

back to such distinguished Senators as Arthur Vandenburg and William Fulbright. In any case, one could not responsibly pass up even a slight chance of being helpful in promoting peace between Israel and Syria when the alternative to peace could threaten dire consequences for us all.

I met with Prime Minister Netanyahu at 8 a.m. on Wednesday, November 20 at his office in the Israeli Knesset Building. United States Ambassador to Israel Martin Indyk was present. The Prime Minister told me that tensions with Syria have been reduced since the August/September time period and that he wants to continue to de-escalate the saber-rattling. He asked me to convey this, and specifically that Israel has no aggressive intent against Syria, when I went on to see President Assad that afternoon. He noted as an exception to the reduction of military dangers attacks on Israeli forces in southern Lebanon by Hezbollah and asked me to convey his request to President Assad that Syria seek to stop the Hezbollah attacks.

On the broader issue of reopening peace talks with Syria, Prime Minister Netanyahu told me to tell President Assad that he wishes to do so as soon as possible and that he is ready, willing, and able to be personally involved in such talks. He said that although there are clearly tough issues to be addressed in negotiating with Syria, he has a real sense that talks could be productive. Prime Minister Netanyahu reiterated that any talks with Syria will be based on the framework for Arab/Israel peace established by U.N. resolutions 242 and 338 and by the terms of reference of the 1991 Middle East peace conference organized by President Bush in Madrid. The Prime Minister's willingness to state the basis of talks with Syria in this way is significant because it indicates an acceptance that such talks would be based on the formula standardly called "land for peace."

The Prime Minister held his ground, however, on what has been the Syrian demand that new talks begin where the old talks left off, that is that Prime Minister Netanyahu's government be bound as a condition for reopening talks by what the Syrians consider a commitment by the prior Israel governments of Prime Ministers Rabin and Peres to full withdrawal by Israel from the Golan Heights to the June 4, 1967 line. He stated that he would not and could not agree to talks with such a precondition.

I flew on to Damascus that day and held a wide ranging, cordial but frank 3-hour meeting with President Assad, lasting from 1:20 p.m. to 4:20 p.m. Syrian Foreign Minister Sharra and United States Ambassador to Syria, Christopher Ross, were also present.

I raised with President Assad the mounting evidence of Iranian and perhaps Syrian involvement in or connection to the dastardly act of terrorist murder against United States soldiers

at Khobar Towers in Dharhan, in Saudi Arabia, on June 15, 1996. I reminded President Assad that the United States had responded militarily against Libya in 1986 when we received proof of Libyan responsibility for a bombing at a nightclub in Germany which killed two American servicemen.

Our exchange on this subject was pointed but it was incumbent on me to take this opportunity of a face-to-face session at this time to reiterate that the United States cannot be targeted by terrorists with impunity.

On the central purpose of the meeting, I regret to say I can report little progress, frankly less than I had hoped based on the encouragement I had received to make this visit and on public statements by the Syrian Foreign Minister about the possibility of renewing talks with Israel.

President Assad did generally seem to share Prime Minister Netanyahu's desire to continue to ease and avoid military tensions which could lead to unintended hostilities. Although he denied having the ability to control Hezbollah activities in Lebanon, President Assad received this portion of Prime Minister Netanyahu's message positively and reiterated his own return message to the same effect. President Assad's position was unmovable, however, regarding the terms for the reopening of talks with Israel.

The Syrian leader asserts with complete conviction that he will not restart talks without a prior reaffirmation by Israel of the pledge he says he received from the prior Israeli governments, and ratified in his view by the United States as participants in the talks, for full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights. In his view the next round of talks are only properly about the details of security arrangements along the new border and the process of normalization between the countries, not on the territorial question itself. This is not a "precondition" for future talks, he argues, because Syria already obtained this commitment from Israel and the United States in the prior talks and that commitment binds Israel despite its change of government.

I attempted to argue to President Assad that in any negotiation such as that between Syria and Israel, nothing is final until everything is final, and that in the absence of any signed document binding Israel as a state, the new Israeli government was not obligated by the negotiating position of a former administration. I also argued that Prime Minister Netanyahu's public comments accepting the land for peace framework for talks with Syria should be a sufficient basis to get back to the table and see what happens in that very different dynamic. I tried many formulations of these ideas but he would have none of it.

I returned to Israel that evening and met again with Prime Minister Netanyahu, to brief him on my talks with President Assad, on the following morning, Thursday, November 21, 1996.

While there is certainly a very sharp divide between the Israeli and Syrian leaders on the basis for a reopening of peace talks, I continue to believe that such a return to the negotiating table is not only essential, but possible if the American involvement in this process is taken to a new level. I came away from this round of meetings convinced that the logjam might be broken, but only with direct action by the President of the United States.

The United States has been more than an observer or facilitator of the Israeli/Syrian peace process so far. We have been an indispensable party, viewed by both sides as the guarantor of the integrity of both the negotiating process and of any final outcome which might be achieved. If the different accounts of where the last round of talks left off and what that means for future talks are to be resolved, it will happen only with the most active American role at the highest level.

Since my return, I have discussed with the President's National Security advisor—and CIA Director designee—Anthony Lake, and his Special Middle East Envoy, Dennis Ross, and I intend to discuss with the President directly, my suggestion that President Clinton invite President Assad—who has never been to this country—and Prime Minister Netanyahu to a meeting in the Oval Office—not to conclude a final peace treaty at this time but simply to find a formula for the reopening of talks between their countries.

While nothing is ever certain in such a difficult situation, I believe it would be productive for the President to raise the stakes of the peace process between Israel and Syria—as an Oval Office invitation would surely do—because the stakes of a continued state of war between these two countries remain so high.

Mr. President, we must all continue to do all we can to find the path to a just and secure peace in the Middle East.

HONORING DAN KEMMIS

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to recognize a truly outstanding Montanan, and to make note of the recent honor extended to him by President Clinton.

Many in Montana know Dan Kemmis through his years of devoted public service, first in the Montana Legislature, where he rose to the position of Speaker of the House, and later as Mayor of the City of Missoula. In every aspect of public life, Dan has served as an example of the standards to which we all aspire. A true gentleman and a model leader he is a public servant who believes that the true greatness of democracy lives in the shared experience of the citizenry.

As mayor, even while working diligently on the problems of the day, Dan continued to think ahead, authoring "Community and the Politics of Place" in 1990, the acclaimed book serving as a

written testament to his work to foster a sense of community in Missoula. Then in 1995 a second work, "The Good City and the Good Life," was published, again to an outstanding reception.

Many were surprised last spring when Dan stepped down as mayor to accept a new challenge as head of the Center for the Rocky Mountain West at The University of Montana. To those of us who know him, however, the move is simply the progression of Dan's unique talents as a leader. It is now his time to share the knowledge of the past years with rest of America, and a time to learn anew.

This past month President Clinton recognized the contributions of Dan Kemmis, not only to Missoula, but to communities throughout America, by awarding him the National Endowment for the Humanities' Charles Frankle Prize. I cannot think of an individual more deserving of the honor. Thoughtful and compassionate, a true visionary and thinker, Dan is one of Montana's treasures and an American leader.

In his prose as in his life, Dan has worked to shape the politics of the future, building consensus, and bringing people together, absent the rhetoric of the past that simply seeks to divide. As President Clinton so eloquently noted, he, " * * * is a welcome and convincing voice against cynicism and social divisiveness." For this alone, we all owe him a debt of gratitude.

I am honored to call Dan Kemmis a friend, and I join with all Montanans in expressing our thanks for his many years of service and congratulations upon receiving this most prestigious award.

BREAST CANCER PATIENT PROTECTION ACT OF 1997

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the Breast Cancer Patient Protection Act. I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this legislation. This bill is about ensuring that women receive equitable treatment in our Nation's health care system. It puts the care of grandmothers, mothers, and daughters with breast cancer before the financial interests of insurance companies.

One of every eight women in America will develop breast cancer. These women will undergo breast cancer treatments such as mastectomies or lymph node removal. Insurance companies know they can cut costs and increase profits if they give skimpy care to these women. Some insurance plans send women home just hours after breast cancer surgery with patients groggy from anesthesia, in pain and with drainage tubes still in place. Other plans require outpatient mastectomies.

The American College of Surgeons and the American Medical Association say that most patients are not ready to be sent home a few hours after surgery. It is just not good medicine. I believe

these doctors, who want to do the right thing and give the right care, should not be discouraged or penalized for not following the insurance company's guidelines.

This legislation ensures that women with breast cancer receive the medical attention they need and deserve. The bill ensures that health plans which provide medical and surgical benefits for the treatment of breast cancer provide a minimum length of stay of 48 hours for patients undergoing mastectomies and 24 hours for those undergoing lymph node removals. Under this bill, patients and their physicians—not insurance companies—can determine if a shorter period of hospital stay is appropriate.

So, I salute the authors of this bill, but I also salute the women, the doctors, and the medical facilities that organized to challenge these unfair practices. I want to see managed care, not mandated care. And I don't want to see doctors managed. There is a fundamental distinction. We have to start getting our priorities straight and end the needless pain and neglect of women with breast cancer. This bill is a step in the right direction.

PAUL TSONGAS

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about Paul Tsongas, who lost his battle against cancer on Saturday. We have all lost a great friend; the Nation has lost an extraordinary American who defined the concept of public service and whose courage and conviction set an example for each and every one of us.

Paul was the son of Greek immigrants in Lowell, MA. He worked in his father's drycleaning business, and served in the Peace Corps, as a Lowell city councilor, as a Middlesex county commissioner, as a U.S. Congressman, and as a U.S. Senator in the seat that I am now honored to occupy.

Paul was able to achieve so much in his life because no matter where he went, no matter what office he held, he never left the people of Lowell. He instinctively understood not only their problems but also how government could help provide some of the solutions which were necessary to resolve them.

In 1992, when George Bush looked unbeatable, Paul Tsongas ran for the Democratic Presidential nomination because he knew his ideas for our future were better.

We must not forget the timeless principles for which Paul Tsongas fought throughout his career in elective office: balancing the Federal budget and establishing sound fiscal principles for the Federal Government, investing in our country and our children, and building our economy so future generations can attain the dreams which seem to elude us today.

Although Paul did not win the nomination, he became the catalyst who turned the national spotlight on our

fiscal policies and changed the political dialog in the United States forever.

After the campaign, Paul Tsongas joined with Warren Rudman and Pete Peterson to found the Concord Coalition to promote fiscal responsibility. This organization again and again has drawn national attention to our Nation's fiscal agenda.

Since the 1992 Presidential campaign, we have cut the Federal budget deficit by more than half. The question in Washington is no longer "Can we balance the budget?," but "How soon can we do so?" Much of the progress we have made can be attributed to Paul Tsongas and his economic call to arms.

The rebuilt, reinvigorated city of Lowell, MA is another long-lasting memorial to Paul. He as much or more than any other person shepherded the revitalization program through the Congress, and by seeing and breathing life into a local pride and spirit that were still alive, he transformed a run-down mill town into an international destination with an amazing story to tell and show visitors from near and far.

Paul Tsongas' accomplishments only explain part of what made him so extraordinary. There is no way to explain the impact on others of his decency, integrity, and courage. But that impact was real and pronounced.

In 1983, he was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. The next year he retired from the Senate in order to spend more time with his wife Niki, and his three daughters, Ashley, Katina, and Molly. He successfully battled cancer for over a decade with a sense of grace and a strength of character that are remarkable.

It is terribly hard to acknowledge the death of such a person. Paul will be greatly and genuinely missed because he was greatly and genuinely loved. That is a compliment to which all of us can aspire when we leave this Earth. But Paul's life took him a step beyond even that status among his family and friends and all who know or observed him in his public service.

We can say truthfully and appreciatively that we are better people because of the example Paul Tsongas set during his life. In that way, he not only improved the lives of many in very direct ways, he will continue to live on as an inspiration to us.

We will miss him, but we are comforted by what he has given to us.

SAFE AND AFFORDABLE SCHOOLS ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise in support of S. 1, the Safe and Affordable Schools Act. I am pleased Senator COVERDELL has introduced this important legislation which will provide our children with an affordable, quality education. By making this bill the first bill of the 105th Congress, it demonstrates to the American people the importance this Senate has placed on the education of our children.