

have extensive data upon which we could base an informed decision regarding the best way for our Nation to provide health care to those who have earned it through the sacrifices inherent in military service.●

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S ULTIMATUM TO ISRAEL

Mr. MACK. Mr. President, President Clinton's ultimatum to Israel regarding proposals to withdrawal from the West Bank to secure the peace process is wrong and should be abandoned. What business is it of the United States to give an ultimatum to a democratically elected people regarding their own security interest? We should not publicly pressure an ally to violate their own security assessment. This is not a matter for Washington to decide, but rather for the Israeli people to decide.

The deadline imposed on Israel by the Administration removes any incentive for Palestinian President Yasser Arafat to negotiate. The United States should encourage direct negotiation, not dictate the agenda. We need to exercise patience to reach a lasting peace, not risk Israeli security.

Mr. President, the Middle East peace process is taking place in a complex environment; caution—not irresponsible bravado—is required. There is no question that everyone involved wants peace in the Middle East. Yet, we must ask if our current actions are leading Israel and the Palestinian people toward security and freedom, or further from it. Putting pressure upon the people of Israel, forcing them to violate their own security needs, works against peace.

The Middle East continues to be defined by suspicion, hatred, and a continuing arms race. Terrorism's presence can be felt everywhere—in the markets and in the streets and cafes. And while much of the Arab world enters modernity, liberalizing economies and governments, radical Islamic extremism also grows. Anti-Semitism and the anti-Israeli refrain has not yet ceased to be heard through the souks and bazaars of the Middle East. This hatred is unfortunately a very real, very frightening, part of daily existence for the Israeli people.

Over the past several months of bipartisan discussions and personal dialogue with the administration, I've concluded two things. First, America can continue to play a vital role in the peace process, but our role must be limited to mediator and facilitator. Second, in spite of this administration's good intentions, the United States is currently trying to lead the talks toward a false goal—the Israelis understand this and resist. The President must understand that peace through ultimatum may get him an agreement, but an agreement which may provide a risky and false peace.

A lasting and secure peace represents the only worthy goal. And if this means that we wait and demonstrate patience and not arrogance, then we

should. The U.S. will eagerly take a share of the credit for a successful agreement, but we must remember—we do not pay the price of failure. The price of failure will be paid by the Palestinian and Israeli people, who will continue to live in fear of another bus bombing in the city center, of their children being targeted in buses and cafes.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL

● Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to join those in this Chamber and around the globe who have spiritually linked arms to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel. I am particularly happy to see that the people of my own hometown of Stamford, Connecticut have seen fit to join in the international chorus of voices commemorating this milestone.

After the horrors of the Holocaust, the establishment of the State of Israel represented a significant turning point. The world community denounced an endemic hatred that had led to the decimation of a people and in doing so, set the stage for the renaissance of a culture that had been without a home for nearly two thousand years. The time of tribulation had passed and Jews were, at long last, reunited with their ancestral homeland.

Israel and the Old City of Jerusalem represent both the current state of humanity and the heights to which we can aspire. We have been taught that long ago, Israel was a gift to Abraham and his descendants, a token of thanks for his faithfulness. Since that time, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam have each governed this land and each religion has developed a spiritual stake in the land. These religions have lived in neighboring and even overlapping communities for half a century, yet peace and security have remained elusive. We have recently begun to see the first opportunities for a lasting peace. When this opportunity is fully realized, Israel will truly stand as both symbol and reality that the forces that bind us together are far greater than the forces that seek to divide us.

The Jewish Community Center in Stamford will be holding its celebration on May 17, 1998. I am happy to join them and the millions of others who have lifted their voices in commemoration of this very important landmark.●

HONORING THE UNITED JEWISH FEDERATION OF STAMFORD ON ITS 25TH ANNIVERSARY

● Mr. DODD. Mr. President, this month, the world's eyes are on the State of Israel as it celebrates the 50th Anniversary of its independence. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate and praise the people of Israel on this historic occasion.

Many centuries ago, Isaiah prophesied that Israel would become "a light unto the nations." Today, Israel's light is shining brightly—not only for its

citizens, but for people throughout the world. This nation arose from the ashes of the Holocaust and has given the Jewish people of the world a permanent homeland.

The modern State of Israel has faced many obstacles in its short life, but it has survived them all, and in fact excelled in spite of them. Its population has grown from 600,000 in 1948 to nearly 6 million today as it has absorbed waves of immigrants from all over the globe. It is a vibrant democracy, with free and open elections and a free press. Despite a shortage of natural resources and many other obstacles, it has developed a thriving economy. And from this small nation, we have seen countless acclaimed writers, artists, and musicians.

Israel has also shared a special relationship with the United States. Over the years, our nations have stood together to preserve Israel's safety and security, and I want to take this opportunity to join my fellow Americans in pledging our continued support for this trusted ally.

This is also a time of celebration for members of the American Jewish population. Festivities are being held all across the country, and in my state of Connecticut, the United Jewish Federation and the Jewish Community Center of Stamford will hold a community-wide festival to commemorate the 50th anniversary on Sunday, May 17th. There will actually be another special event in Stamford the previous Thursday.

On May 14th, the United Jewish Federation of Stamford will celebrate its 25th Anniversary. Throughout the years, the UJF has played a vital role in building and maintaining a sense of unity among Stamford's Jewish community. They have helped to promote and enrich Jewish life in the area by coordinating educational, social and philanthropic activities. They have also worked to defend the political and religious rights of the Jewish people, not only in Connecticut, but around the Nation, in Israel, and throughout the world.

The UJF of Stamford's stated mission is to create a community based on the Jewish ideal of "tzedakah": charity, righteousness and social justice. Well, I would say that their works and actions have clearly embodied these three principles. I want to personally thank them for all that they have done to strengthen and improve both their community and our state, and I offer my sincere congratulations to them on this joyous anniversary.●

PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I am pleased to join the President, Vice President, and my colleagues in Congress in recognizing the significant contribution of all public employees to our Nation's well-being. This week,