

in the Camp David Peace Accord which settled the state of war with Egypt, in Israel's recognition of a Palestinian Authority, and in the 1994 agreement ending war between Israel and Jordan.

Throughout these years, through good and difficult times, the United States and Israel have maintained an enduring strategic partnership which has served us well. The United States commitment to Israel's strength and security remains firm. As President Clinton declared before the Knesset in 1994, "The survival of Israel is important not only to our interests, but to every value we hold dear as a people. Our role in war has been to help you defend yourself by yourself. That is what you have asked. Now that you are taking risks for peace, our role is to help you to minimize the risks of peace."

Today, on the fiftieth anniversary of the Jewish state, we recognize the tremendous achievements of the Israeli people and commemorate the fruitful and enduring partnership between our two nations. We wish for Israel the lasting peace and stability its people have long sought and offer our congratulations on the inspiring example they have set.●

#### ISRAEL INDEPENDENCE DAY

● Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, today is Israel's Independence Day marking the 50th anniversary of the founding of the modern state of Israel. The last fifty years have fascinated and captivated many of us as we have watched and supported this country in its struggle for survival. Out of the ashes of the Holocaust, Jews from around the world converged on this small but holy land to build a modern state in a place where Jews had maintained a presence for thousands of years. From the first days of statehood in 1948 when its neighbors declared war and attempted to obliterate it from the map, Israel has defied the odds and endured in the most dangerous of neighborhoods. Each decade since 1948 Israel has survived a major war with its neighbors: Suez in 1956, the Six Day War in 1967, the 1973 Yom Kippur War, the war in Lebanon in 1982 and then the deadly Iraqi Scud missiles launched against its people in 1991. Yet in the midst of all these wars, tens of murderous terrorist attacks, and a crippling Arab economic boycott, Israel has built a vibrant democracy and a robust economy.

The United States has not been a bystander in this remarkable transformation. We have provided needed assistance, in recognition of our shared democratic values, and we have benefited from a close strategic alliance. There is a special and enduring relationship between the United States and Israel dating back to the days when the United States was the first nation to recognize Israel when it declared its independence. As Israel marks its jubilee year, we celebrate that relationship.

Mr. President, I want to salute the people of Israel for all they have achieved in the last fifty years. I join with the Jewish community around the world, which has provided support and received moral and spiritual sustenance from Israel, in wishing them well. May they go from strength to strength.●

#### ISRAEL'S BIRTHDAY

● Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, today we celebrate the 50th birthday of the State of Israel, a birthday reached after half a century of struggle, of perseverance, and on too many occasions, for too many families, of pain. We also celebrate half a century of vision—and hope above all else that when we join together to recognize the 100th birthday of the State of Israel we will do so in an age of lasting peace.

It is only fitting that the sense of joy that has accompanied this historic milestone for Israel here in the United States is exceeded only within the borders of Israel itself. Israel and the United States share great ideas as well as a great alliance; and the security of Israel is indispensable to the security of the United States.

We accept this fact as central to our foreign policy, to our national interests, and to our view of the world itself. It has been true since the day of Truman and we pray this truth will guide us through the next millennium.

But we sometimes forget that these two great nations—the United States of America and the State of Israel—share another rare quality, as Prime Minister Netanyahu stated so eloquently. Neither country is just a spot on the map, a piece of geography; both are founded on a shining vision of human dignity and purpose.

It was an American poet who wrote, "Nothing grows, unless first a dream." Those like Elie Weisel remind us that not even dreams survive without a great struggle. The Jewish people have taught us much about dignity and purpose because they have preserved their dream and their undying vision through two thousand years in exile and persecution. To arrive at this historic day they had to outlast history's fiercest fires of hate.

That resilience is testimony to a vision forged in adamantine; to the strongest wills and the bravest hearts; an unbreakable spirit that keep Israel alive and daring even into the twenty-first century. It is that same will that we all pray will guide Israel to an era of peace in the Middle East.

Tonight we pay tribute to those who will never see that era of harmony, that day when Israel is a homeland and a safe haven for all who share in that vision. We remember those who died in the hope that even if they could not know peace and safety, those who bore their name might live the dream for them. That sacrifice inspires us all to push forward.

I will never forget that when, addressing age old violence and the awful

spectacle of man's inhumanity to man, Prime Minister Rabin exclaimed "Enough is enough." He touched a chord within anyone who mourns an innocent life lost, who thinks about the future doctor, teacher, nurse, scientist, poet, diplomat, or artists that will never be. Behind all the words and diplomatic documents, shrouded by the haze of the gunfire, that is the reality that must be changed before it happens again and again.

On my first trip to Israel, I toured the country from Kibbutz Mizgav Am to Masada to the Golan. I stood in the very shelter in a kibbutz in the north where children were attacked and I looked at launching sites and impact zones for Katousha rockets. Like many visitors, I was enthralled by Tel Aviv, moved by Jerusalem and inspired by standing above Capernaum, looking out over the Sea of Galilee, where I read aloud the Sermon on the Mount. I met people of stunning commitment, who honestly and vigorously debated the issues as I watched and listened intently. I went as a friend by conviction; I returned a friend at the deepest personal level.

That understanding, that sense of kinship, is shared not just between a set of leaders or between families, but by two nations with a shared faith in the power of the human spirit. The United States and Israel will walk forward together.

Herzl's famous words, "If you will it, it is no dream," signify the promise and the greatest power of Israel—and the hope, after half a century, that a fair and secure peace is finally within reach. For our part as Americans, we must dedicate ourselves to pushing ahead in the coming years more committed than ever to support Israel in the exacting, essential, and sometimes tense search for that dream.

A pain which the heart can never forget reminds us that the ashes of Holocaust victims were scattered on the wind. But that wind also carries on it their prayers and purpose—above mountains and sea, across hundreds or thousands of miles, so that the pain of history is redeemed in the land of Israel. It is a sacred place—for those who have made it their home and for all the world. So let us now resolve again that in the next fifty years, as in the past five decades, we will make our best efforts to keep secure this sacred land.

In many respects, our task as Americans, as a good ally and a committed world neighbor, appears easier in the reflection of history. The memory will never escape me, the emotions that touched me on top of Masada, when I stood on that great plateau where the oath of new soldiers used to be sworn against the desert backdrop and the test of history. I had spent several hours with Yadin Roman debating whether or not in fact Josephus Flavius was correct in his account of the siege—whether these really were the last Jews fighting for survival—