

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HYDRO RELICENSING IN NEED OF REFORM

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, September 26, 1998

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Subcommittee on Energy and Power held an oversight hearing on the relicensing process for the Nation's hydroelectric projects. This is an important energy issue. Hydroelectric generation is the third largest source of U.S. electric generation. And it accounts for about 96 percent of U.S. renewable energy generation. While the time remaining in this session will not permit us to address any kind of meaningful reform in the relicensing process, it is clear from yesterday's hearing that this should be a top priority in the 106th Congress.

Currently relicensing applications make up the bulk of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's licensing workload. The Commission's work, in this area, has been hampered by the complex nature of the relicensing process. A number of parties are involved; the gamut of Federal laws governing the process often have very different and contradictory goals; and we also discovered that there are disputes between the authority retained by State resource agencies and the Commission.

The multiple layers involved in the relicensing process has imposed regulatory requirements and costs that threaten to undermine the Nation's hydropower system. New York City greatly benefits from the inexpensive hydropower generated by the Niagara Falls through New York utilities like, the New York Power Authority and Consolidated Edison. Given the need to relicense over 65 percent of the Nation's hydro electric capacity in the next 15 years, we must seriously consider establishing a more reasonable regulatory process.

I would urge my colleagues to make reform of the hydro relicensing process a top priority in the next Congress. We can ill-afford to lose the benefits of our Nation's most reliable and environmentally sound renewable energy source. I look forward to addressing this important energy issue next year.

SOUTH FLORIDA APPRECIATES FEMA'S HELP IN PREPARING FOR HURRICANE GEORGES

HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, September 26, 1998

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, South Florida owes a debt of gratitude to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for its exceptional performance in helping our communities prepare for Hurricane Georges.

In the hours before the hurricane struck, FEMA played a critical role in helping the local counties make preparations for this dangerous natural phenomenon. At all times, FEMA provided local officials, South Florida Congressional offices, and residents with information about the services it provides before and after the natural disaster.

South Florida was harshly hit by Hurricane Georges, although thankfully, not as severely as many had predicted. Throughout FEMA acted in a professional manner providing the residents of South Florida an opportunity to observe their tax dollars at work.

I extend my appreciation to FEMA director, James Lee Witt, and his staff for their magnificent work in helping my community prepare for this disaster.

WHAT IS A FLAG?

HON. JAY W. JOHNSON

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, September 26, 1998

Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I would like to enter into the RECORD the following essay by Peter Hagen, a seventh-grade student from Appleton, Wisconsin. Peter's essay is entitled "What is a Flag?" and took first place at the Appleton Flag Day essay contest. His words demonstrate how our flag touches each of us in an emotional, personal way. Peter understands the respect our flag deserves, and it is an honor for me to share his moving essay with the rest of America.

What is a flag?

Some say it's just a piece of cloth. Others may say that it's just fancy toilet paper.

But what does it stand for?

It is a representative of our country, just as much a representative as the President. Our country is a large number of citizens united under the government, the values of this country, and the flag. This country was formed and received its values and freedoms through the individual sacrifices of many different men and women. Some may have given their sacrifice through the system of indentured servants. Some may have come as penniless immigrants, coming to look for a better life. Some have even given their lives in defense of this country and what it stands for.

Yes, but what does this all tell me about my flag?

Our flag is the same flag that Francis Scott Key wrote about in his famous anthem. Our flag is the same flag that Betsy Ross gave so much time and effort to make. Our flag is the same flag that has crossed oceans and deserts, mountains and plains, country after country, making sure that the oppressed are freed.

This is what the flag means to me.

TRIBUTE TO SWADESH CHATTERJEE

HON. DAVID E. PRICE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, September 26, 1998

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I want to offer my congratulations to a respected citizen of my district and a national leader of the Indian-American community, Swadesh Chatterjee, on his election to the presidency of one of the oldest and best-known Indian-American organizations in the nation, the Indian American Forum for Political Education. A recent gathering of more than 500 members of IAFPE unanimously elected Mr. Chatterjee. There could be no stronger advocate for the American-Indian community nor a more adept leader than Swadesh Chatterjee to guide the IAFPE into the next century, and we are proud that he calls North Carolina home.

Since his immigration to America from Calcutta, India in 1980, Swadesh Chatterjee has been a leader in North Carolina's business community. Swadesh began as the plant manager of Brandt Instruments, a manufacturer of process control instrumentation located in the Raleigh-Durham area. He was quickly promoted to Executive Vice President, then to the position of President, where he has served for the past five years. Under his guidance, Brandt Instruments's operating profits have grown 170% in the last three years.

Swadesh Chatterjee has been an important leader of the growing Indian-American community in North Carolina. This community is noteworthy for the many accomplished professionals and business people it contains, for its strong emphasis on education, family life, and the preservation of cultural traditions, and for its contributions to the wider community. Swadesh Chatterjee is proud of this community, as they are of him, and we are all delighted that his leadership will now be extended nationwide. I am honored to represent Swadesh Chatterjee and his family and to know him as a friend, and I am pleased to commend his leadership and his achievements before my colleagues in the House today.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DEBORAH PRYCE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, September 26, 1998

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, during the week of September 21, 1998, I was absent due to an illness in my family. I received an official leave of absence from the Majority Leader in this regard.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

However, had I been present, I would have voted in the following manner on the following legislation:

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 1998

H. Res. 545—impeaching Kenneth W. Starr, an independent counsel of the United States appointed pursuant to 28 United States Code section 593(b), of high crimes and misdemeanors, motion to table the measure (Roll Call No. 453): AYE.

H. Res. 144—to express support for the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition (Roll Call No. 454): AYE.

H. Res. 505—expressing the sense of the House of Representatives with respect to the importance of diplomatic relations with the Pacific Island nations (Roll Call No. 455): AYE.

H. Con. Res. 315—expressing the sense of the Congress condemning the atrocities by Serbian police and military forces against Albanians in Kosova and urging that blocked assets of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbian and Montenegro) under control of the United States and other governments be used to compensate the Albanians in Kosova for losses suffered through Serbian police and military action (Roll Call No. 456): AYE.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1998

H.R. 4112—making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, and for other purposes (Roll Call No. 457): AYE.

H.R. 3616—to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 1999 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 1999, and for other purposes (Roll Call No. 458): AYE.

H.R. 3736—to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to make changes relating to H-1B nonimmigrants:

On agreeing to the Watt (NC) amendment (Roll Call No. 459): NAY

On final passage (Roll Call No. 460): AYE.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1998:

H. Res. 552—providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4578) to amend the Social Security Act to establish the Protect Social Security Account into which the Secretary of the Treasury shall deposit budget surpluses until a reform measure is enacted to ensure the long-term solvency of the OASDI trust funds, and for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4579) to provide tax relief for individuals, families, and farming and other small businesses, to provide tax incentives for education, to extend certain expiring provisions, and for other purposes;

On ordering the previous question (Roll Call No. 461): AYE.

On agreeing to the resolution (Roll Call No. 462): AYE.

H.R. 4578—to amend the Social Security Act to establish the Protect Social Security Account into which the Secretary of the Treasury shall deposit budget surpluses until a reform measure is enacted to ensure the long-term solvency of the OASDI trust funds;

On agreeing to the Rangel amendment (Roll Call No. 463): NAY.

On passage (Roll Call No. 464): AYE.

H. Res. 553—providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2621) to extend trade authorities procedures with respect to reciprocal trade agreements, and for other purposes (Roll Call No. 465): AYE.

H.R. 2621—to extend trade authorities procedures with respect to reciprocal trade agreements, and for other purposes (Roll Call No. 466): AYE.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1998:

On approving the Journal (Roll Call No. 467): AYE.

H.R. 4579—Taxpayer Relier Act of 1998:

On agreeing to the Rangel Amendment (Roll Call No. 468): NAY.

On passage (Roll Call No. 469): AYE.

RECIPROCAL TRADE AGREEMENT AUTHORITIES ACT OF 1997

SPEECH OF

HON. GLENN POSHARD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 25, 1998

Mr. POSHARD. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the House's consideration of Fast-Track trade authority today. While I have supported efforts to expand markets for our exports, particularly our agricultural exports, including GATT and the extension of MFN status for China, I cannot vote for this legislation. Over the past five years we have watched hundreds of thousands of jobs from our cities lost across the border of Mexico. I represent a very rural part of Illinois, and the impact this has on small towns is devastating. When a major employer leaves such a community, often times the displaced workers have no where to go for other opportunities. Families are dramatically affected. I have seen the consequences.

The underpinning of this debate defines who we are as a people. Currently in this country we are encouraging a race to the bottom. We have set up a framework where we encourage U.S. companies to find the cheapest wages and least restrictive employment and environmental regulations elsewhere in the world. This Congress should not be undercutting the hardworking men and women that have made this country the envy of the world. The freedom the United States represents more than any other is the ability to work hard and get ahead—an honest day's pay for an honest day's work. We have seen the erosion of this principle, because for too many people it takes more than one job to realize that promise. This is not justice.

As I listen to the debate this afternoon it is all too obvious that the timing of this discussion is aimed at political gains, not economic ones. Members on both sides of this aisle are ready to engage in honest debate about the provisions that can be added to this bill to make it acceptable to all—to make it truly represent free trade. We were ready to do that last fall. But today's vote does not advance this cause. I hope it has not been dealt too severe a blow. I urge my colleagues to vote against this legislation, and for a real debate on these critical issues.

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ATTLEBORO LIONS CLUB

HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, September 26, 1998

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, on October 13, 1998, the Attleboro Lions Club will be celebrating its 75th anniversary. Chartered in 1923, it is the third oldest Lions Club in the State of Massachusetts.

The Attleboro Lions Club has established a long tradition of service to the community. Throughout its history, and as a result of its many fundraising efforts, the Club has been a significant contributor to Massachusetts Eye Research to aid in its fight to prevent blindness. The Club has also been a long-standing contributor to the Attleboro Scholarship Foundation, which provides funds to Attleboro students who are pursuing higher education. Since 1948, the Attleboro Lions Club has contributed approximately \$104,000 to this worthy cause. Other organizations Attleboro that have received funds from the Club over the last few years include the YMCA, the Literacy Center, the Audubon Society, Balfour Riverwalk Project, the Guide Dog Foundation, the Ten Mile River Watershed Alliance and Big Brothers, Big Sisters. The Club also hosts an annual Christmas party for the blind residents of the Attleboro community.

It will be my great honor to attend a luncheon on October 13 celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Attleboro Lions Club. I hope the members of the club will take great pride in the hard work and spirit of service that has characterized this organization since its inception.

TRIBUTE TO ELIZABETH SNYDER

HON. NANCY PELOSI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, September 26, 1998

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the accomplishments of Elizabeth Synder, a long time civic leader who helped pave the way for women to assume positions of leadership in California, who died in Los Angeles on August 26, 1998 of complications related to emphysema. She was 84.

Elizabeth first came to national attention in 1954, when she was elected Chair of the California Democratic Party, becoming the first woman in the United States to be elected chair of a major political party in any state. In a career that spanned more than half a century, Elizabeth worked prominently in the California presidential campaigns of Harry Truman, Adlai Stevenson, and Lyndon Johnson and served as the California Co-Chair of President Jimmy Carter's 1976 Presidential campaign. As one who benefited from Liz's leadership, her advice when I served as Chair of the California Democratic Party and her friendship for many years, I am pleased to call Liz's accomplishments to the attention of my colleagues.

Born on April 8, 1914, in Minnesota of immigrant parents, Elizabeth and her family moved

to San Diego in the early 1920's. Following the collapse of her father's business at the outset of the Great Depression, Elizabeth, her mother and two brothers relocated to East Los Angeles where life was, in her words, "lean, precarious and hard." Elizabeth graduated with honors from Garfield High School in 1931. She studied at Los Angeles City College and in 1933, matriculated as a political science major at UCLA, where she went on to become one of the first two doctoral candidates in UCLA's political science department.

In 1939, her mother's failing health required Elizabeth to leave her post-graduate studies to go to work. Elizabeth became a substitute high school teacher in Los Angeles. Already active in Young Democrats, Elizabeth became involved in the workings of government as she became a volunteer lobbyist speaking out on behalf of substitute teachers in Sacramento. In 1940, she was elected to serve at the Democratic National Convention as the alternative delegate for her first political mentor, Congressman Jerry Voorhis, who was later defeated by Richard M. Nixon in his first bid for public office. In that same year, she married attorney Nathan H. Snyder, her husband of fifty-eight years. During WW II, Elizabeth worked for the Canadian government in Washington, D.C. and returned to California where she became involved in the first of many Congressional campaigns on behalf of her lifelong friend and mentor, Chet Holifield.

None of her political activities was more important to Elizabeth than her life long effort to bring about greater participation by women in the political arena. During the 1970's, Elizabeth devoted herself to the mentoring of Los Angeles women in politics, holding weekly luncheon meetings of the Thursday Group at her Bunker Hill apartment. Her dedication to improving our society extended beyond the realm of politics. Among the many issues to which Liz gave much time and effort in her final years, she was especially proud of her work on the prevention of fetal alcohol syndrome, which culminated in ordinances requiring the posting in restaurants and bars of warnings to women regarding the dangers of alcohol consumption during pregnancy.

In addition to all of her varied civic activities, Elizabeth will be remembered fondly by the literally thousands of men and women in all walks of life to whom she provided comfort and assistance in overcoming the adversities of alcoholism and substance abuse.

In 1994, she received the prestigious CORO Public Affairs Award in recognition of her life long commitment to the reform of the American system of government in which she so deeply believed. As Elizabeth herself once wrote: "In the last analysis, the most significant single political activity is not winning elections and defeating opponents: It is improving, expanding and correcting government structure, so that democracy works." Her life is profiled in the University of California Bancroft Library, "Women in Politics Oral History Project" and in her autobiography, "A Ride On the Political Merry-Go-Round."

Sadly, I send my condolences and those of my fellow California Congressional Democrats to Liz's dear husband, Nathan and her daughter, Christina A. Snyder and her son-in-law, Marc M. Seltzer.

THREATS AGAINST ISRAEL

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, September 26, 1998

Mr. SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I have addressed the House on a number of occasions regarding one of America's closest and most-trusted allies, Israel. The following article, written by Mr. Paul Mann, was published on September 21, 1998 in *Aviation Week & Space Technology*. Mr. Mann's article paints a sobering picture of the current threats facing Israel today by the accelerating spread of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction (WMD) throughout the Middle East. America must take every step to help Israel counter these threats through full development and deployment of an effective antimissile defense. I hereby submit Mr. Mann's article, entitled "Israel Lobbies Hard For Antimissile Defense," for the Record.

ISRAEL LOBBIES HARD FOR ANTIMISSILE DEFENSE

(By Paul Mann)

Israeli legislators of all political stripes are pressing for faster deployment of antimissile defenses, warning that democracies everywhere face a "new world order" of dictatorships increasingly equipped with mass destruction warheads and the missiles to deliver them.

In an impassioned plea last week to their counterparts on Capitol Hill, four members of the Israeli Knesset called for a re-thinking of strategic preparedness in light of the accelerating spread of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

Recent Iranian and North Korean tests suggest their missiles might have longer ranges than previously thought. Israel suspects North Korea of assisting Syria in developing an indigenous missile manufacturing capacity. Tel Aviv also suspects the Damascus government is working on nerve gas warheads on its ballistic missiles date back at least to mid-1997, according to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Israeli lawmakers want to expand on many years of bilateral cooperation with the U.S., particularly in the interoperability of ballistic missile defense (BMD) systems designed for theater warfare. Israel successfully tested its Arrow anti-ballistic missile again last week and might eventually join in the U.S. Theater High Altitude Area Defense (Thaad) program, if varied problems that have dogged it for years are finally overcome. Modifications to the program might be announced by the Pentagon this week, one U.S. lawmaker said.

At the first meeting of the American/Israeli Interparliamentary Commission on National Security, a joint caucus of legislators who are ardent missile defense advocates, the Israelis sought to stoke up support for their long-held advocacy of multilayered BMD deployment. They placed heavy emphasis on boost-phase intercepts—striking enemy missiles right after launch so the warheads fall back on the attacker. This is considered essential with the advent of chemical and biological warheads in the possessions of regional military powers. Tel Aviv suspects Iraq, Iran and Syria have chemical warheads and probably biological warheads as well.

But boost-phase intercept capability presents major technical challenges and almost certainly will not be deployable in the next few years, a period the Israelis consider crucial lead time if theater BMD deployments are to be ready when they are needed to counter the emerging Middle Eastern threat. Israel's plan for a multiple-layer missile defense had its inception in 1988 in a joint program with Washington, begun under the now-defunct Strategy Defense Initiative (SDI) of the Reagan Administration.

The Israelis also met with high-ranking U.S. military officials last week, including Lt. Gen. Lester L. Lyles, director of the Pentagon's Ballistic Missile Defense Organization. It succeeded the SDI office.

Beyond expanded bilateral cooperation, Israeli legislators urged regional BMD cooperation with Turkey and Jordan, and proposed that the U.S. lead world democracies in an initiative to head off a global mass weapons capability while there is still time.

"Jordanian officials are interested in this kind of cooperation, which we intend to pursue" when the congressional half of the Interparliamentary Commission makes a reciprocal visit to Israel, possibly in December, said Sen. Jon Kyl (R-Ariz), a commission member.

As for the presumed global potential of the threat, countries that have never had WMD "can have it tomorrow because [the technology] is so readily available; 'it's more than a theater-specific issue,'" said former Israeli Finance Minister Dan Meridor of the ruling Likud coalition.

Israeli lawmakers stressed there was no time to lose, claiming that terrorist states such as Iran are developing offensive ballistic missiles faster than the U.S. and Israel are developing defense against them.

"They are ahead of us—we must face this very clearly," warned Brig. Gen. Ephraim Sneh of Israel's opposition Labor party. "Their ability to hit Israel and U.S. troops in the Middle East is far ahead of what we can do to contain it. Active defenses, like the Arrow and Thaad, are indispensable, but they are not enough. We must have as well the capacity for preemptive defense—whatever that may mean." Sneh appeared to be referring to preemptive Israeli strikes against emerging WMD capabilities, but did not elaborate.

"We're now very close to a thousand missiles surrounding the state of Israel," added Ran Cohen of the Meretz party.

"And we don't have Canadians as neighbors," rejoined Uzi Landau, Likud chairman of the Knesset's foreign affairs and defense committee.

Arab nations have protested for years, however, that Israel is a de facto nuclear power, has nuclear-capable Jericho ballistic missiles, is pursuing unmanned aerial vehicles and cruise missile development and is collaborating with the U.S. on the Tactical High-Energy Laser (Thel) system (AW&ST Aug. 12, 1996, p. 31).

Landau outlined the latest Israeli estimates of the missile threat:

Neighboring Syria is believed to have hundreds of very short-range Frog 7 and SS-21s, plus hundreds of Scud B and tens of Scud Cs with a range "basically covering the entirety of Israel." The Scud Cs are imported from North Korea, which is assisting the development of Syria's independent manufacture of those missiles, Landau alleged. "Tens of warheads with these missiles can be equipped with chemical gases, and with respect to this, a project is now underway in Syria for development of a new, more advanced lethal nerve gas of the VX type."

Iran has 300-plus Scud B missiles and 60 Scud Cs. Landau called Iran's development of its 800-mi. range Shahab-3 missile "vigorous, done with the active involvement of North Korea, and above it, Russia. Our assessment is that without Russian assistance, [the Iranians] would not have been as successful as they were [in the Shahab-3 test in July] and they need [Russian aid] critically for the successful completion of this project." The Shahab would enable Iran to target Israel.

Iraq retains the know-how to reconstitute much of its previous WMD capability, once U.N. sanctions and weapons inspections are lifted, according to Landau "It will not take much time for Iraq not only to come back to what it used to be, but to be much more of a threatening force in the region." Following Iraq's defeat in the 1991 Persian Gulf war, the International Atomic Energy Agency discovered that Baghdad had been secretly pursuing a multibillion dollar nuclear weapons program, code-named "Petrochemical 3,"

employing thousands of people at numerous sites. The regime of Saddam Hussein has sought steadfastly to limit or thwart U.N. inspections of its WMD capability, which includes chemical and biological weapons and materials.

The Middle East threat is unusually acute, Landau argued, owing to three factors. First, the outlaw regimes procuring WMD capabilities have far-reaching, radical political objectives, among them supplanting Western culture. In other words, they are zealots. Second, the attempts to acquire WMD capability are being fostered with active foreign involvement, namely Russia. Third, there are no treaty or arms control constraints on outlaw regimes to prevent them from using WMD to promote their strategic goals.

"When dictators of very poor countries, particularly in the Middle East region, invest scarce resources in such projects, they do not do so for exhibition purposes," Landau asserted. "They are prepared to use [them]—they mean business. Such a Middle

East threatens other moderate countries in the region like Turkey, like Jordan, like other countries friendly to the U.S., such as Egypt, the Persian Gulf emirates, Saudi Arabia. Such a Middle East poses a threat to the heart of Europe in a few years to come—and beyond the European continent, not later than the first decade of the next millennium."

Reliable deterrence cannot be assured by a single solution, technologically or otherwise, Meridor cautioned. Intelligence, diplomacy, economic sanctions, boost-phase intercept capability—all avenues of deterrence will have to be pursued. Seeking to dramatize the urgency of the issue, he added: "If we don't deter [the threat] in time, with the whole range of political and defense capabilities, we will find ourselves in a very dangerous situation. It takes time to develop [missile defenses], it takes time to test, it takes time to produce, to deploy and to train, and we are in the last hour or minute."

Landau also stated that the United States and its allies must continue to maintain a strong presence in the Middle East region. He emphasized the importance of intelligence gathering and the need for a robust defense posture. Landau mentioned the need for a strong coalition of nations to address the WMD threat in the region. He also discussed the importance of diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict in the Middle East. Landau mentioned the need for a strong presence in the Middle East region. He emphasized the importance of intelligence gathering and the need for a robust defense posture. Landau mentioned the need for a strong coalition of nations to address the WMD threat in the region. He also discussed the importance of diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict in the Middle East. Landau mentioned the need for a strong presence in the Middle East region. He emphasized the importance of intelligence gathering and the need for a robust defense posture. Landau mentioned the need for a strong coalition of nations to address the WMD threat in the region. He also discussed the importance of diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict in the Middle East.

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