

Accordingly, I support H. Con. Res. 215 and I thank the gentlemen for bringing it to our attention at this time.

Mr. LUTHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE), the author of the resolution.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. LUTHER) and the gentleman from California (Mr. GALLEGLY), and also the gentleman from New York (Chairman GILMAN) chairman of the full committee, for the outstanding work that they have done in this issue which is very important to me.

Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned, and have been, about events in Guyana, a wonderful place where the people deserve better.

First, let me congratulate the people of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana for holding multiparty elections on December 15, 1997. I was saddened to learn about the violence that erupted post-election. Although the Guyanese people showed their strong belief in the democratic process, as shown by the 88 percent voter turnout, factions in the country called for civil disobedience and there was looting and rioting for many days following the elections.

In January between 15,000 and 20,000 people were rioting in the streets. I know that Janet Jagan of the People's Progressive Party/Civic, PPP/C, won by a small majority. Nevertheless, a win is a win, and the majority has a right to rule with minority having the right to participate.

Opposition political parties and international observers invited to monitor the elections concluded that while the voting on election day was fair and free, there were some concerns with the counting of the votes. The results have since been challenged and an audit of the votes and the process have been started by the Caribbean Community, CARICOM, an organization deemed acceptable to all parties in that country.

However suspicious the confusion in the election commission, however wrong the opposition feels, mob violence does not address any of these issues. I will be anxious, as I am sure all of us will be, to hear of the results of the audit. At that time I believe we can move forward with the president on a number of issues.

In conclusion, I would hope that all parties, along with the newly elected president of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, will respect the rule of law and human rights. I know that in Africa the newly elected president of Liberia, Charles Taylor, has appointed members of the opposition faction in his country to create a human rights organization. I would hope that President Janet Jagan would extend her government offices to all of the people of Guyana, and in particular the African-Guyanese descent that felt that the election did not go right.

Mr. Speaker, I think that if she brings in all of the political parties, op-

position as well as majority, I think that the country will move forward in the right direction. I am hopeful that it will happen. I wish the new President success once there is the conclusion of the audit.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, House Concurrent Resolution 215 is a straightforward resolution which commends the people of Guyana for conducting what were, by all accounts, free and fair elections.

An assessment of the voting by the International Foundation for Election Systems indicates that election day went very smoothly, that poll workers were professional, that relations between the poll workers and poll watchers from the major parties were cordial, and turnout was very high.

The problems began after the polls closed when it became apparent that the poll workers were not as well trained in the mechanics of counting the votes as they were in actually administering the polls. In some instances, the elections commission had to reject incomplete tally sheets because they could not determine where the votes had been cast. In addition, the reporting of the returns took several days and caused public unease and suspicion which in turn led to unrest and violence.

The resolution makes note of these issues; commends the Caribbean community for its offer to audit the results; and urges all parties to respect the outcome of the audit, and to work for peace and stability in Guyana by supporting the rule of law and respecting human rights.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank and commend our colleagues Congressmen PAYNE and BISHOP, for introducing the resolution, and Chairman GALLEGLY for moving forward with the bill.

I urge my colleagues to support the resolution.

Ms. CHRISTIAN-GREEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 215, and join its sponsors in congratulating the people of Guyana for holding multiparty elections.

Mr. Speaker, the people of the Caribbean have long led the way in Latin America in the practice of free and fair elections. Even before Jamaica and Trinidad gained their independence from Great Britain in the early 1960's, the islands, for the most part, generally were engaged in the practice of freely electing their local political leaders.

In addition to Guyana, 1997 also saw free and fair elections in Jamaica and in St. Lucia. In my District, the U.S. Virgin Islands, we have been electing our Governors since 1970 and our local Legislative council since the early 1900's.

While I support the resolution before us, I must caution that the process of the 1997 Guyana election is still ongoing.

I commend the people of Guyana and the other Caribbean governments for their decision to let representatives of CARICOM conduct an audit of the 97 Guyana Presidential elections and I call on all concerned to await the outcome of the audit.

Last Friday, my colleagues DONALD PAYNE, the prime sponsor of this resolution, Representative MAJOR OWENS and our newest colleague, Congresswoman BARBARA LEE, hosted a breakfast meeting with the Secretary General of CARICOM. It was a very informative meeting and I believe, will serve as the basis for a closer relationship between members of this body and CARICOM.

Mr. Speaker I applaud efforts of the authors of this resolution and the people of Guyana in the struggle for greater democracy and urge my colleagues to vote yes on H. Con. Res. 215.

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LUTHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. GALLEGLY) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 215, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended, the concurrent resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

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

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 102) expressing the sense of the Congress on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel and reaffirming the bonds of friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.J. RES. 102

Whereas on November 29, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly voted to partition the British Mandate of Palestine, and through that vote, to create the State of Israel;

Whereas on May 14, 1948, the people of Israel proclaimed the establishment of the sovereign and independent State of Israel and the United States Government established full diplomatic relations with Israel;

Whereas the desire of the Jewish people to establish an independent modern State of Israel is the outgrowth of the existence of the historic Kingdom of Israel established three thousand years ago in the city of Jerusalem and in the land of Israel;

Whereas one century ago at the First Zionist Congress on August 29 to 31, 1897, in Basel, Switzerland, participants under the leadership of Theodore Herzl affirmed the desire to reestablish a Jewish homeland in the historic land of Israel;

Whereas the establishment of the modern State of Israel as a homeland for the Jews followed the slaughter of more than six million European Jews during the Holocaust;

Whereas since its establishment fifty years ago, the modern State of Israel has rebuilt a nation, forged a new and dynamic society, and created a unique and vital economic, political, cultural, and intellectual life despite the heavy costs of six wars, terrorism, international ostracism, and economic boycotts;

Whereas the people of Israel have established a vibrant and functioning pluralistic democratic political system including freedom of speech, a free press, free and fair and open elections, the rule of law, and other democratic principles and practices;

Whereas, at great social and financial costs, Israel has absorbed hundreds of thousands of Jews from countries throughout the

world, many of them refugees from Arab countries, and fully integrated them into Israeli society;

Whereas for half a century the United States and Israel have maintained a special relationship based on mutually shared democratic values, common strategic interests, and moral bonds of friendship and mutual respect; and

Whereas the American people have shared an affinity with the people of Israel and regard Israel as a strong and trusted ally and an important strategic partner: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the United States—

(1) recognizes the historic significance of the fiftieth anniversary of the reestablishment of the sovereign and independent modern State of Israel;

(2) commends the people of Israel for their remarkable achievements in building a new state and a pluralistic democratic society in the Middle East in the face of terrorism, hostility and belligerence by many of her neighbors;

(3) reaffirms the bonds of friendship and cooperation which have existed between the United States and Israel for the past half-century and which have been significant for both countries; and

(4) extends the warmest congratulations and best wishes to the State of Israel and her people for a peaceful and prosperous and successful future.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this measure.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. GILMAN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 102 expresses the sense of the Congress on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel. It reaffirms the bonds of friendship and cooperation between our Nation and the State of Israel.

I want to commend our colleague on the Committee on International Relations, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) for his leadership in sponsoring this resolution and for his unstinting support of the State of Israel over the years.

H. Res. 102 has been cosponsored by more than a majority of our House Members. Such support is yet another indication of the special esteem in which we hold the State of Israel.

Mr. Speaker, over 50 years ago the United Nations General Assembly voted to partition the British Mandate of Palestine, and through that vote to create the State of Israel. On May 14,

1948, Israel became a sovereign state and the United States, under President Harry Truman, recognized that state.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would remind the guests in the gallery that they are guests of the House and please keep their conversations to a minimum.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, within 11 minutes of that recognition, President Harry Truman recognized the State of Israel. According to the Jewish calendar, that anniversary will be celebrated this week.

The modern state of Israel was re-born after thousands of years thanks to the leadership and years of dedicated commitment by Theodore Herzl and hundreds and thousands of men and women who, sharing his vision, worked tirelessly to make that dream a reality.

The reestablished state of Israel became a homeland for Jews who survived Hitler's slaughter, as well as those who fled Arab lands as well as others in which they had been persecuted. Despite all of those difficulties, Israel has absorbed hundreds of thousands of Jews over the past five decades, and has become a thriving multicultural democracy that holds a special place as a strong ally of our own Nation.

The special relationship that we in our Nation share with Israel is based on democratic values, common strategic interests and moral bonds of friendship and mutual respect. Israel is a strong and trusted friend and is an important strategic partner.

Mr. Speaker, H.J. Res. 102 therefore recognizes the historic significance of the 50th anniversary of the reestablishment of the sovereign and independent modern state of Israel. The resolution commends the people of Israel for their remarkable achievements despite the terrorism, the hostility and belligerence by many of its neighbors.

This legislation reaffirms the bonds of friendship and cooperation which have existed between our Nation and Israel for the past half century and which have been significant for both nations. The resolution also extends our warmest congratulations and best wishes to the state of Israel and to her people for a peaceful, prosperous and successful future.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I urge our colleagues' full support for H.J. Res. 102.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, let me first acknowledge in the gallery the distinguished Ambassador of the State of Israel and his party for having joined us for this very significant occasion.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the distinguished gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), chairman of the Committee on International Relations, my good friend, for his kind words. Let me

just say no one in this body has been a more steadfast supporter of the democratic state of Israel than Chairman GILMAN, who through the years, with action after action, has demonstrated his profound commitment to this democratic friend and ally of the United States and to the ultimate goal of that democratic friend and ally, the securing of a permanent and stable peace in the region.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to first briefly discuss the essence of my resolution. We here in the Congress are congratulating the modern state of Israel, which is the outgrowth of the existence of the historic Kingdom of Israel established thousands of years ago in the City of Jerusalem and in the land of Israel.

The establishment of the modern State of Israel 50 years ago followed the slaughter of more than 6 million Jews in the concentration camps and gas Chambers of Europe.

Since being created as a tiny nation on a tiny piece of land with a population of some 600,000, the modern state of Israel has rebuilt a nation, forged a new and dynamic society, created a unique and vital economic political, cultural and intellectual life, despite mind-boggling costs of six wars started against it, continuing terrorism, international ostracism and severe economic boycotts.

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The people of Israel have established a vibrant, functioning, pluralistic democratic system which cherishes the right of free speech, free press, free and fair and open elections, the rule of law, and all the democratic practices of a free society.

During the 50 years of its existence, this young State absorbed well over a million refugees from throughout the world, ranging from Ethiopia to the former Soviet Union and integrated these people fully into the very fabric of Israeli society.

For a half a century, the United States and Israel have maintained a special and unique relationship based on mutually shared democratic values, common strategic interests, and moral bonds of friendship and mutual respect.

The American people have shared an affinity with the people of Israel and regard Israel as a strong and trusted ally and an important strategic partner in the Middle East.

The resolution we are about to vote on recognizes the historic significance of the 50th anniversary of the reestablishment of the sovereign and independent modern State of Israel. The resolution commends the people of Israel for their remarkable achievements in building a new State and a pluralistic democratic society in the Middle East in the face of terrorism,

hostility, and belligerence by many of her neighbors.

It reaffirms the bonds of friendship and cooperation which have existed between the United States and Israel for a half a century and which have been significant and beneficial to both of our countries.

Of course, it finally extends our warmest congratulations and best wishes for the State of Israel and for her people for a future of peace, prosperity, and success.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday on the White House lawn, in a magnificent ceremony, President Clinton was awarded an honorary doctorate from Israel's leading university, the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

During the course of his acceptance speech, among others, the President had these ideas to share with us: I accept this honor today, he said, on behalf of my predecessors, beginning with Harry Truman, nine American Presidents all devoted to Israel's security and freedom, all committed to peace in the Middle East. I accept it on behalf of the American people who have formed, not just an alliance, but a profound friendship with the people of Israel over these last 50 years.

Today we celebrate those extraordinary 50 years. In 1948, Israel arose from the seeds of the Diaspora and the ashes of the Holocaust. The children of Abraham and Sarah, survivors of 2,000 years of exile and persecution, were home at last and free at last.

For its founders, the Israeli State was, however, about even more than securing a haven for the Jewish people after centuries of suffering and wandering. Isaiah prophesied that Israel would become a light unto the nations, and David Ben-Gurion, the first President of this new nation, and his allies set out to make that prophesy come true by establishing a society of light, embracing what Ben-Gurion called the higher virtues of truth and justice and compassion.

Ben-Gurion, Mr. Speaker, believed Israel could lead the world to a better future by marrying the ethical leadership of the ancients with the discoveries of modern science. I quote him: "It is only by the integration of the two that the blessings of both can flourish." Of course, he also envisioned a third great achievement for Israel that, with the strength and wisdom and skill, Israel would build a lasting peace with its Arab neighbors.

Relations between our two nations were born of another leader's courage and vision. Harry Truman brushed aside the urgings of his advisors, as he so often did, when they said, go slow, wait and see before offering Israel its recognition.

For Harry Truman, supporting the State of Israel was a moral imperative rooted in his understanding of the sufferings and the dreams of Jews from Biblical times. As we learned yesterday on the White House lawn, our recognition of Israel occurred just 11 minutes

after Israel proclaimed its independence. We, in becoming the first nation to recognize Israel, had one of our proudest moments.

Not only that, Mr. Speaker, but 50 years later, old Harry Truman looks pretty smart. Look what Israel has done. Under a brilliant blue sky, the Israelis have built prosperous farms, planted forests, turned streets of sand into shining boulevards, raised families and welcomed the arrival of brothers and sisters from Europe and North Africa, from Russia and Ethiopia, from all over the world. They have dazzled the world with their achievements in science and scholarship and literature and art. They have built a thriving democracy.

Despite the passage of 50 years, Israelis seem to practice their freedom as if they had only just gained it yesterday. They never seem to cease challenging themselves about their history, their relationship with their neighbors, the hard choices for the future.

If anyone ever wonders whether there is ever a place in the world where you can have freedom and honest vigorous 24-hour-a-day, 7-day-a-week, 365-day-a-year argument, go to Israel.

It is truly one of the most pulsating, vibrant places on the face of this planet. Alive with thousands of sounds, prayers in dozens of languages in the Old City; young people gathered on the avenues of Tel Aviv, computer keyboards tapping; new ventures launched on the Internet; school children now conversing in Hebrew, once the language only of the sacred text, now the voice of an Israeli renaissance.

The economy that has been propelled by all this energy and activity into being one of the most advanced and diversified in the world last year exported \$32 billion worth of goods, 1,000 times their level of 50 years ago.

High-tech companies and high-tech people. You go to Israel, it looks as if you cannot be a citizen of Israel unless you have a cell phone glued to your hand.

Israelis have gone a very long way of fulfilling the first two pieces of Ben-Gurion's mission. Surely they have built an ethical, democratic society, a society which is based on modern science and technology. It has endured against unspeakable odds by prevailing again and again in battle. The valor of its soldiers and military and political leaders are legendary.

But the battle for the third piece of Ben-Gurion's vision, a just and secure and lasting peace, is still being waged and still in blood and tears. Camp David brought peace between Israel and Egypt, but it cost Anwar Sadat his life.

On the White House lawn, on a brilliant day in September of 1993, Yitzhak Rabin committed himself not only to an agreement with the Palestinians, but to a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. And how bravely he pursued it, but it cost him his life.

Jews and Arabs who have wanted nothing more than to live quiet, nor-

mal lives are still denied that simple pleasure. Still, Mr. Speaker, as the new century dawns, the world is filled with the promise and hope that we can overcome ancient hatreds to build a modern peace for our children.

From Guatemala to Mozambique and to Bosnia, and now even to Ireland, longtime antagonists have left the battle ground to find common ground. They are weary of war. They long for peace for their children and for their grandchildren. They move beyond hatred to hope.

Mr. Speaker, this is a time for reconciliation around our globe. It must be a time to deepen freedom and to raise up life in the Middle East. The 21st century can and must be a century of democracy, prosperity, justice, and most of all of peace; but it can only be a century of peace if we learn not only to respect, but to honor our differences. It is in that spirit that I ask my colleagues to join me in approving this resolution, commending the State of Israel on its 50th anniversary.

Mr. Speaker, I include the following for the record:

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT AT RECEPTION FOR THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF ISRAEL

The PRESIDENT. Thank you very much. Mr. President, Director, all the officials of Hebrew University. Mr. Vice President, members of the Cabinet, the administration, members of the Congress. I'd like to especially thank Dr. Dunn, Dr. Nyang, Dr. Schorsch, and Richard Dreyfuss and Linda Lavin for their wonderful contributions to this day. To Ambassador and Mrs. Ben-Elissar, thank you for being here. To all of our former ambassadors to the United States and other distinguished guests from Israel, and my fellow Americans.

I'd also like to ask that we give a special word of appreciation to the people who provided all that wonderful music which got us in the right frame of mind. Thank you very much. (Applause.) If you could hang around here for a month or two, I think we might get some things done—you'd keep us all in a very positive frame of mind.

I am very honored to receive this degree from Hebrew University of Jerusalem—honored because its founders include Chaim Weizmann, Martin Buber, Sigmund Freud and Albert Einstein; honored because it is now one of the world's leading centers of learning and research.

I must say, I never expected to be doing this here. Many American universities have satellite campuses where working people like me can obtain degrees at locations near their homes and offices. (Laughter.) This is more than I ever could have anticipated. (Laughter.)

President Magidor, thank you for bringing this ceremony here so that those of us who cannot go to Israel in a couple of days may share in the celebration of this magnificent 50th birthday.

I accept this honor today on behalf of my predecessors, beginning with Harry Truman—nine American Presidents all devoted to Israel's security and freedom, all committed to peace in the Middle East. I accept it on behalf of the American people who have formed not just an alliance, but a profound friendship with the people of Israel over these last 50 years.

Today we celebrate that extraordinary 50 years. In 1948, Israel arose from the seeds of the Diaspora and the ashes of the Holocaust. The children of Abraham and Sara, survivors

of 2,000 years of exile and persecution, were home at last and free at last. For its founders, the Israeli state was, however, about even more than securing a haven for the Jewish people after centuries of suffering and wandering. Isaiah prophesied that Israel would become "a light unto the nations," and David Ben-Gurion and his allies set out to make that prophecy come true by establishing a society of light, embracing what Ben-Gurion called the higher virtues of truth, justice, and compassion.

Ben-Gurion believed Israel could lead the world to a better future by marrying the ethical teachings of the ancients with the discoveries of modern science. "It is only by the integration of the two," he wrote, "that the blessings of both can flourish." Of course, he also envisioned a third great achievement for Israel that, with strength and wisdom and skill, Israel would build a lasting peace with its Arab neighbors.

As we have heard today, relations between our two nations were born of another leader's courage and vision. Harry Truman brushed aside the urgings of his advisors, as he often did, when they said go slow, wait and see, before offering Israel recognition. For him, supporting a Jewish homeland was a moral imperative rooted in his understanding of the sufferings and dreams of the Jews from biblical times. And as we learned from Richard's wonderful reading, it occurred just 11 minutes after Israel proclaimed independence. We, in becoming the first country to recognize Israel, had one of our proudest moments. (Applause.)

Not only that, 50 years later, old Harry Truman looks pretty smart. (Laughter.)

Look what Israel has done. Under a brilliant blue sky, the Israelis have built prosperous farms and kibbutzes, planted forests, turned streets of sand into shining boulevards, raised families and welcomed the arrival of brothers and sisters from Europe and North Africa, from Russia and Ethiopia, and America. Israelis have dazzled the world with achievements in science and scholarship, in literature and the art. They have built a thriving democracy.

And despite the passage of 50 years, Israelis seem to love and practice their freedom as if they had only just gained it. They never seem to cease challenging themselves about their history, their relationship with their neighbors, the hard choices for the future. If anyone ever wonders whether there is ever a place in the world where you can have freedom and honest, vigorous, 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week, 365-day-a-year argument, go to Israel. (Laughter and Applause.)

It is truly one of the most pulsating, vibrant places on Earth—alive with thousands of sounds, prayers in dozens of languages in the Old City; young people gathered on the avenues of Tel Aviv, computer keyboards tapping; new ventures launched on the Internet; school children now conversing in Hebrew, once the language only of sacred text now the voice of an Israeli renaissance. And the economy has been propelled by all this energy and activity into being one of the most advanced and diversified in the world—per capita income now matching nations in Europe; exports last year were \$32 billion dollars, 1,000 times their level in 1948.

Hi-tech companies, hi-tech people. You go to Israel, it looks as if you can't be a citizen of Israel unless you have a cell phone glued to your hand. (Laughter.) Yes, Israelis have gone a very long way toward fulfilling the first two pieces of Ben-Gurion's vision. Surely they have built an ethical, democratic society, and a modern science and technology-based economy. It has endured against great odds by prevailing again and again in battle. The valor of citizen soldiers and military and

political leaders like Golda Meir, Moshe Dayan, Yonnie Netanyahu.

But the battle for the third piece of Ben-Gurion's vision—a just, secure and lasting peace—is still being waged and still in blood and tears. Camp David brought peace between Israel and Egypt, but it cost Anwar Sadat his life. Here on this very spot, on a brilliant day in September of 1993, Yitzhak Rabin committed himself not only to an agreement with Mr. Arafat, but to a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. How bravely he pursued it. But it cost him his life.

Jews and Arabs who have wanted nothing more than to live quiet, normal lives are still denied that simple pleasure. Still as the new century dawns, the world is filled with the promise and hope that we can overcome ancient hatreds to build a modern peace for our children.

From Guatemala to Mozambique to Bosnia, and now even to the land of my ancestors in Ireland, longtime antagonists have left the battleground to find common ground. They are weary of war. They long for peace for their children. They move beyond hatred to hope.

This is a time for reconciliation around the world. It must be a time to deepen freedom and raise up life in the Middle East. The 21st century can and must be a century of democracy, prosperity and justice, and of course, of peace. But it can be only if we learn not only to respect, but to honor our differences. The Middle East can build on the momentous achievements of its Nobel Prize winners—Begin and Sadat, Arafat, Peres and Rabin—so that all its children may grow up without fear.

In a land holy to three great religions, sacred sites for Islam, Judaism and Christianity exist side by side. If there is so much history there, the children of all that history should be able to live together.

Again and again, extremists have sought to derail peace with bullets and bombs. Again and again, they demonstrate the real divisions today are not between Jews and Arabs, but between those stuck in the past and those who long for a better future; between those paralyzed by hatred and those energized by hope; those who stand with clenched fists and those who reach out with open hands. We cannot let the extremists prevail. Israel can fulfill its full promise by drawing on the courage and vision of its founders to achieve peace with security. Never has the opportunity been more real and it must not be lost.

You know, I was sitting here on the stage today listening to everything that was said and thinking of all the great gifts that Israel has given the United States. In 1963, 35 years ago this year, when Israel was still a young nation and President Kennedy was killed, your then-United Nations Ambassador, Mr. Eban, gave an enormous gift to the American people in all of our pain by putting in one short, terse sentence how we all felt when he said, tragedy is the difference between what is and what might have been. As we look ahead to tomorrow, let us define triumph by turning his formula on its head. Triumph is when there is no difference between what might have been and what (Applause.)

Let us in the United States say that we will stand by Israel, always foursquare for its security, always together in friendship, but we want this debate to continue until there is no difference between what might have been and what is. (Applause.)

We look at Hebrew University and see all three pieces of David Ben-Gurion's dream coming to life. We see biologists developing techniques to locate a single cancer cell among millions of healthy ones. We see the

moral commitment to keeping people's health among the scientists there. We see Hebrew University researchers undertaking efforts in cooperation with Palestinian researchers in East Jerusalem. One of the participants in the project said, it's science and peace together. We know that much more is possible. We must understand that much more is essential.

Fifty years from now the 21st century will near its midpoint and Israel will have a 100th birthday celebration. Sure as the world, our grandchildren will be hanging around here on this lawn. What do you think they'll be able to say? And what will they be celebrating? It is my dream that on that 100th anniversary, people from every country in the Middle East will gather in the Holy Land, and all the land will be holy to all of them.

As a Christian, I do not know how God, if He were to come to Earth, would divide the land over which there is dispute now. I suspect neither does anyone else in this audience. But I know that if we all pray for the wisdom to do God's will, chances are we will find a way to close the gap in the next couple of years between what might be and what is. I think that is what we owe the founders of Israel—to finish Ben-Gurion's dream.

Thank you and God bless you all. (Applause.)

REMARKS BY VICE PRESIDENT AL GORE—50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION FOR ISRAEL

Thank you all so very much for those profound and moving words.

It is a privilege to be here with you today. A half century ago, on a morning bursting with the promise of spring, a small group of rabbis and statesmen, workers and *kibbutzim*, dreamers, soldiers and survivors gathered at the Tel Aviv Museum, under a portrait of Theodore Herzl—and listened as the wise and brave David Ben-Gurion read the Scroll of Independence: "By virtue of our national and intrinsic right," he said, "we hereby declare the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, which shall be known as the State of Israel."

Thus—quietly and triumphantly—a sovereign Israel at last had been born in the promised land. And only eleven minutes later, a daring Harry S Truman became the very first among world leaders to recognize the newly-proclaimed Jewish state.

Today we gather as one nation to give thanks for the fiftieth anniversary of this remarkable moment of hope and history.

But in a larger sense, we gather today not just to celebrate Israel's independence—but to give thanks for the miracle of her survival; for the history of Israel and the Jewish people is the story of the redemption and freedom of all oppressed peoples everywhere.

For more than four millennia, Judaism has struggled over four continents and six civilizations. After enslavement by the Pharaohs, wandering in Canaan, destruction in Judah, captivity in Babylon; after the strife of the Maccabees, oppression by the Romans; as children of the ghetto in the Middle Ages, as victims of the camps, Judaism has survived. And—my friends—Israel survives.

It survives because of the ingenuity and foresight of men and women with names like David Ben-Gurion and Chaim Weizmann and Golda Meir; Shimon Peres, Yitzhak and Leah Rabin, and Yonni and Bibi Netanyahu.

It survives and is nurtured every day by the morality of the Torah, the social justice of the Prophets, and the eternal Jewish values of family and faith.

It survives not as an artifact or a monument. No; Israel is vital, and is constantly renewed by its diversity, and its creativity.

Israel has proven to be far more than the land of "milk and honey"; it is a land of poetry and culture and learning and life, of

technology and science and commerce, of productivity and prosperity unrivaled virtually anywhere in the world.

We gather here today not only to celebrate these achievements, but also to proclaim for all to hear that the dream of an Israel free, secure, and at peace, in a world where the echoes of anti-Semitism are heard no more, will be a reality for all time.

I want you to know that Israel never has had a better friend in the White House than President Bill Clinton.

That is what Israel's leaders will tell you, and that is what the historians and the history books will tell in the future as well.

Our friendship with Israel is not merely with one or another of its political parties. Our ties are deeper: they are forged by an iron-clad commitment to Israel's security and well-being, to combating terrorism, to stopping the spread of weapons of mass destruction; and to achieving a just, lasting, and comprehensive peace between Israelis and Palestinians, Egyptians, Jordanians, Syrians, and Lebanese and all who live in this holy land.

In two days, Tipper and I will travel to Israel to represent the American people at the celebration of Israel's 50th anniversary of independence. This is a great honor. I know we will carry the yearnings of millions of Americans for peace in the promised land; for a new season of joy, and a new jubilee of hope.

There is a wonderful song of Israel which is called *al kol eileh*—For all these things. Let me share with you some of its lyrics:

For all these things, please watch over for me my good God;

Please don't uproot that which is planted.

Don't forget the hope

Bring me back, and I shall return to the good land. *El ha'a-retz hatovah.*

As we prepare to begin our own special journey to the good land, may we never forget the hope that God who makes peace in the heavens will grant peace here on Earth, among us, on Israel and upon all the inhabitants of the world.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield whatever time he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER).

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my very dear friend, the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), the chairman of the Committee on International Relations for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I would simply like to rise to echo the remarks of my very dear colleague the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) in extending a very important 50th anniversary congratulations.

When one thinks about this alliance which has begun since the outset of the existence of the State of Israel, it is a very key one. When one thinks about the sacrifices that have been made on part of the Israeli people for interests that are, quite frankly, in many cases, those of the United States of America, I think it is very fitting and appropriate that we, as a Nation, mark this very, very important milestone.

I would simply like to express my appreciation to my colleagues for moving ahead with this resolution and extend the hardest congratulations possible.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 3 minutes to my distinguished colleague, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. VENTO).

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California for yielding and commend the gentleman from California for his profound statement this afternoon in recognition of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the modern State of Israel.

While I failed to and have not heard the statement from others this afternoon, I know that the distinguished chairman has a statement, but I would certainly associate myself with the profound remarks that the gentleman from California and I know my colleague, the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), the chairman of the committee, will make.

I simply want to rise and support this resolution. As we have said that the founding of the modern State, of course, is predicated on the fact that, for 2,000 years, without a physical presence and a nationalism which has come to characterize nation states today, the faith of the people of Israel persisted to such an extent that it has had a positive contribution in so many nations around the world.

□ 1600

I doubt that one could find a religious group that has upheld their values, and I would say those values have woven their way into what we characterize as Judeo-Christian tradition.

And so the celebration today is really one of recognizing the importance of the individual, the very old but I might say contemporary values that have served our Nation and served the people, mankind, that are so well embraced in the Jewish faith. And it is indeed a celebration to recognize that in this world today that this threat of human history, this continuity has been embraced in terms of a nation state.

Israel, really, as my colleague has said, is a jewel of economic and social success in North Africa; one that I think on occasions has had to rise to the defense of and deal with in other ways to persist in advocating those values but, nevertheless, one that has served mankind very well.

So I am very proud to recognize, as an old faith with a modern face, as my friend said, with a blue sky and the white, great hope that is engendered by this, and especially the positive prospects for the new century. It has not been an easy birth, it has not been an easy life for this nationalism in that part of the world, but I think that with the policies and working together in Congress and with the strong ally of the United States and maintaining those goals, we can ensure that this Nation and this faith and these people and these values are something that we share in common and we can guarantee and assure it into the future with our solidarity.

I commend my colleagues for offering the resolution and join in strong support of it and urge all to support it.

I rise today to honor the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the modern State of Israel. Founded in the aftermath of the Holocaust, in which over one-third of the world's Jewish population lost their lives, Israel was established as a homeland for Jews from around the world. A permanent refuge free from oppression and persecution which had persisted for over 2000 years. In 1948, the creation of the free independent state finally rendered a new hope for people of the Jewish faith. Despite the land, the elements and the many adversaries who have done their utmost to extirpate it, Israel has flourished and developed into a dynamic democracy. Today, Israel is a social and economic jewel that persists in offering hope.

No history or culture has been so well documented or remembered as that of the Jewish people. Israeli culture, religious and national identity were formed in the Holy land of Israel. Its vision and faith has been maintained unbroken through the centuries, especially after the majority of Jews were forced into exile. With the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, Jewish independence, lost two thousand years earlier, was renewed. The events fifty years ago have breathed new life into this age old faith. The physical presence in national terms has been born anew.

Israel has been America's most loyal and devoted ally today. This is evident in American values which exemplify our ideals socially, economically and militarily that safe-guard these guarantees to all peoples. As our Cold War partner, Israel stood firmly in perpetual support for America's global commitment to freedom and democracy. As an example, during the Persian Gulf War, Israel joined the American-led coalition in its action against Iraq. Israel was very tolerant and withstood Iraqi Scud missile attacks as a result. Today, Israel continues to extend its hand in friendship to the United States and the American people.

This anniversary illustrates fifty years of freedom and democracy for the Israeli people. In honor of the special relationship the United States and Israel have maintained based on mutually shared democratic values, common strategic interests, moral bonds of friendship and mutual respect, I extend the warmest congratulations and best wishes to the State of Israel and her people for a peaceful and prosperous and successful future.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY).

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) for bringing this resolution to the floor today. I am deeply pleased to be an original co-sponsor of it.

As policymakers and politicians, we often talk about how Israel is our most important ally in the Middle East, a cherished friend and a democratic society that we must continue to support for the sake of stability and peace. And that is indeed true. But, as a person, I also know that the State of Israel, which is so physically tiny, appears so very large because of its history and its heart and the heart of its people.

Israel has been both a battlefield and a sanctuary, and this year we celebrate

its 50th anniversary as a state. I know that it became that state because of the incredible courage and determination of a people who had faced more evil than a thousand generations could conceive and have survived to reflect both dignity and strength.

I join my colleagues today in this strong celebration and congratulations, recognizing the historic significance of the 50th anniversary of the reestablishment of the sovereign and independent modern State of Israel.

We commend the people of Israel for their remarkable achievement in building a new state and pluralistic democratic society in the Middle East in the face of terrorism, hostility and belligerence by many of her neighbors; and we strongly today reaffirm the bonds of friendship and cooperation which have existed between the United States and Israel. I think of all of the things that America has suffered and has witnessed and has been a part of in our history, the friendship with Israel remains our strongest and most formidable.

It is more important than ever for this Congress not only to support this resolution on its 50th anniversary but through the commitment of the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) that we go about securing this celebration each and every day we are here in this Congress; that we let everyone know, friend and foe alike, that we will always stand side-by-side with Israel; that we will not back down from a challenge and that we will indeed protect and defend them at all possible costs. They would do the same for us and have shown that determination for our abilities in the past.

Again, I just want to strongly echo my support and my sentiments and my pride in our chairman of the committee on H.J. Resolution 102, the 50th Anniversary of the State of Israel.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to my distinguished friend and colleague, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BENTSEN).

Mr. BENTSEN. I thank my colleague from California for yielding me this time; and, Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution commemorating the 50th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel and join my colleagues in congratulating the people of Israel for their impressive achievements in these 50 years.

This is also an appropriate opportunity to reaffirm the unique bond between the United States and Israel, a bond forged of our common commitment to freedom, justice and peace, and strengthened by the many links between our peoples.

So much has happened since May 14, 1948, when the State of Israel was reestablished following a vote by the United Nations General Assembly to petition the British mandate of Palestine. On that day, the State of Israel was formally proclaimed, and the United States extended diplomatic rec-

ognition to the new state. This day also marked an historic return to the Jewish people, who had established their homeland more than 3,000 years before in the historic kingdom of Israel in the City of Jerusalem.

In 50 years, Israel has developed a vibrant and dynamic society and established a strong economic cultural identity, despite the heavy tolls imposed by six wars, countless terrorist attacks and the hostility of its neighbors. Because of the perseverance, ingenuity, and faith of its people, Israel has overcome the most daunting of challenges and become one of the world's great nations.

Mr. Speaker, few nations could prosper and grow while under siege, on a state of alert and under attack, as Israel has had to do over the last 50 years. For 50 years, the United States Congress has extended bonds of friendship and cooperation to Israel. It is more important than ever that we continue to support Israel economically and militarily today as it makes the difficult decisions needed to secure a lasting peace.

The future will surely bring many new challenges, including the continued threat of terrorism and the added danger imposed by weapons of mass destruction. So it is critical the United States and Israel maintain our unshakeable alliance to further our many mutual interests. May the next 50 years bring continued prosperity, ever stronger friendship between our two nations, and a lasting peace for Israel and all the nations of the Middle East.

I join my colleagues in congratulating the State of Israel and its people on the occasion of its 50th anniversary.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that an additional 30 minutes be made available, to be equally divided between the majority and the minority, for the debate of H.J. Res. 102, since large numbers of our colleagues wish to speak on this subject.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The 30 additional minutes is assigned 15 minutes to each side.

The gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) is recognized.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. ROSA DELAURO), my good friend and colleague and a strong friend of Israel.

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, let me congratulate my colleagues, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN); and I thank the gentleman from California for yielding me this time.

I rise in strong support of the joint resolution congratulating Israel on the 50th anniversary of its founding.

Today, we mark one of the monumental achievements of the 20th century, the birth of Israel.

In 1948, as the Jewish community and the world was trying to come to terms with the awful brutality of the holocaust, a miraculous thing occurred: The very people who had been victims of the most vicious genocide the world has ever known emerged strengthened and hopeful. And the Jewish people forged that enduring strength and hope into a mission to build a new homeland, Israel.

The war had devastated the Jewish community of Europe, but in Israel there was a new determination to build a new community, a new nation and a secure future. The founders of Israel understood that only by uniting in a common land, with a common language, a common culture could the Jewish people and their heritage survive.

Israel was dedicated not only to physical survival but the survival of the Jewish religious traditions, ethnic customs and history. Israel's 50th anniversary is a reminder of the courage and strength of the human spirit and what it can accomplish. Against all odds and enemies, the people of Israel have united to build a strong nation. It has not been an easy journey, but it has been a triumphant one.

Americans have had the honor over the past five decades to help the brave men and women of Israel in their fight to make their dream a reality, and today we unite with them in the effort to bring peace to the region.

Congratulations to the people of Israel. May you continue to serve as examples of courage, vigilance and dedication to the world.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ROTHMAN).

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to first congratulate and thank my friend, the gentleman from California (Mr. TOM LANTOS), and the gentleman from New York (Mr. BEN GILMAN), two leaders in this Congress who we look to on regular occasions for their inspiration as well as their wisdom.

We are here to honor a nation of hard-working people, a country that is a thriving democracy of freedom and human rights, a land that has contributed to the world's economy and a sense of moral well-being, yet a state that, on its 50th birthday, still has to fight its neighbors for respect and, yes, for its right to exist.

Israel was founded after World War II, not by war, not by force, but by the United Nations. The Jewish people's ties to the region goes back more than 3,000 years. Every major country in the world supported Israel's creation, just like they supported the creation of other countries, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria and Saudi Arabia, all of which nations were created after World War I. The only difference between Israel and these other countries, none of which existed before the 20th century, is this:

Israel is the only western-style democracy in the Middle East, and it is the only nonIslamic state.

The vast majority of these other states are still ruled by bloodthirsty dictators, like Saddam Hussein of Iraq and Hafez Al-Assad of Syria and the supreme leader Khamenei of Iran, and they are also ruled by monarchies, like the tightly controlled monarchy of Saudi Arabia. Yet Israel has thrived despite being surrounded by countries still determined to drive them into the sea.

But she is not a war-torn nation, like the media tries to depict. Israel is a beautiful, safe place, a vacation destination for Americans, Europeans, Asians and Africans alike. She peacefully keeps the Christian, Muslim and Jewish holy sites safe and secure for all visitors from around the globe.

But Israel's 50th anniversary means more than the celebration of its people, its democratic roots, its determination and its ability to survive in a hostile environment. It means Israel should be respected as one nation in the family of nations, especially by the organization that created it, the United Nations.

Israel is America's strongest, most trusted and most reliable ally in the Middle East. At the United Nations, Israel votes with the United States 97 percent of the time, more than any other country in the world. It is time for the United Nations to treat Israel as an equal and not to vote against Israel when it takes measures to protect itself and her citizens from her hostile neighbors.

Israel has earned the world's respect the hard way, making the desert bloom with agriculture, high technology, art, culture and, above all else, democracy. America wishes Israel a very happy 50th birthday, and we want Israel to know that America stands with Israel, our greatest, most trusted ally in the Middle East, now and forever.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA), my good friend who has been a steadfast friend and supporter of the independence and security of the State of Israel.

(Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Joint Resolution 102, the legislation which expresses the sense of the Congress on the 50th anniversary of Israel's founding and reaffirmation of the bonds of friendship and cooperation between the United States and the modern State of Israel.

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Mr. Speaker, I am honored to be a cosponsor of this legislation, and I thank our distinguished colleague the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) for introducing this worthy measure. I also commend the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), chairman of the House Committee on International Re-

lations, and the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HAMILTON), the ranking member, for his support and for bringing this legislation to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, on May 14, 1948, the modern State of Israel was founded when Israel declared independence and was extended diplomatic recognition by the United States. Today, our legislation honors the 50th anniversary of the reestablishment of the sovereign and independent modern State of Israel and commends the leaders and people of Israel for their remarkable achievements in building a thriving democracy in the Middle East while being threatened constantly with terrorism and war.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation further reaffirms the strong ties of friendship and cooperation that have traditionally bound the people of Israel with the insurance over the past century and extends from Congress our warmest congratulations and best wishes to the State of Israel and her people for peace and prosperity in the future.

Mr. Speaker, the existence of the modern State of Israel is the culmination of a 3,000-year journey from the kingdom of Israel established in old Jerusalem. Today, Israel is America's closest ally in the Middle East, and the people of our two nations share a special relationship based upon democratic values, common strategic interests, and bonds of cooperation and mutual respect.

Mr. Speaker, it was my privilege recently to travel with the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) and other Members of this body to visit Israel and to especially pay homage to the great site of the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin; and I recalled how this great modern-day warrior, Mr. Rabin, who seriously and who earnestly sought a solution to the crisis between the Israelis and the Palestinians, a man who truly was a peacemaker, a man who wanted so much to have a lasting peace with his blood cousins, the Palestinians, a man who recognized that Arabs and Israelis are, in fact, first cousins under Father Abraham.

And I sincerely hope that the current leadership, Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel and President Arafat of Palestine, will eventually find the solution for peace to the never-ending problems between Israelis and Palestinians in the Middle East.

Mr. Speaker, the late Prime Minister Rabin's greatness, in my humble opinion, did not originate in the field of battle, but in his sincere desires to establish peace between Israel and among its Arab neighbors. Mr. Speaker, Americans with Jewish descent should have every reason to be proud and to witness the existence on the 50th anniversary of the modern State of Israel.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I would like to make a few observations con-

cerning this anniversary. I suspect the most important thing we need to congratulate Israel on is that it survived. It survived in an atmosphere and in a climate of unrelenting hostility. We need to congratulate this small land for having remained democratic. We must commend it for having successfully concluded peace agreements with Egypt in 1979 and with Jordan in 1994. We must commend it for having withstood terrorist assaults that continue to this very day.

In calendar 1997, 463 terrorist attacks were launched against Israel, and an additional 100 were foiled. Iraq, during the Persian Gulf War, lobbed ballistic missiles on the largest city in Israel. I was there.

Just earlier this year, Mr. Speaker, Israeli citizens, men, women and children, were queueing up for gas masks when the climate in the Persian Gulf indicated that they might again be subjected to Iraqi attacks. They were buying antidotes for anthrax.

I think it is important to recognize that if this small land of great history and great future is to celebrate its 100th birthday 50 years from now, it and it alone will need to determine its basic perimeters of its own security requirements. We can play a critical role, and must play a critical role, in mediating, lubricating, facilitating. But just as any other nation on the face of this planet, it is only the people of Israel who, in the final analysis, can determine what are the minimum requirements for their own security. It is in that spirit that I ask my colleagues to approve this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) once again for introducing the measure, for his kind words, for his strong, eloquent support of this measure. I want to thank all of the Members who came to the floor and took the time to express their thoughts with regard to this measure. I thank all of those who participated in today's debate.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support for the resolution honoring Israel on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of its independence. From ancient prayers to modern dreams, the State of Israel has blossomed into a strong, thriving democracy and a steady ally of the United States. We have witnessed two solutions to the so-called Jewish Problem this century. One was evil and named the Final Solution. Seeking to destroy the Jewish people, the Nazis murdered 6 million Jews and millions of other innocents. The other solution, which we join together to honor today, was one of hope and promise—the return of the Jewish people to their ancestral home in the land of Israel. That dream remains alive.

Israel has overcome the most daunting obstacles in its quest to create a haven from persecution and the world's only Jewish state. After 2,000 years of Jewish wandering and exile, the modern state of Israel was born on

May 14, 1998, only to face the onslaught of its neighbors and constant threat of destruction. Against all odds, Israel defended itself and began to plant the seeds for its future. Following the war of independence, Israel has time and again fought for its very existence. Even today, the threat of war and the promise of terrorism weigh heavily on Israel.

While many of the threats and anti-Israel rhetoric of 50 years ago unfortunately remains the same today, much has changed for the better. Egypt and Jordan have signed peace agreements with Israel, and the Palestinian Arabs and Israel have begun a formal, if not shaky, process toward peace. In the name of peace, Israel has ceded valuable territory to those who vowed its destruction.

Israel has created a thriving economy, a free press, regular free and open elections, the rule of law, and other firmly established democratic institutions. The once-barren hill-sides now are green with trees and the fields again are plowed for the growth of food. Israel has successfully fulfilled the dreams of thousands of immigrants who fled tyranny and poverty and stands as a model for the absorption of the outcast and homeless. High literacy and educational achievement have produced an extraordinarily capable and creative workforce which boasts achievements in agriculture, medical research, emerging technologies and many other fields. Israel stands as a significant trading partner of my home State of Texas.

I salute the people of Israel on this anniversary. May your future be one of peace and security, prosperity, and continued friendship with the people of the United States.

Mr. BONILLA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of legislation commemorating Israel's fiftieth anniversary. The rebirth of Israel in this century is a modern day miracle. Jews from every continent have built a new nation, ancient in history, with a vibrant democracy and a modern economy.

Israel represents the rebirth of a nation, a people, and the Hebrew language. The building of a new nation with immigrants from societies as diverse as Russia, Poland, Morocco, Argentina, India, and Ethiopia is a challenge we as Americans recognize and celebrate. The achievements in this regard are truly impressive. Israel has made the desert bloom, has an exemplary education system and a growing economy. It is a world leader in technology and has had an impact far larger than other nations of its size.

Israel's accomplishments are particularly impressive as it has been living under siege for its entire history. Independence was secured in a bloody struggle and freedom has been defended at great cost. The Jewish state has faced great struggles maintaining its independence as the sole democracy in a hostile corner of the world.

America and Israel have been natural friends. Most Americans admire Israel's commitment to democratic government while living under siege. I think all Americans would like to join me in wishing the Israeli people a future of peace and prosperity on this occasion. I am hopeful that the people of Israel will achieve even more once a real peace, not one imposed by outside powers, is reached with their neighbors.

Mr. GEPHARDT. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to join my colleagues in celebrating the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the modern state of Israel.

Created in the aftermath of the Holocaust, the state of Israel has served as a beacon of justice, freedom, and hope to Jewish people around the world. Israel's deep commitment to a pluralistic democracy and a vibrant economic, cultural, and intellectual life has served as a model for many nations. And despite great adversity, Israel has been steadfast in its commitment to achieving peace and security in the region. These values have garnered the admiration and respect of millions around the world.

It is these values that have also fostered the American people's great affinity and mutual respect for the people of Israel, and which have formed the core of the special bond between our two countries. Today the U.S.-Israel relationship remains among the strongest of any bilateral relationship in the world. The strength of this relationship is also a tribute to those U.S. citizens, many of Jewish heritage, who have worked tirelessly over the years to keep our Nation's leaders focused on the importance of this relationship.

The United States and Israel have numerous common and deep interests, and together will continue to lead the international fight against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, and threats to religious freedom. Above all, we are united in our paramount goals of peace, prosperity, and security for all people of the Middle East.

I am proud to be a co-sponsor of House Joint Resolution 102, which reaffirms the bonds of friendship and cooperation between our two countries on Israel's fiftieth anniversary. On this occasion, I encourage my colleagues to seize this celebration not only as an opportunity to reflect on the achievements of Israel's past, but also to use it as a stimulus to further strengthen the U.S.-Israel partnership.

Fifty years ago, within minutes of Israel's leaders declaring their independence, Harry Truman rejected the advice of staff and took a momentous step in recognizing Israel's sovereignty. From that moment, the United States and Israel have forged perhaps the closest partnership in the international community today. It is in this spirit of friendship and cooperation that I extend my warmest congratulations and best wishes to the state of Israel and her people for a peaceful, prosperous and successful future.

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Joint Resolution 102, a resolution expressing the sense of the Congress on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the modern state of Israel and reaffirming the bonds of friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel. I want to thank Mr. LANTOS for introducing such a timely and appropriate resolution and giving me the opportunity to be an original cosponsor. I am proud to support this excellent bill.

House Joint Resolution 102 recognizes the historic significance of this special anniversary, applauds the Israeli people for building a vibrant, modern democracy in the face of physical, economic, and political hostility, reaffirms the deep friendship between our two countries, and warmly congratulates the Israeli people and extends to them all the best for a prosperous, safe and successful future.

Mr. Speaker, the United States and Israel share a special relationship. As our only true democratic friend in the region, Israel deserves America's strong and unyielding support. I applaud the unanimous passage of this

resolution today and extend to the people of Israel my very best wishes.

Ms. DeGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.J. Res. 102, expressing the sense of the Congress on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel.

I am proud to be a co-sponsor of this important resolution. I look forward to a unanimous vote by the House that will send a strong message of our country's unyielding support to the State of Israel. April 30th will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the birth of the State of Israel. Israel's extraordinary history makes this milestone especially significant. Despite incredible challenges and continuous obstacles, Israel has developed into a prosperous democracy, whose citizens continue to enjoy the unlimited freedoms that Israel was created to protect.

The State of Israel and the well being of her people is one of the foreign policy issues that people in my district care about the most. There are so many in this country who share a common denominator of heritage, history and identity with the people of Israel. For many Jewish-Americans the fate of Israel is something to which they are inextricably linked.

The United States and Israel have a unique relationship due to the fact that Israel is our only democratic ally in that region of the world. There is no better time than right now to reaffirm our commitment to foreign support for Israel. I believe foreign aid to Israel is an important way to support and promote the peace talks. I am concerned that without peace in the Middle East, Israel's second fifty years will be as tumultuous as her first half century.

At Israel's 100th anniversary, I hope we can look back on Israel's second fifty years as a period of peace and prosperity where the challenges that face her today have long faded into history.

Mr. WEYGAND. Mr. Speaker, today I wish to congratulate the State of Israel on her 50th Anniversary. In fifty years, the people of Israel have endured many of the same things that our founding fathers did more than two hundred years ago. They have had to create a government, elect leaders who had come to their state from various countries around the world, and establish laws for their new state. Israel has had to defend her borders from advances first in 1948 to gain her independence within the Middle East, and again in the Six Day War to assert her autonomy. Much like the United States did in the 18th Century, Israel continues to define her character today.

I know in my home state of Rhode Island, many people struggled and worked very hard to realize the dream of a Zionist state. Former Governor Frank Licht got his passion for public service by working with the Rhode Island Zionist Emergency Council. Upon the creation of the new Jewish state, Governor Licht stated:

The proclamation officially creating the new state is a milestone in the history of mankind. The 2000 year old dream of the Jewish people has become a reality. Recognition by the United States will go far, I hope, towards restoring peace in the Holy Land . . . I am confident that the state which the Jewish people set up in their own country will guarantee justice, freedom, and equality for all people regardless of religion, race, sex, or land of origin.

I believe, along with my constituents, that the State of Israel will find a way to ease tensions both internally and externally. Israel has persevered in building and maintaining a democratic state in the face of hostility and terrorism. Perhaps in another fifty years we

will again gather here and commend Israel on solving these problems with her neighbors.

I commend the people of Israel on their successes over the past fifty years, and congratulate them wholeheartedly on this milestone in their history.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.J. Res. 102, Expressing the Sense of Congress on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Founding of the Modern State of Israel. May 14th will mark the 50th anniversary of its independence. I commend the State of Israel which has rebuilt a nation, forged a new and dynamic society, and created a unique and vital economic, political, cultural and intellectual life. I applaud the relationship held between the United States and Israel. This relationship is one that is based on mutually shared Democratic value, common strategic interests, and moral bonds of friendship and mutual respect. The State of Israel has built a nation in the face of adversity and triumphed in assuming a prosperous democracy in their ancient land. The people of Israel have so much to be proud of, these brave people have battled through a new frontier to create a new and thriving world for their children.

While I am delighted and quite proud of this fantastic milestone, I am also filled with promise and hope that both Israel and the Palestinians will one day come to a peaceful agreement allowing all of the people of the Middle East to grow and prosper towards another landmark anniversary celebration.

Mrs. KENNELLY of Connecticut. I rise as a cosponsor of House Joint Resolution 102 congratulating the State of Israel on its 50th Anniversary and wish to offer my strong support for this resolution.

Since declaring its independence on May 14th, 1948 the State of Israel has fought for its very existence and it has succeeded. In the years that have followed Israel has thrived, it has embraced democracy and has become and remains the most important ally for the United States in the Middle East region.

I want to commend the people of Israel for their perseverance through the difficult times they have faced. They have stood up to terrorism and aggression and have endured. They have built a vibrant democracy, with a unique culture, and a diverse economy. Throughout its existence, Israel has remained focused on its future and on the welfare of its people.

I am pleased to support this resolution which reaffirms the lasting bond of friendship between the United States and Israel which has been so important for both nations. Together we make our democracies stronger and it is together that we can work to ensure that lasting peace for Israel and throughout the Middle East can become a reality.

I want to extend my sincerest congratulations to the modern state of Israel on the occasion of their 50th Anniversary and to urge my colleagues to support this important resolution.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, it is fitting as Israel approaches the fiftieth anniversary of its independence to commemorate this event. It is also fitting to recognize this historic event here in the U.S. Congress. The U.S. has been Israel's friend and supporter from its inception. On a personal level, I have been an ardent supporter of Israel throughout my life. I became more of a staunch supporter after I traveled to Israel in 1989 toward the beginning of my Congressional service.

Once one has seen the many unique features of Israel and its people, one cannot help but be awestruck by this nation's accomplishments in its short 50 years. First, Israel has provided a refuge and homeland to hundreds of thousands of persecuted Jews from the former Soviet Union, Ethiopia, and many other places. In meeting with Israeli leaders and residents, I also was struck by their deep commitment to achieving a lasting peace in the region. This commitment is easily understood as Israeli Remembrance Day approaches: nearly every citizen has lost a relative or friend in the effort to protect and defend the land and its people. Thus, the desire and need to achieve peace for the present and future generations becomes even more evident.

As a Congressman actively involved in environmental issues, I have been particularly impressed with the stewardship Israelis exercise over natural resources. Israelis learn from a young age that every drop of water is precious. But the pioneers worked the land and developed the technologies to make these precious drops of water help grow trees, flowers, and crops, so that the entire nation could not only survive, but flourish—to the point where they now export flowers and produce all over the world.

And, while Israelis still bargain over prices in traditional, Middle Eastern-style market places, they also have developed a light industrial base that employs many people in high technology and computer-related fields. One example of the developmental progress that has occurred can be seen in the telephone systems. When I was last in Israel a decade ago, making a telephone call was difficult. Today, not only are phones accessible and easy to use, but cellular phones, call waiting services, and answering machines are prevalent.

Moreover, Israel's GDP has grown from \$2.5 billion to an astonishing \$90.6 billion in the past three decades. Equally important, if not more so, is the fact that Israel is the only pluralistic democracy in the region. At the same time, Jerusalem, the unique "City of Gold," is the holy site for a number of the world's most important religions. And yet, this nation is smaller than my home state of New Jersey; one can walk across the country (East to West) in one day.

David Ben Gurion was prophetic when, on May 15, 1948, he stated that "[s]omething 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 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."

I hope that as we recognize the fiftieth anniversary of its creation, Israel will soon cease to face such struggles. Yitzhak Rabin was deeply committed to securing peace for Israel. For this reason, the "Song for Peace" was being sung at the rally where he last spoke, and the words to this song were found in his shirt pocket at the time of his assassination. I pray that Rabin, and the many that will have fought for peace both before and after him, will not have sacrificed their lives in vain.

In closing, since I have seen the marvels of Israel and its people first-hand, and have been a strong supporter of Israeli and Jewish causes throughout my service in Congress, I am particularly pleased to be a cosponsor of

this joint Congressional resolution that is being brought to the House floor today. The resolution recognizes the historic significance of the fiftieth anniversary of the reestablishment of the State of Israel; commends the Israeli people for their achievements in building a new state and a pluralistic, democratic society in the Middle East; reaffirms the bonds of friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel; and extends congratulations and best wishes to the State of Israel and her people for a peaceful, prosperous, and successful future.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, this May 14th, the modern state of Israel will celebrate its 50th birthday. In the life of an ordinary country, the 50 anniversary is a notable milestone of historical achievement. In the case of Israel, 50 years 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 of 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 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.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. Speaker. This week we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the State of Israel, a truly momentous occasion. For Jews in Israel, America, and around the world this is a time of great celebration.

For 50 years, Israel has struggled to survive in a region of hostility, surrounded by neighbors who sought to destroy her. For 50 years, Israel has labored to transform a desert into a land of milk and honey and for 50 years, Israel has become a beacon of democracy, a land of freedom and a homeland for Jews everywhere.

Mr. Speaker, dear colleagues, let us join together in wishing Israel a happy 50th and a hearty "mazel tov."

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I once again ask my colleagues to support this resolution, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution, H.J. Res. 102.

The question was taken.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 5 of rule I and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF RETIREMENT OF HON. GERALD B. SOLOMON, CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE ON RULES

(Mr. DREIER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to join with my colleagues, and I know that my friend the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), the chairman of the Committee on International Relations, will want to be recognized, to

say how saddened and surprised we all were, but we certainly respect the decision that was made by the distinguished gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON), chairman of the Committee on Rules, yesterday that, after 20 years of service as a Member of the United States Congress, and after a career in public life that expands 31 years, he has chosen to retire at the end of this term.

He, of course, has many more vigorous and active months left as chairman of the Committee on Rules. But I would like to say that, as we think about his stellar service in this institution, it has been a great honor for me to be part of a very important team.

The gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) has been on the front line of so many battles here in the Congress. He has been very active. He was, as was pointed out in the New York Times today, clearly the most influence member of the New York delegation serving in the Congress, and he was a member of Ronald Reagan's core group of individuals who provided him with a great deal of advice and assistance throughout President Reagan's campaigns and during the time that the President served.

So I am one who will say that I clearly am going to miss my colleague. He clearly always makes his presence known when he is here in the House of Representatives, because he carried that great binder that had his name inscribed on it. So we will be seeing that again before we hope the 105th Congress adjourns sine die the first of October. But I can tell my colleagues, when the 106th Congress convenes, we clearly miss that. He has been a great leader who has stood by principle very, very passionately and diligently.

Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), distinguished Chairman of the Committee on International Relations.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank him for bringing this issue to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, as senior Republican in the New York State congressional delegation, I want to express my shock and my sadness to the surprising announcement that our dear colleague the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON), a senior member of our New York delegation, has now chosen to leave this body at the end of this congressional session.

I came to know and admire my colleague soon after he came to the Congress in 1978. His experiences as a United States marine, and he reminded us of that service continually, as a town supervisor, as a county legislator, as a member of the New York State Assembly, as well as his experience in the insurance business and real estate business brought to this Chamber the unique combination of experience of balance and of common sense.

I especially appreciate the gentleman from New York championing the cause of our POWs and MIAs in Southeast