IN HONOR OF THE NEW JERSEY ARYA SAMAJ MANDIR, INC., AND ITS FIFTH ANNUAL COMMEMORATIVE FLAG-RAISING CEREMONY

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2000

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, today I recognize the New Jersey Arya Samaj Mandir, Inc., and the fifth annual commemorative flag-raising ceremony in celebration of the 34th Anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of Guyana.

This fine organization was incorporated in 1988 to promote Indian culture, while also assisting with the sometimes trying period of adjustment that immigrant families experience upon entering, settling, and residing in a foreign land. Arya Samaj Mandir, Inc., serves the educational, cultural, religious, and social needs of New Jersey's Arya and Hindu immigrants in a way that improves the quality of their American experience.

Guyana's independence is the primary reason for this flag-raising ceremony, and in honor of Guyana's Independence and its many years of struggle to realize that independence, it is important to provide overview of its history.

'Guyana' is an indigenous Indian word that means land of many waters. In 1622, the Dutch began colonizing Guyana and in 1640, the first group of slaves arrived. Following the 1763 Berbice Slave Rebellion, British captured the colony in 1781, were ousted a year later, and they returned in 1812. Laborers were brought from Portugal in 1935, from India in 1838, and from China in 1853.

Under universal suffrage, the first elections were held in 1953. The People's Progressive Party (PPP) won the election, but it was removed 133 days later by the British. The PPP was reelected in 1957 and again in 1961. In 1966, Guyana became an independent nation. However, corrupt elections led to 28 years of unpopular rule. It was not until 1992 that the Republic of Guyana held free and open elections. Today, the PPP-Civic government is in power under the Presidency of Dr. Cheddi Jagan.

I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the New Jersey Arya Samaj Mandir, Inc., and the fifth annual flag-raising ceremony in honor of Guyana's independence.

THE U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2000

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to share with my colleagues excerpts of a speech recently delivered by the Vice President on the subject of the U.S.-Israel relationship and the situation in the Middle East region. I found the Vice President's remarks to be quite thoughtful and believe they would be of great use to members.

The Vice President made a number of especially important points. He stated that the United States can and should continue to guarantee Israel's qualitative military edge. We all want to see peace in the Middle East. But without security, Israel cannot be expected to negotiate with hostile adversaries toward a resolution of age old differences.

I am pleased that the Vice President spoke of Israel's participation in international politics, and underscored his commitment to helping Israel achieve full and fair status at the United Nations.

The Vice President made it clear that he understands the importance of the U.S.-Israel friendship. He also pointed out that while we are close allies, and are supportive of the peace process, we must never pressure Israel to do anything it feels may compromise its security.

I am so pleased that Egypt and Jordan have entered into peace treaties with Israel. I join the Vice President in expressing hope for success with the Palestinian authorities. I agree with him that a final agreement between Israel and the Palestinians is possible. However, we must see as much resolve from Yassir Arafat and the Palestinian leadership toward that goal in order for it to be reality. Like many Israeli's, Syrians, and others around the world, I am disappointed that Syria has not taken advantage of the opportunities presented so far to negotiate in good faith toward a fair and lasting resolution to the issues the two nations face. I hope that President Assad will engage Israel again and commit to working through the challenges that remain in the way of peace between Israel and Syria.

The Vice President's words regarding Russian and Iran were encouraging, in that, he realizes that Russia must actively work to help reduce the threat Iran poses to the international community, to Israel, and to the U.S.

Finally, I join the Vice President and numerous other leaders in this nation and around the world in remaining committed to Israel's security now and in the future. Until the day comes that we witness peace between Israel and all of her neighbors, I will remain steadfast in my support for our great ally in the Middle East. I will always work to maintain a strong friendship and strategic alliance between our two nations.

REMARKS BY VICE PRESIDENT AL GORE

AIPAC ANNUAL POLICY CONFERENCE

''. . . Now, almost two decades later, the crowd is a little bigger, and the challenges before Israel and the U.S.-Israel relationship have changed. But some things have not: our enduring support for a strong partnership between the United States and Israel; and our commitment to one of the cornerstones of America's national security—a strong, secure, peaceful, and prosperous State of Israel.

. . . Even when the world is upside down, the United States and Israel see eye-to-eye. Ben-Gurion may have had unorthodox ways of conducting diplomacy, but he was a modern-day prophet. He was part of a generation that believed it was their responsibility to make the centuries-long dream of a Jewish homeland a reality. He was one of the dreamers who believed that they could make the desert bloom. He was one of the warriors who never lost hope for peace. As Ben-Gurion wrote to a friend near the end of his life, ''there is hope . . . that peace is approaching, not quickly, but slowly, slowly . . . and it appears to me that by the end of this century, the prophecy of Isaiah will be fulfilled.''

I want to talk with you today about what we can do to achieve peace and security for Israel, for our own country, and ultimately, throughout the world. In a speech three weeks ago in Boston, I laid out a vision for America's strength and role abroad. I believe we need to recognize that the classic security agenda—the question of war and peace between sovereign nations—is still with us during this new Global Age, in which the destinies of billions of people around the globe are increasingly intertwined.

We need to recognize that this Global Age presents us with a new set of threats—such as rogue nations or terrorist groups acquiring biological, chemical, or nuclear weapons—or merely the ability to dissrupt our computer networks. Or the continued degradation of our environment which threatens the long-term security of all humanity. At the same time, this new age also presents us with new opportunities—for peace, and for economic growth. . . .

. . . When we took office seven years ago, President Clinton and I decided that the United States needed to chart a new course with regard to the Middle East peace process. Unlike our immediate predecessors, we chose to get intimately involved. But we also established a firm, new rule—that we must not, and would not, in any way try to pressure Israel, to agree to measures that they themselves did not see were in their own best interests.

This commitment to Israel was not new for me. I stood against the efforts of the two previous administrations to pressure Israel to take stands against its own view of what was in Israel's best interests. In 1988, 1 took a strong stand against a previous administration's efforts to force Israel into concessions that would have threatened its security. And in 1991, I remember vividly standing up against a group of administration foreign policy advisors who promoted the insulting concept of ''linkage,'' which tried to use loan guarantees as a stick to bully Israel. I stood with AIPAC, and together, we defeated them.

And incidentally, I have never and will never interfere in an Israeli election. But I certainly hope that all of you will be active in this upcoming American election because a lot is at stake.

Facilitating peace, not forcing it; standing by our friends, not against them—these have been the hallmarks of my approach for my entire career, and it will be my approach if I'm entrusted with the Presidency.

I will never, ever let people forget that the relationship between the United States and Israel rests on granite—on the rock of our common values, our common heritage, and our common dedication to freedom.

If, from time to time, we disagree, I will always work to make sure that we emerge even stronger—with a better understanding of each other's interests—so that we are always working to reinforce one another. I will never forget that Israel's security rests on its superiority in arms. That is why, two years ago, the United States and Israel established a new strategic partnership, ushering in an unprecedented level of military cooperation. I am absolutely committed to make sure that Israel's qualitative edge remains, and remains strong.

Our renewed partnership has brought historic progress over the past seven years. Last year, when we met, I told you I would work to end Israel's half-century of ostracism from the United Nations groupings of countries from which membership in the UN Security Council is drawn.

When I was last at the UN in January, I raised this issue with Secretary General Annan in a private meeting. I have continued to work on it, and I can report to you that we are closer than ever to seeing Israel finally, and proudly, take its rightful, equal

place in the international order. The shameful wall that has blocked Israel's full integration into the community of nations must come down.

In these seven years, Jordan has joined Egypt as an Arab state which has signed a peace agreement with Israel. The negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis have reached a point where final status talks and a full resolution are still possible, although the difficult struggle to get there is clearly growing more intense. As we have seen again this past week, there are those who prefer violence to negotiation. I condemn this violence. Just as I supported Prime Minister Netanyahu's efforts, I now applaud Prime Minister Barak's resolve, and his clear message that peace will be achieved at the bargaining table, not in streets torn by riots and violence. We should all be proud of his courage. He has shown as much bravery in negotiations as he has demonstrated in a lifetime of heroic service on the battlefield.

The negotiations can not be a one-way street. The Palestinians, too, must recognize that they will not get all that they want. It is the responsibility of Yasir Arafat and the Palestinian leadership—a responsibility they acknowledge—to prevent those who would resort to violence from disrupting the peace process at this extraordinarily difficult and delicate time.

It is a particular disappointment that Syria, at least for now, has turned down offers made in good faith in Geneva. As Israel proceeds to withdraw from Lebanon in compliance with Resolution 425, President Assad can decide to let this happen without incident as a down payment for peace in the future. Or, by continuing to allow Hezbollah to harass Israel as her troops withdraw and even after they withdraw, he can signal that he is not interested in progress.

Syria may not choose to pursue peace for now. But make no mistake: Syria has no right to pursue a course of conflict that denies peace to others. The people of the Galilee should be able to live their lives without the disruption of an air-raid siren. If peace does not come to this area, President Assad will bear a heavy responsibility before the entire world.

It is a sign of how serious matters have become that Prime Minister Barak has decided to remain at home, canceling his trip to the United States. Ehud Barak is far away from here tonight, but the message we all send to him should be loud and clear: we stand by you in these critical days. The classic challenges of war and peace extend beyond Israel's immediate neighborhood, to Iraq and Iran.

In Iran, there is an increasing tension between the people, who clearly want to lead normal lives, and the most extreme clerics, who are bent on preserving their radical regime, by whatever means necessary.

We see this tension playing itself out in the trial of thirteen Iranian Jews in Shiraz. Like the closure of newspapers and the assassination of dissident leaders, this trial is part of the effort to block reform in Iran. Those conducting the trial claim that due process is being served, but the proceedings are closed to international observers and to the press. They say they have received confessions from some of the accused—but it is clear that these confessions are meaningless and that the trials are a mockery of justice. We utterly and absolutely condemn these show trials as an immoral and illegal abuse of basic human rights.

And let me be clear: the United States will judge Iran by its actions, not by its assurances.

Iran is not only a conventional threat to our national interests, the security of Israel, and the stability of the region. It also stands at the crossroads, where the classic and new security agendas meet—for it is a major sponsor of terrorism and seeker of weapons of mass destruction, a deadly and unacceptable combination.

We have been working to cut off all possible suppliers of missile and nuclear technology. We have gained full cooperation from our European allies. But Russia represents a special concern—because there is a gap between the stated policy of its government to stop proliferation, and what occurs in practice. We have used our leverage with Russia.

We have made progress at some points, but not at others. We now call on President Putin to show leadership in this area—not just because it is in our interests, but also because it is in Russia's interests.

The challenges of the classic security agenda—facilitating peace between Israel and its neighbors, and containing and transforming Iran and Iraq—are ones that I believe we can meet, with unwavering vigilance and commitment. But we also recognize that when the time comes for that last peace treaty to be signed—if it comes—there will then be agreements between govermnents, but not necessarily peace between peoples. True peace—if it is to take hold—will come about only if we apply the same courage and determination to making the Middle East a more stable, secure, and prosperous region.

I ask us, for a moment, to lift our eyes and look beyond the ebb and flow of daily events. Despite all the grave problems of the moment, all the real challenges to the prospect for peace, let us envision the Middle East as it can be ten or twenty years from now—a Middle East at peace with itself, taking full advantage of all its potential and the talents of all its people. And let us focus on the steps we can take to make that vision a reality. . . .''

AUTHORIZING EXTENSION OF NONDISCRIMINATORY TREATMENT (NORMAL TRADE RELATIONS TREATMENT) TO PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN J. LaFALCE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2000

Mr. LAFALCE. Mr. Speaker, the vote this week on whether to establish Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) with China will undoubtedly be the most important one we will take in this first year of the new millennium. I rise today to express my intent to vote ''yes'' on granting stable trade status to China and to explain, in some detail, the reasons behind my decision.

This issue involves the economies of the United States and China, and indeed the economies of nations around the world. But the judgments to be made involve far more than economic concerns alone. What we do this week will affect national and international security. It will set the agenda for how the U.S. interacts with China on such important matters as human and worker rights, the environment, and religious freedom. And it will help to determine how both the U.S. and China address the rest of the world for decades to come.

EVOLUTION IN CHINA

Over the last two decades, I have been fortunate to witness the social and economic evolution in China ''up close and personal.'' In January 1979, I traveled to Beijing as part of a Congressional delegation representing the United States as we reestablished diplomatic relations with China, This past week I reminisced with President Carter about that historic day, the intervening twenty years, and today's historic vote. We share virtually identical views.

Twenty years ago China was a backward, drab country just starting to recover from the disaster that Mao called ''the Cultural Revolution.'' The streets were crowded—with pedestrians and bicycles. A few newspapers posted on a few walls were the only visible demonstration of ''openness'' allowed by the government at that time.

I went back to China a few years ago. The change and the progress in the human condition were profound. What had been gray now had a rainbow of color. Economic development—and the entrepreneurial spirit—was evident around every corner. The streets were still crowded, but this time jammed with cars. And the newspapers plastered on walls had been supplanted by cell phones and laptop computers with Internet access. There was an openness that I believed was virtually irreversible, although much progress still needs to be made.

Two personal stories: (a) when first in China, a colleague used a Polaroid camera and the Chinese people thought a miracle had been wrought. They had never before seen themselves in print. Today, Eastman Kodak sells more film in China than in any other country in the world outside the United States; (b) when last in China, a human rights activist said to me, ''Let's keep in touch. What's your e-mail address?'' That's progress.

I have no doubt that commercial relations between China and the United States—and the rest of the world—contributed substantially to these changes in Chinese society. Mao's approach was wrong, and the actions, if not the words, of subsequent leaders in Beijing have demonstrated that they know he was wrong. They have opted for a movement toward a market economy, with all that means for progress and development and, ultimately and inevitably, various forms of freedom.

This view is also held by both President Jimmy Carter and President Bill Clinton, by both Vice President AL GORE and Senator Bill Bradley, by both Governor George W. Bush and Sen. JOHN MCCAIN, by both Senators from New York and by both Senate candidates in New York.

I believe that bringing China further into the international economic system will only accelerate these trends. And I am persuaded that these trends enhance freedoms for the Chinese people which, in turn, should make Asia and the world more secure.

BILATERAL U.S.-CHINA TRADE

Looking at this purely in commercial terms, it seems fairly clear that the consequences of rejection of PNTR on U.S. businesses generally would be quite severe. There is virtual unanimity in the business community that welcoming China into the WTO—which will happen regardless of how the upcoming vote in Congress goes—and stabilizing our trading relations with that massive and growing market is in our economic interest. And if that were the only criterion on which to base our vote, the decision would be easy indeed.