

**D2. REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE MITT ROMNEY, REMARKS AT ANNUAL AIPAC CONFERENCE, WASHINGTON, 6 MARCH 2012 (EXCERPTS).**

*Below are excerpts from former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney's address to the annual AIPAC policy conference in Washington on 6 March 2012 (the same day as the Super Tuesday primary voting). Romney did not attend the conference but spoke via video link from the campaign trail. The full transcript can be obtained from the AIPAC website at [www.aipac.org](http://www.aipac.org).*

. . . This year, we are gathering at a dangerous time for Israel and for America. Not since the dark days of 1967 and 1973 has the Middle East faced peril as it does today. This is a critical moment. America must not—and, if I am President, it will not—fail this defining test of history.

The current administration has distanced itself from Israel and visibly warmed to the Palestinian cause. It has emboldened the Palestinians. They are convinced that they can do better at the UN—and better with America—than they can at the bargaining table with Israel.

As President, I will treat our allies and friends like friends and allies.

In recent days and weeks, we've heard a lot of words from the administration. Its clear message has been to warn Israel to consider the costs of military action against Iran. I do not believe that we should be issuing public warnings that create distance between the United States and Israel. Israel does not need public lectures about how to weigh decisions of war and peace. It needs our support.

Israel's democratically elected leaders will always be welcomed and respected by my administration. Israel's current prime minister is not just a friend; he's an old friend. We worked together over

30 years ago at the Boston Consulting Group. He is a leader whose intellect and courage I admire—and whose family's sacrifice I profoundly respect. In a Romney administration, there will be no gap between our nations or between our leaders.

I have seen Israel by land and by air. I have seen its narrow waist, and its vulnerability to positions on the Golan Heights. I have spent time with families in Sderot who have been terrorized by rocket barrages from Gaza. I have walked the streets of Jerusalem, seen schools pocked by rifle rounds fired from the foreboding hills that nearly surround it. I would never call for a return to the 1967 lines because I understand that in Israel, geography is security.

I have studied the writings and speeches of the jihadists. They argue for a one-state solution—one all-dominating radical Islamist state, that is. Their objective is not freedom, not prosperity, not a Palestinian state, but the destruction of Israel. And negotiating and placating such jihadists will never, ever yield peace in the Middle East.

I recognize in the ayatollahs of Iran the zealot refrain of dominion. Their passion for the martyrdom of Arab youth is matched only by their cowardice in avoiding it for themselves. Nuclear ambition is pursued by Iran to dominate, to subjugate, and to obliterate. A nuclear Iran is not only a problem for Israel; it is also a problem for America and the world.

We may not know when Iran will secure sufficient fissile material to threaten the world, but the IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency] warns that the hour is fast approaching.

In the Gulf, Iran prepares to close the Strait of Hormuz, to hold hostage 20 percent of the world's oil. In their nuclear laboratories, they prepare the means to hold hostage the entire planet.

Iran has long engaged in terrorism around the world, most recently in Georgia and in Thailand. In Washington, DC, Iran plotted to assassinate the Saudi ambassador by bombing a Georgetown restaurant. Iran has deployed Hizballah and Hamas and armed the insurgents of Iraq and Afghanistan, killing our sons and daughters. They war against America.

Yet, the current administration has promoted a policy of engagement with Iran. The President offered to sit down with Ahmadinejad during his first year in office without preconditions. He sat silent as Iranian dissidents took to the streets of Tehran, not wanting to disrupt the potential opportunity for dialogue with Iran's fanatical tyrants. This President not only dawdled in imposing crippling sanctions, he has opposed them.

Hope is not a foreign policy. The only thing respected by thugs and tyrants is our resolve, backed by our power and our readiness to use it.

Of course, the administration's naive outreach to Iran gave the ayatollahs exactly what they wanted most. It gave them time. Whatever sanctions they may now belatedly impose, Iran has already gained three invaluable years.

There are some in this administration who argue that Iran's leaders are "rational," and that we can do business with them. The President speaks of common interests. Let me be clear: we do not have common interests with a terrorist regime. Their interest is in the destruction of Israel and the domination of the Middle East. It is profoundly irrational to suggest that the ayatollahs think the way we do or share our values. They do not.

I will bring the current policy of procrastination toward Iran to an end. I will not delay in imposing further crippling sanctions, and I will not hesitate to fully implement the ones we currently have. I will make sure Iran knows of the very real peril that awaits if it becomes nuclear. I will engage

Iran's neighbors. I will station multiple carriers and warships at Iran's door. I will stand with the Syrian people who are being mercilessly slaughtered. I know that the fall of Assad would not only be an important victory for liberty, but also a strategic blow to Tehran.

As President, I will be ready to engage in diplomacy. But I will be just as ready to engage our military might. Israel will know that America stands at its side, in all conditions and in all consequence. . . .

As President, peace will be my solemn goal. A peace based not on empty assurances, but on true security and defensible borders. This will require American strength, and a demonstration of our resolve. That's why, as President, my first foreign trip will not be to Cairo or Riyadh or Ankara. It will be to Jerusalem.

We will make clear to the world that Israel's continued existence as a Jewish state is a vital national interest of the United States. . . .

In a Romney administration, the world will know that the bond between Israel and America is unbreakable—and that our opposition to a nuclear Iran is absolute. We must not allow Iran to have the bomb or the capacity to make a bomb. Our enemies should never doubt our resolve and our allies should never doubt our commitment.

This is a critical time, and AIPAC has a vital voice. Together, let's achieve peace for the region and ensure a secure future for Israel—and America.

God bless America, and God bless our friendship with Israel.