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JOURNALS + DIGITAL PUBLISHING



D1. U.S. Pres. Barack Obama, Remarks at the AIPAC Conference, Washington, 4 March 2012 (excerpts).

Reviewed work(s):

Source: *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 4 (Summer 2012), pp. 198-201

Published by: [University of California Press](#) on behalf of the [Institute for Palestine Studies](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/jps.2012.XLI.4.198>

Accessed: 04/10/2012 13:18

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AIPAC policy conference on 4 March 2012 in Washington. The full transcript can be obtained from the AIPAC website at www.aipac.org.

. . . Every time I come to AIPAC, I'm especially impressed to see so many young people here. . . . You carry with you an extraordinary legacy of more than six decades of friendship between the United States and Israel. . . . And for inspiration, you can look to the man who preceded me on this stage, who's being honored at this conference—my friend, President Shimon Peres. . . .

In his life, he has fought for Israel's independence, and he has fought for peace and security. As a member of the Haganah and a member of the Knesset, as a minister of defense and foreign affairs, as a prime minister and as president, Shimon helped build the nation that thrives today: the Jewish state of Israel. But beyond these extraordinary achievements, he has also been a powerful moral voice that reminds us that right makes might, not the other way around. . . .

In many ways, this award is a symbol of the broader ties that bind our nations. The United States and Israel share interests, but we also share those human values that Shimon spoke about: a commitment to human dignity. A belief that freedom is a right that is given to all of God's children. An experience that shows us that democracy is the one and only form of government that can truly respond to the aspirations of citizens.

America's Founding Fathers understood this truth, just as Israel's founding generation did. President Truman put it well, describing his decision to formally recognize Israel only minutes after it declared independence. He said, "I had faith in Israel before it was established. I believe it has a glorious future before it as not just another sovereign nation, but as an embodiment of the great ideals of our civilization."

For over six decades, the American people have kept that faith. Yes, we are bound to Israel because of the interests that we share in security for our communities, prosperity for our people, the new frontiers of science that can light the world. But ultimately it is our common ideals that provide the true

UNITED STATES

D1. U.S. PRES. BARACK OBAMA, REMARKS AT THE AIPAC CONFERENCE, WASHINGTON, 4 MARCH 2012 (EXCERPTS).

Below are excerpts from U.S. Pres. Barack Obama's address to the annual

foundation for our relationship. That is why America's commitment to Israel has endured under Democratic and Republican presidents, and congressional leaders of both parties. In the United States, our support for Israel is bipartisan, and that is how it should stay.

AIPAC's work continually nurtures this bond. And because of AIPAC's effectiveness in carrying out its mission, you can expect that over the next several days, you will hear many fine words from elected officials describing their commitment to the U.S.-Israel relationship. But as you examine my commitment, you don't just have to count on my words. You can look at my deeds. Because over the last three years, as president of the United States, I have kept my commitments to the state of Israel. At every crucial juncture at every fork in the road, we have been there for Israel. . . .

Four years ago, I stood before you and said that "Israel's security is sacrosanct. It is non-negotiable." That belief has guided my actions as president. The fact is my administration's commitment to Israel's security has been unprecedented. Our military and intelligence cooperation has never been closer. Our joint exercises and training have never been more robust. Despite a tough budget environment, our security assistance has increased every single year. We are investing in new capabilities. We're providing Israel with more advanced technology, the types of products and systems that only go to our closest friends and allies. And make no mistake: We will do what it takes to preserve Israel's qualitative military edge because Israel must always have the ability to defend itself, by itself, against any threat. . . .

And just as we've been there with our security assistance, we've been there through our diplomacy. When the Goldstone report unfairly singled out Israel for criticism, we challenged it. When Israel was isolated in the aftermath of the flotilla incident, we supported them. When the Durban conference was commemorated, we boycotted it, and we will always reject the notion that Zionism is racism.

When one-sided resolutions are brought up at the Human Rights

Council, we oppose them. When Israeli diplomats feared for their lives in Cairo, we intervened to save them. When there are efforts to boycott or divest from Israel, we will stand against them. And whenever an effort is made to delegitimize the state of Israel, my administration has opposed them. So there should not be a shred of doubt by now when the chips are down, I have Israel's back. . . .

Of course, there are those who question not my security and diplomatic commitments, but rather my administration's ongoing pursuit of peace between Israelis and Palestinians. So let me say this: I make no apologies for pursuing peace. Israel's own leaders understand the necessity of peace. Prime Minister Netanyahu, Defense Minister Barak, President Peres, each of them have called for two states, a secure Israel that lives side by side with an independent Palestinian state. I believe that peace is profoundly in Israel's security interest.

The reality that Israel faces from shifting demographics, to emerging technologies, to an extremely difficult international environment demands a resolution of this issue. And I believe that peace with the Palestinians is consistent with Israel's founding values because of our shared belief in self-determination, and because Israel's place as a Jewish and democratic state must be protected.

Of course, peace is hard to achieve. There's a reason why it's remained elusive for six decades. The upheaval and uncertainty in Israel's neighborhood makes it that much harder, from the horrific violence raging in Syria, to the transition in Egypt. And the division within the Palestinian leadership makes it harder still, most notably, with Hamas's continued rejection of Israel's very right to exist.

But as hard as it may be, we should not and cannot give in to cynicism or despair. The changes taking place in the region make peace more important, not less. And I've made it clear that there will be no lasting peace unless Israel's security concerns are met. That's why we continue to press Arab leaders to reach out to Israel, and will continue to support the peace treaty with Egypt. That's why just as we encourage Israel to be resolute in the pursuit of peace,

we have continued to insist that any Palestinian partner must recognize Israel's right to exist and reject violence and adhere to existing agreements. And that is why my administration has consistently rejected any efforts to short-cut negotiations or impose an agreement on the parties.

. . . [L]ast year, I stood before you and pledged that "the United States will stand up against efforts to single Israel out at the United Nations." As you know, that pledge has been kept. Last September, I stood before the United Nations General Assembly and reaffirmed that any lasting peace must acknowledge the fundamental legitimacy of Israel and its security concerns. I said that America's commitment to Israel's security is unshakeable, our friendship with Israel is enduring, and that Israel must be recognized. No American president has made such a clear statement about our support for Israel at the United Nations at such a difficult time. People usually give those speeches before audiences like this one, not before the General Assembly.

And I must say, there was not a lot of applause. But it was the right thing to do. And as a result, today there is no doubt anywhere in the world that the United States will insist upon Israel's security and legitimacy. That will be true as we continue our efforts . . . in the pursuit of peace. And that will be true when it comes to the issue that is such a focus for all of us today: Iran's nuclear program, a threat that has the potential to bring together the worst rhetoric about Israel's destruction with the world's most dangerous weapons.

Let's begin with a basic truth that you all understand: no Israeli government can tolerate a nuclear weapon in the hands of a regime that denies the Holocaust, threatens to wipe Israel off the map, and sponsors terrorist groups committed to Israel's destruction. And so I understand the profound historical obligation that weighs on the shoulders of Bibi Netanyahu and Ehud Barak and all of Israel's leaders.

A nuclear-armed Iran is completely counter to Israel's security interests. But it is also counter to the national security interests of the United States. . . .

The United States and Israel both assess that Iran does not yet have a nuclear weapon, and we are exceedingly vigilant in monitoring their program. Now, the international community has a responsibility to use the time and space that exist. Sanctions are continuing to increase, and this July thanks to our diplomatic coordination a European ban on Iranian oil imports will take hold. Faced with these increasingly dire consequences, Iran's leaders still have the opportunity to make the right decision. They can choose a path that brings them back into the community of nations, or they can continue down a dead end. . . .

We all prefer to resolve this issue diplomatically. Having said that, Iran's leaders should have no doubt about the resolve of the United States just as they should not doubt Israel's sovereign right to make its own decisions about what is required to meet its security needs. . . .

Iran's leaders should understand that I do not have a policy of containment; I have a policy to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. And as I have made clear time and again during the course of my presidency, I will not hesitate to use force when it is necessary to defend the United States and its interests.

Moving forward, I would ask that we all remember the weightiness of these issues, the stakes involved for Israel, for America, and for the world. Already, there is too much loose talk of war. Over the last few weeks, such talk has only benefited the Iranian government, by driving up the price of oil, which they depend on to fund their nuclear program. For the sake of Israel's security, America's security, and the peace and security of the world, now is not the time for bluster. Now is the time to let our increased pressure sink in and to sustain the broad international coalition we have built. Now is the time to heed the timeless advice from Teddy Roosevelt: Speak softly; carry a big stick. And as we do, rest assured that the Iranian government will know our resolve and that our coordination with Israel will continue. . . .

As Harry Truman understood, Israel's story is one of hope. We may not agree on every single issue; no two nations

do, and our democracies contain a vibrant diversity of views. But we agree on the big things, the things that matter. And together, we are working to build a better world, one where our people can live free from fear, one where peace is founded upon justice, one where our children can know a future that is more hopeful than the present. . . .