed this selection criteria and the necessary on site visits in order to be recognized for the innovative work it is accomplishing through the education process.

Whitney M. Young Middle School is located in an urban environment with a 75% minority student body. A major portion of the school's success is having a faculty that is willing to go that extra mile for their students by ensuring a proper and challenging curriculum is available. Teachers are not only available for extra time with students but with parents as well for conferences and team meetings. Many of the strategic approaches that are initiated at Whitney Young are teacher implemented and originated.

Whitney Young also recognizes the efforts of its student body by awarding achievement on a regular basis. Students are given the opportunity for a wide range of cultural activities based upon their academic performance. The Cleveland metropolitan area provides the middle school with a diverse variety of events for the students to attend. Corporate sponsors are involved in Whitney Young's phenomenal learning process as well, by each year sponsoring a special location for the National Junior Honor Society inductions.

Mr. Speaker, schools are the institutions that equip our young people with the necessary tools for dealing with the challenges of the next century. This prestigious award recognizes those schools that not only provide students with an education but do so with a degree of pride and excellence. I would like to recognize a few of the people involved in Whitney Young's educational success; Mrs. Elaine Davis, the principal, the faculty and staff of Whitney Young, and lastly the students for their incredible achievement. I am extremely proud that Whitney M. Young Middle School has been added to the roster of distinguished schools who have received this award.

TRIBUTE TO THE 1998 GRADUATES RECOGNIZED BY THE CHALDEAN FEDERATION OF AMERICA

HON. DAVID E. BONIOR

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 3, 1998

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate all the students being recognized by the Chaldean Federation of America at their Annual Commencement and Scholarship Program. The program is being held this afternoon at the Mother of God Chaldean Church in Southfield, Michigan.

An umbrella organization of Chaldean churches and civic organizations, the Chaldean Federation of America devotes the majority of its efforts to education. The Federation encourages Chaldean youth not only to remain in school, but to strive for academic excellence and achievement. Almost 400 Chaldean students graduating from southeast Michigan high schools or colleges and universities will be recognized.