

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

ON THE RETIREMENT OF SENATOR
JERAHMIEL "JERRY"
GRAFSTEIN OF CANADA

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, December 19, 2009

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, as Co-Chairman of the US Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (the Helsinki Commission), and a former President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, it is bitter-sweet that I rise today to honor the retirement of one of this nation's closest friends north of our border. Senator Jerahmiel "Jerry" Grafstein of Canada is well known to many in this House. To me, he has been a mentor, friend, and colleague for the past 15 years or so. Senator Grafstein ends his service to the Canadian Senate this month. The distinguished Chairman of the Helsinki Commission, my very good friend BEN CARDIN of Maryland, recently gave an eloquent tribute on the Senate floor to Jerry Grafstein. Rather than try to be redundant to what Chairman CARDIN has already said, I thought to honor Senator Grafstein by sharing with this House his insightful final speech in the Senate of Canada. I hope my colleagues will read it and learn from it for years to come. Let me finally say to Sen. Grafstein that I thank him for his service to his country, his friendship to our country, and his tireless work on behalf of humanity. I look forward to seeing him in Washington or the great State of Florida sometime very soon.

SENATE OF CANADA, DECEMBER 9, 2009

HON. JERAHMIEL S. GRAFSTEIN: Honourable senators, thank you for those most generous words. My late father would have been surprised. My late mother would have said, "Not nearly enough." Honourable senators, I have always been curious about the words, "maiden speech." By custom, it designates the first speech a parliamentarian makes when a parliamentarian enters a house of Parliament. What do we call a farewell speech in Parliament when we are no longer a maiden? I leave that to honourable senators' imagination.

It has been over 25 years since I was first summoned to the Senate by Mr. Trudeau. When he called to appoint me, he said, "We need you in the Senate; take your time, Jerry, to think about it." I told the Prime Minister I did not need any time, that I accepted. "This is the greatest honour anyone has ever bestowed on me," I told him. "However, Prime Minister, I do have one question." Mr. Trudeau laughed. "What is your question, Jerry?" he asked. I asked, "What did you mean when you said, 'We need you in the Senate?'"

Mr. Trudeau laughed again and I heard the phone drop. A second later he apologized and said he did not mean to laugh. He said, "Jerry, you are the very first person I have ever appointed who asked me why." "Well, Prime Minister, why?" I repeated. "Why am I needed in the Senate?" He responded so graciously, and he said these words—I made notes at the time: "You have provided me

with great ideas. Now I want you to use the Senate as a platform to share those ideas with the Canadian public."

Honourable senators, I have tried. Sometimes I succeeded. Many times I failed. However, I have been motivated by three pieces of advice that Mr. Pearson gave me when I first entered politics and I sat beside him. He told me these three things: Aim high, work hard, and be fair. Some time before my appointment, Mr. Trudeau told me at a meeting, "Jerry, you have great ideas, but you have not overcome one problem that you have." "What is that?" I said. "I do not have any problems."

"Yes, you do," he said. "Each time you advocate a great idea, automatically and spontaneously, a coalition of 'antis' spring up to fight any good idea. Your job as a politician is to navigate around that coalition and get to the other side." Then he said these words that I have never forgotten: "Never give up."

Honourable senators, each day when I awake at the Chateau Laurier, I say a short Hebrew prayer: *Modeh ani Lefanecha*—Thank God who has awakened my soul to live another day. I walk a hundred steps from the Chateau Laurier across the historic bridge over the Rideau Canal and look up to the statue of my great political hero, as Senator Munson mentioned, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and give him a morning salute. Then I take another hundred steps, past the East Block, and the most beautiful building in Canada looms into sight. What a sight it is.

I see the Parliament buildings, the Peace Tower and, on top of it, the Canadian flag flying. I remember the courage of Mr. Pearson, who introduced the flag in the face of great division in this country. I swear every morning that I will do my very best that day for the privilege of serving in the Senate and here in Parliament. Honourable senators, I have served under eight Prime Ministers and twelve leaders in the Senate. I want to thank all of my colleagues, but especially the current deputy leaders, Senator Tardif and Senator Comeau, who have the most complex jobs in the Senate. I want to say how much I admire both of them.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Grafstein: Of course, I salute my own leader, the graceful Senator Cowan, and the Leader of the Government in the Senate, Senator LeBreton, both of whom lead us here so very ably. Thank you so much. May I thank the reporters who have reproduced—do not be shocked—almost 5 million words of my speeches, resolutions, comments and reports. I would be remiss if I did not mention the researchers of the Library of Parliament who have responded to my needs. To Mark Audcent and to the legislative staff who drafted my bills, motions and resolutions with skill and professionalism, I thank you. For the many courtesies offered to me by the Speaker, his predecessors, by the Deputy Speaker, and to all the table officers, my sincere appreciation for your patience and advice. I have learned much from all of you. Of course my special appreciation goes to my executive assistant, who is sitting up in the gallery, Mary de Toro, who leads my mighty staff of one, the wisest woman on Parliament Hill who has kept me from making disastrous mistakes.

My first decision when I came to the Senate was what name and what designation I should use as senator. I chose my first given

name, Jerahmiel, although people have called me Jerry. People have been curious about why that name and not my customary name, Jerry. Jerahmiel is mentioned only once in the Bible. He was the son of the last King of Israel. The name means "the mercy of God." It is meant to remind the holders of that name to remember that they are here to help the less fortunate. My other designation as senator is Metro Toronto, to remind me of the great city of Toronto and the regional base of the key of my responsibilities here.

What lessons have I learned in the Senate? Honourable senators, I will not predict the future. I have always worked hard in the past and in the present. In the process, I became a much better criminal lawyer, a substantial constitutional lawyer, as my friend Senator Nolin has become, and an expert international lawyer. The future, honourable senators, I leave to you.

The precious gift that the Fathers of Confederation bestowed on the Senate and senators was independence and the freedom to make choices. That is what Sir John A. Macdonald and the Fathers of Confederation gave each and every one of us. Most of my choices I shared with my party and my leader, and sometimes I disagreed and did as Mr. Trudeau advised, spoke my mind to the discomfort at times of my leaders and my colleagues on this side.

I have served on all the committees of the Senate, and I have been kicked off several committees several times when I did so, and I do not regret it. I always believed that the Senate acts best when it is true to its mandate as a chamber of second sober thought. The Senate has always made mistakes when there has been a rush to judgment. "Principles and pragmatism," so said Lloyd George, "march best when they march together."

This chamber, following the teachings of the great Blackstone, is a chamber dedicated to checks and balances. To check and balance the executive and the other house of Parliament is our constitutional mandate. Hence, we should not place our trust blindly in government. Governments do what they do and do what they want and do what they must. It can be best summed up in Psalm 146: "Put not your trust in princes." We are here to speak truth to power. That is our constitutional duty.

I recall my maiden speech when I advocated an apology to Canadians of Japanese descent. Mr. Trudeau, who had just appointed me, disagreed. He argued that we cannot correct the past but can only improve the future. I disagreed with him on the facts. Citizens of Japanese origin had been deprived of their rights and property during the war, and there was no evidence whatsoever provided to me or to the Prime Minister at the time to call in or question their loyalty to Canada. I advocated for an apology, and ultimately it was given by Brian Mulroney, and I respect him for that.

I recall the extradition bill, as Senator Joyal pointed out, passed by a Liberal government in haste, with barely a debate in the other place. Under that bill, the Liberal Attorney General of Canada of the day would have had the power to extradite Canadians to a state that practiced capital punishment even though Parliament had abolished capital punishment under Mr. Trudeau after a fantastic and unbelievable fight across the

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

country. The government wanted that bill. They wanted it then. They urged it was important because of pending decisions.

I disagreed, and so did my colleague Senator Joyal. Together, with other colleagues in this chamber, we kept that debate going for several months, but finally we succumbed to our leadership and to government pressure. Senator Joyal and I decided to make our arguments in the Senate at third reading as if we were arguing before the Supreme Court of Canada because we felt that that bill would be ultimately challenged and would be shown to be unconstitutional. We sent the Senate Hansard, a public document, to all the judges of the Supreme Court, and we were so pleased over a year later when the Supreme Court of Canada upheld our major arguments.

I remember another important debate on a resolution introduced in the other place declaring Quebec "a distinct society." The government introduced that resolution here shortly after the referendum. I angered my colleagues on this side, I angered the Prime Minister, I angered the leader of the Senate, my great friend Allan MacEachen, and other colleagues on this side, when I refused to support that resolution. I gave the shortest speech I have ever given in the Senate, and I repeat it here now: Canada is a distinct society. All the rest is commentary.

While Quebecers are different, so are Newfoundlanders, so are Acadians, so are hundreds and hundreds of Aboriginal tribes and many other groups in Canada. Honourable senators, I believed then and I believe now in one Canada, bilingual and multicultural—one Canada.

One of my most stimulating periods was as chairman of the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce with Senator Angus as my congenial deputy chairman. Together, with a total consensus of all members on both sides, we did a number of important, sharp and pointed studies dealing with consumer protection of the financial securities sector, the volunteer and charitable sector, the demographic time bomb, stemming the flow of illicit money to Canada and others.

Hopefully the work we commenced on hedge funds and derivatives, started well before the last financial meltdown, and the work on reducing interprovincial trade barriers to make Canada one dynamic competitive marketplace will be completed by others in the Senate. Being a Canadian senator offers unique opportunities to travel and to participate in international affairs. One of my most satisfying experiences has been as co-chairman of the Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group. I was elected to that office by members of Parliament in both houses for eight successive terms and served for over 16 years in that position.

The Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group was founded in 1959 and recently celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. During my term in office, with the support of colleagues on all sides, bipartisan, we transformed that organization from one annual meeting with the Americans to an active, vigorous advocacy group meeting with state legislators, governors in every corner of America, in addition to regular meetings on Capitol Hill in Washington with congressmen and senators to advocate one thing, Canada's interest. We learned that all politics is local, and so we have to work at the local level in the United States, and hence our meeting with state officials and governors. All problems in the United States affecting Canada start at the local level and, if detected early enough, can be diluted if not resolved.

After each meeting, honourable senators, as I will do later today, we tabled a complete report of our activities to the Senate to en-

sure that the senators who were interested could benefit from our experience. We were not there to represent ourselves. We were there to represent Canada, and that is why we tabled these reports. I want to thank my current co-chair in the house, Gord Brown, and my current American co-chairs, Senator Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota and Congressman James Oberstar of Minnesota, who is the only member of our group who has served the Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group longer than I.

When I first came to the Senate, I was able to travel to a number of international organizations consistent with my work on the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, where I and my colleague Senator Stollery have been the longest serving members. I decided that I would focus my activities where Canada and the United States both had a vote, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Parliamentary Assembly, which flowed out of the Helsinki Accord in 1974, currently with 56 member states from Vladivostok to Vancouver.

There I became an active member on the executive and served as an elected member for 15 years. This organization is the largest parliamentary assembly dedicated to human rights, economic rights and democratic rights in the world. I became a witness to history serving as one of the heads of election monitoring in Russia, Ukraine during the Orange Revolution, Georgia during the Rose Revolution and on the Independence Referendum for Montenegro and many others. Senator Di Nino has also served on a number of those committees with great skill and expertise.

I learned how precious democracy is and how important democracy building is for the future of the world. I worked closely with elected presidents of the assembly, and I want to pay special tribute to two recent presidents: Congressmen Alcee Hastings of Florida and João Soares, the head of the Portuguese Delegation and current Vice-President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, who have done outstanding work travelling the length and breadth of the OSCE space. We have become great personal friends.

A sparkplug in this organization, which is headquartered in Copenhagen, is Spencer Oliver, the long-serving Secretary General, who is the most brilliant and knowledgeable American I have ever met, with a deep and penetrating insight into foreign affairs. He has become one of my closest friends in public life. While at the OSCE PA, I served as leader of the Liberal group there, and I finally resigned this year after 12 years. They elected me as Liberal Leader Emeritus Perpetual, a title I will cherish all my life. I do not kid myself: I achieved these offices overseas because I was Canadian, because the world respects Canada and Canadians who represent Canada.

I think the Senate should have a brief explanation, particularly those senators who have been mildly critical of the numerous OSCE resolutions combating anti-Semitism on the Order Paper that I tabled and that are still on the Order Paper. Why those many resolutions? After the Berlin Wall came down in 1989—and I was in Germany before and after the wall came down—I thought I would finally close my dossier on anti-Semitism. There was hope for a new world order. But it was not to be. The UN had passed an invidious resolution equating Zionism with racism.

Anti-Semitism was on the rise not only across the face of the earth and around the globe, not only across Europe, but also in South America and in Canada. In 1994, a diligent congressman from New Jersey, Chris

Smith, approached me to work on a resolution to combat anti-Semitism and to present it to the OSCE parliamentary assembly annual meeting. I agreed. We were joined by Congressman Steny Hoyer, now the majority leader of the Congress and one the most powerful men in the United States, a good friend; Congressman Alcee Hastings; Congressman Ben Cardin, now a senator from Maryland; Gert Weisskirchen of the German Parliament and parliamentarians from Italy, France, Austria, Ukraine, Poland and others.

That first resolution was passed by a bare majority. Thereafter, across the face of Europe, in Copenhagen, twice in Berlin, Oporto, Cordoba, Rotterdam, Edinburgh, Vienna, London, Rome, St. Petersburg, Kazakhstan, Madrid, Washington and so forth, we continued the thrust of those resolutions, parliamentary, ministerial and side meetings.

There were two chilly experiences. I spoke on these resolutions in the Berlin Reichstag at the very podium where Hitler had declared the Nuremberg Laws in 1933. I spoke in the Hofberg Palace at the very same place in Vienna where Hitler announced the Anschluss between Germany and Austria in 1938 that most historians agree ignited World War II. This work continued, meeting after meeting, and finally, honourable senators, I brought one of these resolutions to the Senate in 2002. It was passed in 2004 and was referred to the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights. That committee held meetings for a day or so, and then, without explanation, decided not to complete its work.

It is the first time I can recall that a resolution passed by the Senate was not followed by a committee of the Senate. I urged members of the committee to complete their work, but without success. I decided to put down resolution after resolution on the Order Paper until there could be some closure and conclusion to this matter. I was pleased some years ago that the UN would use those very resolutions to hold a one-day conference on anti-Semitism, the first of its kind at the UN. I was delighted when the British Parliament did a landmark study on this topic several years ago and published it. I am pleased that, finally, parliamentarians on the other side, under the leadership of Mario Silva and Scott Reid, are holding hearings on combating anti-Semitism. I live in hope that the Senate will consider its findings and add its considerable expertise and credit to its recommendations.

I have learned two things about this topic, "anti-Semitism," the oldest of all prejudices. First, that discrimination starts with Jews, but never ends with Jews, as one great Danish Prime Minister once said. Second, what to do? Education is the answer. The Nobel Prize winner Elie Wiesel said these words at the Berlin conference: "You can teach a child to love or you can teach a child to hate." So education is an answer. A word about Senator Di Nino: I admire very much his work with respect to human rights not only at the OSCE but also with respect to the Dalai Lama. He has been a great and compatible companion at the OSCE, and he will continue to do great and important work over there. My congratulations to him.

Senators, I am coming to the close, but before I end, I would like to say a word about the current atmosphere in the Senate that I dislike. While I am as partisan—as everyone knows—as any senator, and will vigorously attack on behalf of my party and on behalf of my principles, I also believe in political companionship and congeniality that rises above partisan politics. I do not enjoy those who downgrade the Senate, the institution we are all privileged and summoned to serve. I have made good friends on both sides of the aisle here and in the other place. I take my leave of this hallowed hall with no regrets. I

tried my best, and if I failed, I have failed trying to do my best.

Honourable senators opposite will forgive me if I remind them that my great parliamentary hero was and is Sir Winston Churchill, whose printed works and speeches I have read avidly. When Britain was in the most desperate straits in the early part of World War II, he gave this advice to his colleagues, and this is my advice to my colleagues on this side: KBO, keep bugging on. As for my colleagues on the other side, I recall that Sir Winston Churchill in his dotage confessed that he had always been a Liberal. Good advice.

If I have succeeded, I owe it to my late father and the great mentors I have encountered in politics: Mr. Pearson, Mr. Trudeau, Mr. Turner, Mr. Chrétien and Mr. Martin, and, of course, Keith Davey, our former colleague, who taught us all on this side to love the Liberal Party. I will not say goodbye, but au revoir. On January 2, I start my third act. Regretfully, you have not heard the last of me yet. To my wife who might feel trepidation on my return to Toronto: Do not worry. I have lots of new projects that will keep me eternally occupied. All the very best to all of you, Godspeed and thank you so much.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2010

SPEECH OF

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, December 16, 2009

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 3326, the Department of Defense Appropriations Act.

The bill extends unemployment and COBRA benefits, which I have fought for and continue to support.

It also funds a number of employment, medical, and transportation programs that I also support.

Nevertheless, I urge my colleagues to oppose this bill because it continues funding for our futile efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, which have already cost our country too much in blood and treasure.

Instead of pursuing military action where there is no military solution, we need a new strategy that relies on the effective tools of what I call smart security.

These tools include diplomacy, humanitarian aid, economic development, education, civil affairs, and better intelligence and police work to search out and capture extremists.

In the case of Afghanistan, for example, a great majority of all further funding should be devoted to these smart security efforts.

Madam Speaker, let's change our strategy before it's too late. We can begin by voting against this bill.

IN HONOR AND REMEMBRANCE OF
LEO A DiEGIDIO

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, December 19, 2009

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor and remembrance of Leo A. "Lal" DiEgidio; devoted husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, great-great grandfather and dear friend to many. His generosity, concern for others and gift for singing uplifted countless people throughout our community.

Mr. DiEgidio's life was centered on family, faith, hard work and his love of song. For more than forty years, he lifted the spirits of

people of all ages with his beautiful singing voice. Mr. DiEgidio volunteered his time and talents by visiting nursing homes and singing for residents and staff. During many of these visits, he sang with another local celebrity singer, Rocco Scotti. Mr. DiEgidio directed the choir at Gunning Park Golden Age Center in Cleveland, and was a founding member of the Choir at Holy Name Church, where he sang for nearly eighty years. Mr. DiEgidio often sang duets with the late Father John Dalton, whose favorite was "Danny boy." Mr. DiEgidio was also known for his powerful versions of "The Star Spangled Banner" and "God Bless America."

Mr. DiEgidio lived his life with a spirit of generosity, a compassion for others, and a joy of living. His quick smile easily drew others to him. He was a devoted husband to the late Harriette, and was a devoted father to the late Leo, Ronald and Lalene. Together, Lal and Harriette worked hard to provide a wonderful and loving home for their family. In 1951, he established Lal's Cleaners and Tailors on Garfield Boulevard in the heart of Garfield Heights, Ohio. Now owned by his grandson, the business continues. Mr. DiEgidio was active in the Italian-American community of Garfield Heights. He was a longtime member of the Knights of Columbus Council and the Solon Italian-American Club.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honor and remembrance of Leo A. "Lal" DiEgidio, whose joyous spirit and love for others will exist forever within the hearts and memories of those who loved and knew him best—his family and friends. His life, framed by his gift of song, compassion for others, devotion to family and commitment to community, will be always celebrated and remembered.