

Asian Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 13, 1998, at 2:00 p.m. to hold a hearing.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Labor and Human Resources be authorized to meet in executive session during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 13, 1998, at 9:30 a.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS ON  
REGULATORY RELIEF

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Financial Institutions and Regulatory Relief of the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 13, 1998, to conduct an oversight and reauthorization hearing on the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund (CDFI) Program.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL SECURITY,  
PROLIFERATION, AND FEDERAL SERVICE

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent on behalf of the Governmental Affairs Subcommittee on International Security, Proliferation, and Federal Services to meet on Wednesday, May 13, 1998 at 2:00 p.m. for a hearing on "S. 1710, The Retirement Coverage Error Correction Act of 1998."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

#### AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH, EXTENSION, AND EDUCATION REFORM ACT—CONFERENCE REPORT

• Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, particularly in light of the 1996 Farm Bill, it is important that the federal government focus its attention on the factors that will increase U.S. agriculture's competitiveness in a deregulated farm economy. This includes improving efficiency in the transportation system, keeping international markets active and growing, advancing research, and facilitating use of market oriented risk management tools.

Yesterday the Senate approved the Conference Report to S. 1150, which provides for two of those critical factors. First of all, it provides important funding for agriculture research programs. Though I am critical of government funding of applied research that would otherwise be financed by those who will directly benefit in the private sector, I view basic research as a responsibility of the federal government. It is through research—largely conducted by the land grant universities supported by the federal government—

that we experienced the "green revolution" whereby the world learned to produce more food using fewer resources. Through research we have developed technologies that have increased farm efficiency exponentially, transformed food processing, and enhanced human nutrition. Given the structure of the agriculture industry, these advances never would have occurred if it had been up to individual farmers or individual companies to conduct the necessary research.

Furthermore, the intensive use of farmland here in the U.S. means that sensitive ecosystems around the world—which would have to be converted to farmland were it not for the productive capacity of the Midwest—can be spared. Continuing to search for ways to increase the productive capacity of America's farmers will help ensure that these ecosystems are not destroyed in order to provide for the food needs of the world's growing population. So the advances achieved through research have not only improved our own economic position, they have also benefitted the environment worldwide.

The bill also provides a stable funding mechanism for crop insurance, which has been subject to annual debates in recent years. This has been problematic for farmers and insurance agents, who need to be able to plan ahead. With the more liberalized market conditions that the new Freedom to Farm Act provides, risk management is more important than ever for farmers. And, for many, crop insurance is the most viable option for managing risk. In fact, lenders often require that producers obtain crop insurance in order to qualify for operating loans.

All of the spending that is directed toward these programs is offset by savings from food stamp administration accounts and the limitation of Commodity Credit Corporation funding for computers. So, the increased spending in this bill does not jeopardize the balanced budget agreement enacted last year.

It goes without saying that this bill is critical for a farm state like Kansas. However, the benefits of agricultural research and a reliable mechanism to manage risk extend well beyond the state lines of farm states—this country's production affords our consumers in rural communities and cities alike the cheapest, safest, and most abundant food supply on earth. It is imperative that Congress continue the investment that makes this competitive advantage possible. I am glad that the Senate finally approved the Conference Report, and hope that the House will act soon to secure these benefits for rural America. •

#### CELEBRATION OF ISRAEL'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, during the last few days, both in Israel and around the world, Jews and millions of

others have been celebrating the 50th anniversary of the birth of Israel. A celebration of Israel is a celebration of democracy, prosperity, faith and the fulfillment of the dream of a Jewish homeland.

It was on May 14, 1948, that David Ben-Gurion announced Israel's birth to the world. Fifty years later, Israel is a mature state—a survivor of wars, assassinations and painful regional conflicts. And Israel has not only survived, it has prospered and thrived.

It has bloomed in the desert, taking root against seemingly impossible odds.

But it does not surprise us, for we know that overcoming the insurmountable is the story of the Jewish people. Examples of Israel's achievements abound: it is a world leader in developing agricultural techniques for arid climates, and in harnessing the power of solar energy.

Ben-Gurion believed that 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."

Israel ranks among the most advanced economies in the world, and is a vigorous democracy in a region of largely authoritarian regimes. Voter turnout for Israel's 1996 elections were about 80 percent, a high turnout by any standard, and one that surpasses and challenges the United States, which had just 49 percent turnout that same year. And Israel has successfully resettled Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Republics and across the globe, including absorbing 680,000 immigrants during a three year period. The culture of Israel is equally vibrant, as Israelis have drawn on their dramatic personal and national histories to create invaluable contributions to the arts.

At 50, Israel has character, strength and dignity. Of course, like anyone who reaches 50, Israel is also experiencing something of a mid-life crisis.

As Israelis take stock of their achievements at this important moment in their history, they find problems yet to be solved and many goals yet to be reached. Israel has not yet made peace with all of her neighbors, and difficult decisions about how to achieve peace, or whether to continue to, at this point, seek peace at all, are causing painful rifts in Israeli society.

Personally, I look at Israel from many perspectives—as an American, as a Jew, as a United States Senator and as a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

As an American, I see Israel as a staunch ally and friend. As a Jew, I see a spiritual homeland, a place where all Jews have a claim, a right to belong. Israel is an oasis of faith for Jews in every corner of the world. As a United States Senator and member of the Senate's Foreign Relations Committee, I take a deep interest in Israel and the Middle East peace process.

I first visited Israel when I was 19 years old. My father and mother took me as a way to educate me about the importance of Israel, and the trip had an enormously powerful impact on me. I returned two more times, in 1976 and 1977, while I was a student at Oxford University.

My strongest memory of that last trip was our visit to the Western Wall, when I brushed up against a soldier carrying a machine gun under his jacket. It was then that I felt for the first time, through the cold steel of a weapon, what it was like to exist in a society where the threat of violence was a constant. At the time, I hoped upon my next return to Israel that there would be peace in the region—never realizing that we would find ourselves in the stalemate we are in today so many years later. For these 21 years since then, I was unable to return to Israel except for one time and one time only—and then only for 10 hours—for the sad occasion of Yitzhak Rabin's funeral in November 1995.

I went as a very young man and returned much changed—I had become a Senator, a husband and a father—but was still awed by the powerful presence of faith and hope, violence and conflict that still characterize the Jewish state today.

In between these visits, I had the opportunity to study the evolving relationship between Israel and the United States for a paper I did for a history course at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. To research this paper, I read all the comments of Members of Congress in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD concerning Israel for the years 1948, 1956, 1967 and 1973, and analyzed how those comments reflected a changing definition of U.S. interests in the region from the birth of Israel, through the Suez Crisis, the Six Day War and the Yom Kippur War.

In 1948, most of the talk was about the need for a homeland for the Jewish people, especially after the Holocaust. In 1956, that talk shifted to describing Israel as a blooming democracy; a small outpost of democratic values in the midst of a non-democratic region. In 1967, Israel was the non-aggressive dove who triumphed in a hostile environment. By 1973, my predecessors had shifted to speaking of Israel in a very positive geopolitical and national security terms.

Today, I add my own remarks about Israel to the long chronicle of the American-Israeli relationship in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD to those of my predecessors who came to speak in times of crisis and triumph for Israel.

The U.S. has played a pivotal role in Israel's history, and our relationship has been a strong one from the beginning. Within minutes of Ben-Gurion's announcement of the birth of Israel, President Harry Truman recognized the fledgling state. Prior to Israel's founding, between the end of the Second World War and May 14, 1948, official U.S. support for a Jewish state was

largely grounded in the desire to help re-settle hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees, displaced people and survivors of the Holocaust.

From May 14, 1948, until today, America could always count on Israel as an island of democracy and stability in an area of the world not altogether familiar with either concept.

The presence of a secure and vital Israel, in and of itself, is in America's interests.

For many years, those interests included containment of Soviet expansion into the Middle East, securing access to the region's oil for the industrialized nations of the West, promoting market economies and democratic institutions and safeguarding Israel's national security. As the inter-relationship between Israel and the United States has developed, matured and adapted to political and economic developments, so too has American policy. During the tenure of President Jimmy Carter, for example, America was very active in the Middle East peace process, culminating in the signing of the Camp David accords.

During the first Reagan term, the administration's priorities of combating terrorism, promoting cooperative security and confronting Soviet expansion found common ground with the perspectives of Prime Ministers Begin and Shamir, and, in general, those closer relations survived the policy differences arising over the Lebanon war in 1982. Ties between Israel and the United States grew stronger during President Reagan's second term, including the signing of several precedent-setting strategic and cooperative defense agreements.

During the early Bush years, U.S.-Israel relations were marked again by tension caused by some policy disagreements, but tension eased in 1990 when—amid Iraqi threats against Israel generated by the Persian Gulf crisis—President Bush repeated the U.S. commitment to Israel's security. Confidence in U.S. support was a primary factor in Israel's decision not to retaliate against Iraq for its Scud missile attacks.

Of course, the first year of the Clinton administration saw the historic signing on the White House lawn of the Declaration of Principles establishing the goals and framework for peace talks. On September 13, 1993, the world watched with hope and trepidation as Prime Minister Rabin and Yasser Arafat inaugurated a new era in the Middle East. This would soon be followed by two other major peace agreements: the May 1994 Gaza-Jericho Agreement that provided for Palestinian control over the Gaza Strip and the environs of Jericho after an Israeli withdrawal, and the September 1995 Interim Agreement that set a timetable and an agenda for final status negotiations.

The Palestinians and Israelis have also agreed to other arrangements, such as the Israeli withdrawal from six

Palestinian cities in December 1995, and the Palestinian elections in January 1996.

As much as we hoped the historic moment on the White House lawn would bring an end to terrorism, bloodshed and occupation, we all knew just as well that the road to peace would not be that simple. Years of bitter experience also told us the road would not be that short.

But 1994 and 1995 were relatively good years. The peace process was progressing, and, by late 1995, it seemed relations between Rabin and Arafat were warming. Then, of course, as we can never forget, extremism struck again with the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin by a Jewish radical. It is important to note that this was a terrorist attack like so many in the new Middle East, where extremism and violence of every stripe lashes out against any sign of peace and tolerance.

Today, this extremism and violence present perhaps the greatest and most persistent threat to peace.

Just before he died, Rabin said, "Peace is the future." We must remain faithful to the memory of Rabin and all those who had the courage and the abiding discipline to put ancient hatreds aside and made peace their priority, because Rabin had no illusions about the difficulty of the peace process.

Someone who witnessed Rabin in a meeting on the peace process said to the prime minister, "I can see I'm talking to the converted." Rabin's reply was, "You're talking to the committed, not the converted." It was commitment that peace required of him and requires of all of us.

As we look forward to Israel's next 50 years, we must be able to look forward to a future that gives every Israeli, and every Jew, a peaceful homeland. But the Palestinians are also clearly key to peace in the region, and that is why it is so important to get the current negotiations back on track.

Although our priorities and perceptions on the path to peace sometimes differ, America and Israel have, by and large, moved forward together, and I believe that partnership will continue. Earlier this month, in honor of this 50th anniversary, Congress unanimously passed a resolution which read, in part, "The United States 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." The resolution reaffirmed the bonds of friendship between Israel and the U.S., and extended best wishes for a peaceful, prosperous and successful future.

The key to continued success and prosperity in Israel will be a lasting peace, and the United States clearly has an interest in taking an active role in the peace process, as it has done throughout the years.

Helping facilitate the peace process is one facet of U.S. relations with

Israel, and another is foreign assistance. Since 1976, Israel has been the largest recipient of U.S. foreign assistance. Over the past 10 years, Israel has annually received about \$3 billion in economic and military grants, refugee settlement assistance, and other aid, from the United States.

Recently, we have seen a movement to gradually reduce that level of aid, beginning with the declaration by Prime Minister Netanyahu that Israel should reduce its dependence on the United States when he addressed a joint session of Congress two years ago. Negotiations have since been conducted with the goal of reducing the overall level of American assistance and to gradually phase out economic aid while increasing military aid.

Specifically, the Clinton administration and the Congress are currently reviewing an Israeli proposal to reduce the \$1.2 billion in U.S. *economic* assistance to Israel to zero over 10 years, and to increase U.S. *military* aid to Israel from \$1.8 billion to \$2.4 billion per year. I am intrigued by this idea, and am glad to see Israel taking the lead in this regard. Israel has recognized that in its 50-year history, it has made enormous strides in economic development and, as a result, now boasts a relatively healthy economy. At the same time, Israel recognizes—as I think we all do—that it still faces a substantial security threat, and so must maintain a robust military and access to state-of-the-art weaponry.

The proposal to change our aid relationship reflects this reality. It is an Israeli plan, and as such reflects Israeli priorities, including a desire to decrease its dependence on the United States, and boost its own self-sufficiency. I am concerned about potential unintended consequences of hasty action by the Congress, and so, I, along with others in this body are still considering our legislative response. But by and large I believe these are worthy goals that we should support, just as we have supported Israel in the past.

Ben-Gurion envisioned many achievements for Israel, including one I mentioned earlier, the idea of building a successful nation by marrying scientific advances with ancient Hebrew traditions. He believed that by drawing on the strength, wisdom and skill of a nation of faith and accomplishment, Israel could build a lasting peace with its neighbors.

Israel deserves that peace at last.

Just over 100 years ago, the First Zionist Congress convened in Basel, Switzerland. Under the leadership of Theodore Herzl, the participants announced their desire to reestablish a Jewish homeland in the historic land of Israel. Herzl once said that "If you will it, it is not a dream."

Israel is a testament to the will of a people who believed those words and proved them true.

It would be 51 years until the dream expressed at the First Zionist Congress would become reality, until Holocaust

survivors and other Jews persecuted around the world could have a homeland where they could seek refuge and build a life. And 50 years after that founding, Israel has taken root in the desert soil and it has thrived.

The United States has built an alliance and friendship with Israel that has enriched American life and helped Israel thrive, and I hope that partnership will continue for the next 50 years and beyond. But as Israelis well know and all of us must recognize, the dream of those at the First Zionist Congress and of other Jews for centuries, to have a homeland, cannot be truly fulfilled until peace is attained.

Violence and conflict are a constant threat to the people of Israel, and to the Nation of Israel itself. As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the birth of Israel, we have every right to wish for something more. Not just for a Jewish homeland, but a homeland at peace.

As Theodore Herzl said, "If you will it, it is not a dream."•

#### TRIBUTE TO THE FLOYD COUNTY EMERGENCY AND RESCUE SQUAD: FORTY YEARS OF VOLUNTEER SERVICE IN EASTERN KENTUCKY

• Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the recent anniversary of the Floyd County Emergency and Rescue Squad. Forty years ago, this squad of volunteers was formed to help the people of Eastern Kentucky in times of emergency and disaster, and have been doing so ever since.

The Floyd County Emergency and Rescue Squad was founded on April 27, 1958, as a result of a tragic accident in Prestonsburg, Kentucky, in which a school bus plunged into the Big Sandy River, killing 26 students and the driver. As a result of this tragedy, dozens of community members came together to form the Squad and the late Graham Burchett became the first Captain, a position he held for twenty years.

Since that time, over 300 community members have served on the Squad—doctors and lawyers, coal miners and factory workers—people from all walks of life have worked side-by-side in volunteer service to their community. The Squad operates without any public support. The members are all volunteers and all their equipment is paid for through private donations and grants.

The Squad currently maintains a roster of thirty active members and dozens of reserve members. The Squad is called on for auto extrication, water rescue and drowning recovery, lost or missing persons, and assistance to coal mine rescue teams. In the last month alone, they have assisted in the evacuation of flood victims, recovered a drowning victim and have assisted on four auto accidents.

Despite the fact that the Squad must labor mightily for every dollar they get, they have managed to secure ultra-modern equipment, and are

called frequently to assist in recovery activities outside the county and even outside the state.

Mr. President, I hope all my colleagues will join me in offering our congratulations to Captain Harry Adams, Co-Captain Richie Schoolcraft, Treasurer and Secretary Brian Sexton, First Lieutenant Derek Calhoun and Second Lieutenant Lee Schoolcraft and all the volunteers of the Floyd County Rescue Squad. They carry on the Squad's rich tradition of volunteering their time and risking their lives to help the people of their community, and they are all worthy of our admiration and thanks.●

#### ANTI-SLAMMING AMENDMENTS ACT

• Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, yesterday, Senator MCCAIN and Senator HOLLINGS proposed a managers' amendment, Amendment No. 2389 to S. 1618, a bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934. The amendment significantly improves the protections for consumers against "slammers," persons who deliberately deceive consumers and change their long distance carrier without proper authorization. The manager's amendment included two of my amendments which were cosponsored by Senator DURBIN and Senator GLENN.

The Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations held a hearing recently on slamming. At this hearing, we became aware of the fact that slammers intentionally used names like Phone Company and Long Distance Services to deliberately deceive customers on their phone bills. Usually local telephone companies or billing agents precede an itemized list of long distance calls by printing the name of the long distance service provider. When deceptive company names are used, customers are not aware that their long distance service provider has been changed. My intention was to remedy this situation by requiring the billing companies to specify the long distance provider using a statement like, "Your provider for the following long distance service is———". If that type of statement were made conspicuously and clearly stated on a consumer's phone bill before the itemized long distance charges, consumers would know if their long distance carrier had been changed.

Section 231 of the manager's amendment, entitled Obligations of Telephone Billing Agents, has language that differs from my proposed amendment. The language in the Manager's amendment is language that was suggested by the staff at the Federal Communications Commission.

I chose not to use the FCC language because my staff contacted several telephone companies and learned that if we used the FCC language several problems could be created which may result in potential increased costs to consumers. GAO has advised my staff that some of the requirements in the