

**SENATE—Thursday, March 11, 1999**

The Senate met at 12 noon and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

## PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, like the signers of the Declaration of Independence, we pledge to You and to our Nation our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor. We confess that it is a lot easier for us to say that than for the 56 men who placed their signatures on that historic liberating document. We reflect thoughtfully that few were long to survive. Five were captured, tortured, and later died. Twelve had their homes ransacked, looted, occupied by enemy soldiers, or burned. Two lost sons in the Army. One had two sons captured. Nine died of hardships. Thomas McKean of Delaware was so harassed that he had to move his family five times and yet served in Congress without pay, his family living in poverty and hiding. Thomas Nelson, Jr. of Virginia committed his own estate to pay back loans of the Government for \$2 million and was never paid back. And we remember John Hancock's courage was as large in commitment of his funds as his signature was on the Declaration.

Father, remind us that freedom is not free. May we do our work today with profound gratitude, but it is You we give the praise. Thank You for women and men in every period of our history who really had to give up their lives, offer up their fortunes, and keep their sacred honor with costly patriotism. God, bless America with women and men like that today and start with each of us now. In Your holy name. Amen.

## RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able acting majority leader is recognized.

## THE CHAPLAIN'S PRAYER

Mr. BROWNBACK. What a beautiful prayer and beautiful way to start the day.

## SCHEDULE

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, today the Senate will begin consideration of Senate Concurrent Resolution 5, a concurrent resolution relating to congressional opposition to the unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state.

Under the order, there will be 45 minutes for debate on the resolution with time controlled by Senators BROWNBACK and WELLSTONE.

At the conclusion of the debate time, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 280, the education flexibility bill, with the time until 2 p.m. equally divided between the chairman and the ranking member.

At 2 p.m., under a previous order, the Senate will proceed to a stacked series of rollcall votes. The first vote will be on adoption of Senate Concurrent Resolution 5, to be followed by votes on amendments pending to the Ed-Flex bill. The final vote in the sequence will be on the passage of the bill.

Following the stacked series of votes, it may be the leader's intention to begin consideration of Calendar No. 16, S. 257, a bill regarding the deployment of a missile defense system.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

## CONGRESSIONAL OPPOSITION TO THE UNILATERAL DECLARATION OF A PALESTINIAN STATE

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FITZGERALD). The clerk will report the pending business.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 5) expressing congressional opposition to the unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state and urging the President to assert clearly United States opposition to such a unilateral declaration of statehood.

The Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I yield myself such time as I may consume. Under the previous order, I believe there are 45 minutes equally divided between myself and Mr. WELLSTONE on this debate.

At the very start of the Oslo peace process between Israel and the Palestinians, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat wrote a letter to then Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in which he stated this: "The PLO commits itself to the Middle East peace process, and to a peaceful resolution of the conflict between the two sides, and declares that all outstanding issues relating to permanent status will be resolved through negotiations." That letter was dated September 9, 1993, and it led to the ceremony on the White House lawn 4 days later that publicly launched the peace process.

Indeed, it was on the basis of the words that Chairman Arafat wrote that Israel agreed to enter into the negotiations. It was on that basis that Israel

agreed to cede land and political authority to the Palestinians. It is the most important and fundamental Palestinian commitment, and it undergirds the entire peace process.

And yet it is this very principle that Chairman Arafat now threatens to abandon. Over the past several months he has repeatedly threatened to unilaterally declare a Palestinian state over the entire West Bank and the Gaza Strip, with the eastern part of Jerusalem as its capital.

Mr. President, this issue touches the core of the Israel-Palestinian conflict as the question of the permanent status of the Palestinian entity. What will be its final borders? Will there be limits on its sovereignty? Will it be allowed to have a military, to possess jets and tanks and missiles, to enter into foreign alliances with the likes of Iraq or Iran or Libya? All these questions need to be bilaterally negotiated between Israel and the Palestinians so that Israel's security can be assured.

You can just imagine what happens the day after a unilateral declaration. Palestinian security forces begin patrolling an area that they now consider part of an independent state but that is part of the area that Israel has had security control over. Israel would undoubtedly have to take steps to provide for the safety of its citizens. Tension will mount quickly, leading inevitably—and rapidly—to a quick descent into violence and bloodshed.

And consider for a moment what the Palestinians have already achieved in the peace process. Five years ago at this time, not one Palestinian living in the Gaza Strip or on the West Bank lived under Palestinian civilian authority. Today, 98 percent have their own executive branch, democratically-elected legislature, and courts. They have their own educational system, their own broadcasting authority, their own airport, their own travel documents, their own flag and anthem. They have full control over virtually the entire Gaza Strip and ten percent of the West Bank, including all major population centers, and civilian authority over another seventeen percent. And that is even before the start of final status negotiations. There has been much progress.

So why does Arafat make such a threat? Why jeopardize the entire peace process? On May 4, the five-year period that began with the signing of the first agreement between Israel and the Palestinians ends. It had been hoped that by that point all final status negotiations would have been completed. But it should be noted that