

permanent and secure peace in the Middle East, with Israel and its Arab neighbors working together to build a better future for all the citizens of the region. This would truly fulfill Israel's promise and its destiny.●

ISRAEL'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

● Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, there is a notable chorus of Senators congratulating the people of Israel and their government on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Israel's birth. There are few things that have not been said on the subject of Israel—friend, ally, democracy. The Congress has spoken on countless occasions about Jerusalem, our commitment to Israel's security, and to peace in the Middle East.

In the end, however, all these expressions, as heartfelt as they are, pale beside the real miracle of the Jewish people, in exile for 2000 years, having returned to the land of Israel. And on that tiny piece of land, smaller than the State of New Jersey, an incredible nation has been built—a nation that has survived five wars, untold numbers of terrorist attacks, and the hostility of most of its neighbors.

Israel has absorbed millions of immigrants, providing homes, and jobs, and schools and freedom. Year to year, day to day, Israel may not look precisely like a land of milk and honey, but for the Jews of Europe who survived the Holocaust, and the Russians who survived Communism, it is the Promised Land.

Israel is great, not merely because its creation is the fulfillment of a biblical promise, or because it is a faithful friend to the United States. It is great because the people of Israel are great people. I congratulate my friend, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and all the people of Israel.●

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL

● Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN. Mr. President, today is the 50th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel. I would like to take a moment to reflect upon the significance of this historic event.

For the nearly two millennia that preceded the founding of Israel, Jews across the globe had experienced unrelenting persecution, culminating in the previously unimaginable apocalypse of the Holocaust. In the wake of Adolph Hitler's effort to exterminate all of the Jews of Europe, and his success murdering six million of them, the moral imperative of establishing a Jewish state became clear. And so the Jewish people battled to create that which had only been dreamed of for 19 centuries: a nation of their own.

Their triumph marked the beginning of one of the most inspiring stories of the 20th century. That Israel would survive to see today's anniversary was far from certain. It's founding brought

about the first of four wars in which outnumbered Israeli forces somehow managed to defeat or hold off the armies of its hostile neighbors. Israel's courage and ingenuity in the face of overwhelming odds is, quite simply, unparalleled in the modern world.

Despite the constant threat to its security, out of the desert, Israel has created a flourishing, democratic society, home to innovative science, cutting-edge technology, and rich culture. Today, its economy rivals that of Western Europe in terms of per capita wealth.

I am proud of the role that the United States has played in helping to keep this brave nation alive. To this day, the preservation and maintenance of Israel's national security remains the foundation upon which U.S. policy in the Middle East rests. Israel remains one of America's most trusted allies—a nation with which we have cooperated to resolve a variety of regional and global issues. Time and again over the last 50 years, Israel and the United States have demonstrated that we share a special relationship that transcends parochial and short-term policy objectives.

I have always believed that there can be no real peace in the Middle East unless Israel's security is guaranteed. That is why, throughout my career, I have supported strong U.S. economic and military support for Israel. As the greatest democratic nation on the planet, I believe that the United States must do everything in its power to ensure that Israel—the only multi-party democracy in the Middle East—survives.

Currently, the best way for the United States to ensure the future security and prosperity not only of Israel but of the entire region is for it to play a strong role in keeping the Middle East Peace Process alive. If further strife and sorrow in the region is to be avoided, dialogue between Israel and her historic enemies must be maintained. Although the Peace Process has stalled recently, I believe that it can be revived if the United States remains committed to serving as an honest intermediary between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Key to the effort to see the participants through this difficult period is President Clinton's commitment to provide financial and technical assistance to Israel to help fight terrorism and to monitor the Palestinian Authority's compliance with the Oslo Accords.

Mr. President, the Israeli people have demonstrated countless times that they are willing to take risks for peace. That is why I am confident that they will face the challenges of implementing the Oslo Accords and the Declaration of Principles with fortitude and creativity. The United States must stand shoulder to shoulder with them as they make this effort. Working together, I am confident that we can forge a peace that will guarantee that Israel will live to celebrate its centennial in 2048.●

ISRAEL'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

● Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, 50 years ago the State of Israel proclaimed its independence as a homeland and beacon of hope to Jews around the world. At 4:06 p.m. on April 30, 1948, David Ben-Gurion declared that the establishment of Israel would be effective at midnight the same day. Eleven minutes into the next day, the United States became the first country to extend recognition to the State of Israel when President Truman declared to the American people:

This government has been informed that a Jewish State has been proclaimed in Palestine and recognition has been requested by the provisional government thereof. The United States recognizes the provisional government as the de facto authority of the new State of Israel.

The ensuing rejection of Israel's appeal for peace expressed in its 1948 Declaration of Independence represented a missed opportunity of historic proportions. The Declaration stated: "We extend our hand to all neighboring states and their people in an offer of peace and unity and appeal to them to cooperate with the independent Jewish nation for the good of all." Yet for 50 years, the people of Israel have endured war and violent conflict, including a war of independence, the Six Day War, and the Yom Kippur War, weathered constant challenges to their survival, faced isolation, an economic boycott, and struggled against terrorism.

To build an independent Jewish nation on a small piece of land would have been difficult even under the most ideal conditions. For Israel to have done so while the country's very existence was constantly being threatened is truly a tremendous accomplishment. In the face of hostility and adversity, Israel has persevered and developed into a thriving and diverse nation.

The special relationship between the United States and Israel is fundamentally based on shared values and experiences. As a vibrant democracy like our own, and despite the heavy burdens imposed on the country by war, Israel is a land of immigrants and pioneers whose democratic achievements reflect the hard work, sacrifice, courage, devotion, and self-discipline of its people. Few societies have sustained such pressure and kept their commitment to a strong democracy as Israel has done. In just 50 years the Israeli people have built modern cities and prosperous farms, and established high quality educational and medical institutions. Israel has accomplished this while remaining a refuge for Jews fleeing oppression and persecution around the world, as earlier Israel offered a new life to the survivors of the Holocaust.

In keeping with its earliest hopes, Israel has been successful in forging ties with some of its neighbors and former adversaries, and sought to strengthen its security by ending the cycle of conflict and violence marking its first 50 years. Israel's willingness to take risks for peace has been borne out