

against Katyusha rockets, and by the U.S. providing \$25 million for anti-terrorism assistance.

Thanks to the industriousness of its people, and with the help of American financial assistance and free trade agreements with both the United States and the European Union, Israel has transformed itself from a small, agriculturally-based economy in a largely desert climate into a modern, successful, high-tech economy.

Israel's industrial exports are today 1,380 times what they were 47 years ago. Its Gross Domestic Product has risen from \$2.5 billion in the 1960s to \$90.6 billion last year. Its computer industry and agricultural technology are some of the most successful and innovative in the world.

Israel has also seen phenomenal growth in health care and education. More than 33% of Israelis have formal schooling of 13 years compared from 6% in the 1960's and the life expectancy of Israelis is among the longest in the world. It is a sign of Israel's economic maturation that in January of this year, Israel and the United States began to discuss proposals to reduce and phase out U.S. economic aid to Israel.

For Israel's long-term security and economic success, there is no higher priority than the achievement of a permanent peace settlement with all of its neighbors. The peace treaties with Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994 were the first steps in that process. The United States has stood by Israel in its desire to achieve peace with its neighbors, and will continue to work to help Israel achieve peace with Syria, Lebanon, other Arab nations, and, perhaps most urgently, to fulfill the promise of the handshake between the late Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat on the White House lawn in 1993 by achieving a final peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians.

For all of us who care so deeply for Israel's security, who long to see Israel achieve peace with its neighbors, the current peace process has reached a critical juncture. Since Israel's security can best be guaranteed by peace between it and its neighbors, the United States must remain prepared to do everything we can to help reach a successful conclusion to this peace process. That is the best 50th birthday present we can give the people of Israel.

On this historic occasion, I would like to offer my utmost congratulations to President Weizman, Prime Minister Netanyahu, and the people they represent, and express my deep admiration for the accomplishments of the State and people of Israel, a nation that has risen from the darkest moments of history to rebuild itself as an example of the capabilities of the human spirit, the unbreakable ties that exist among a people, and the great justice of democracy. May Israel's next 50 years bring it even greater success.●

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF ISRAELI INDEPENDENCE

● Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, today we are celebrating one of the greatest achievements of the twentieth century—the founding of the state of Israel. I rise to congratulate the people of Israel for a half century of independence—and to look forward to a future of peace and prosperity.

The story of Israel is unique. A people forced into exile, who endured centuries of persecution, rebuilt their ancient homeland. They forged a nation where they could practice their ancient faith and traditions. They created an open and free democratic society. And always, they offer a home to Jewish immigrants from around the world.

The founding of Israel followed the most incomprehensible and evil event of the twentieth century, when the Nazis—with the complicity of so many others—sought to exterminate a people. The survivors of the Holocaust helped to build modern Israel. Never again will the Jewish people be dependent on anyone else for their security.

At first Israelis envisioned an agrarian society. But today, Israel is a center for technology and science. American scientists and engineers are working as partners with Israelis to develop the innovations of the next century. Our great federal laboratories, like the National Institutes of Health, are now working with Israeli scientists on a cure for cancer and other deadly diseases.

America's relationship with Israel is also unique. We share common goals, values and interests. We stand by each other in good times and bad.

Israel has had to endure five wars and live in constant readiness for battle. They live with the constant threat of terrorism. America must continue to stand by Israel—to make sure they have what they need to protect themselves. We must also stand by them in stopping their enemies from developing the weapons of mass destruction—and the missiles to deliver these deadly weapons.

We all hope that the next century will bring peace to Israel and its neighbors. Five years ago, we witnessed the famous handshakes on the White House lawn. These handshakes heralded a new commitment toward peace.

The peace process is now stalled. There is a crisis of confidence and a lack of trust. There has been a lot of finger-pointing about who is to blame. But let's remember how much Israel has given up for peace. Let's remember the Sinai and Hebron. No victorious power has ever given up more for peace.

Mr. President: I salute the people of Israel as they celebrate fifty years of independence, and I look forward to a future of peace, prosperity and friendship.●

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL

● Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, in recognition of the warm bonds of affection that exist between the people of Israel and the people of the United States, and the enduring friendship that unites our two nations, I rise today to congratulate the State of Israel on the 50th Anniversary of its birth as an independent nation.

Mr. President, no people in the world have more in common with Americans than the people of Israel. No two nations are more committed to freedom, to justice, and to peace than Israel and the United States.

As nations of immigrants, we cherish our common culture and honor the rich traditions that make us one. We revere our families, nourish our faith, and never hesitate to make sacrifices in the present if they will secure a better future for our children.

As such, we make loyal friends and determined adversaries—as both our friends and our foes around the world have learned throughout the years.

Mr. President, those shared values and similar heritage have made us more than fellow democracies. They've made us fast friends, valued trading partners, and strategic allies. And I pray that nothing ever happens to change that relationship.

These things were never clearer to me than they were when I visited Israel last year. It was, in fact, my first foreign visit as a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. What I learned and saw there will remain with me for the rest of my life.

Together with my wife, Karyn, I visited Jericho, Haifa and Tel Aviv. I traveled to the Golan Heights, spent a night on a kibbutz, and stood on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. I met with diplomats and military leaders, visited industries and hospitals, and throughout it all I was excited by Israel's economy and impressed with its commitment to technological excellence.

But my most memorable moments had nothing to do with international politics or diplomacy. They came from my contact with a people whose spirit is as strong and unshakable as the 3,000 years of history that lies beneath every step one takes in that holy land.

Mr. President, in preparing for my trip to Israel, and especially to Jerusalem, I read a lot about its topography, its history, its climate, and its culture. But nothing prepared me for its incomparable beauty. It is a place whose sights and melodies permeate your being and leave an indelible mark on your soul.

After experiencing it first-hand, it is not at all hard to imagine why this 3,000-year-old link—unmatched in all of history—exists between a place and a people, and why—even through centuries of war, oppression, exile and dispersion—that link has never been severed.

But Israel is much more than its collected history, as the last five decades

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF ISRAEL

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ISRAEL'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

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

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

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

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