



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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PREPARED TEXT OF SPEECH PRESENTED BY SENATOR BOB DOLE
BEFORE THE 80th CONVENTION
OF THE ZIONIST ORGANIZATION OF AMERICA
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I am honored to address this 80th Congress of the Zionist Organization of America. It is a pleasure to be with you all again, I see many familiar faces here. I am especially grateful for the reception given me. I get more applause and fewer votes from my Jewish friends than any other politician in America. The distance between Israel, 1977, and Switzerland, 1897, is not significant in terms of miles. But in terms of the time and energy, of the hopes and frustration, of the grief and the monumental achievement between that First Congress and this one today, the distance is greater than words can tell.

Peace Endangered, Peace Desired

Today, the journey is still not complete. In spite of the green valleys and the crops on the hills of Latrun, in spite of the industry and the universities, in spite of the creation of a democratic oasis, the redemption of the holy places, in spite of it all, the journey is not over. The peace prophesied by Isaiah for all the world, is most endangered here, even as the hope of its achievement remains most fervent here. Hebrew is a strange tongue. In most of the languages of the world, the most common, the most necessary verb is the infinitive "to be." In the language of Israel - the language of the Jews, "to be" exists only in the past tense and in the future. For the present, it is simply understood.

So, for two thousand years, has the ultimate realization of the most cherished hopes of the Jewish people been understood. That a reborn Israel was to be, was understood. That Jews would one day live and work and worship freely in the city of David was to be - it was understood.

That peace will crown and sanctify this achievement is also something that will be. That, too, is understood. But how it shall be defies and surpasses our understanding.

Change and Continuity

Today there is concern in Israel, and among the American Jewish community, about the U.S. position toward Israel in its relations with the Arab states and the Palestinians. This is understandable. We meet at a time of change. We have a new Administration in America. We have a new Administration in Israel. Both promise to explore and pursue courses of action affecting Israel in ways that differ from their predecessors. But while there may be changes in procedure, there can be continuity in goals.

I have spoken to Prime Minister Begin, and to former Prime Minister Rabin, and to the Leader of the Labor Party, Shimon Peres. All share the same goal of a safe, secure and lasting peace for Israel. This includes and requires sensible, secure, defensible borders.

I believe these are goals which President Carter shares. Israel and America may differ on how to reach those goals. But friends can differ and still be friends. Allies can differ and still support each other fully and forcefully. We can also differ in America about the proper way to achieve those goals. But the proper place to express those differences is in America, and I can assure you that whenever necessary, this will be done. What is most important is not the differences between allies. But those between adversaries: between Israel and the Arabs. Today we are testing the strength and the dimensions of those differences to see if they can be compromised far enough to negotiate a peace. This is still unclear.

When one party to a dispute says, as Egypt's foreign minister did recently, that they will not negotiate a resolution of the dispute unless their objectives are agreed to in advance, it is difficult to see where an opportunity for a settlement exists, or even that any basis for real negotiation exists. I think it is more, it is more common to fund negotiation producing an agreement than to find agreement producing a negotiation.

Sadat and Fahmi

But Mr. Sadat has said he is anxious to negotiate. So perhaps Mr. Sadat does not always listen to his foreign minister, and great good may come of that. I understand Mr. Fahmi recently said the Jews should go back where they came from. I hope you don't all take his advice, but for those who do I trust the new Minister of Immigration and Absorption is prepared to handle the influx.

We may be witnessing the most radical reversal in Egyptian policy since the Exodus.

For the first time since her rebirth, Israel is in a position to negotiate from strength. It is natural that she wishes to be patient and deliberate about it. It is understandable that her friends should want to offer her advice about it, and we can understand the great interest in what she considers negotiable, since that is for Israel and only Israel to decide.

What Do the Arabs Have to Negotiate?

What is missing from serious public discussion, however, is any real consideration of what the Arabs should bring to the table. What they are publicly committed to in an agreement is to recognize Israel's right to exist, and to make peace with Israel. Those are desirable goals, but they are somewhat less specific and consequential than what they are asking of Israel, and asking to have committed in advance.

As desirable as they are, I would suggest that they are hardly indispensable in the short term, which is why Israel can afford to be patient and deliberate, and should be.

Recognition, Reconciliation

On recognition, as I understand it, the Arab position is that they will acknowledge Israel's right to exist, in return for which Israel must give up some of the means of preserving her existence. Israel does exist. Whether the Arabs acknowledge that is problematical. Her right to exist is recognized in international law confirmed by history, and reinforced by the same Lockean logic which guided and informed those men and women who founded and built the United States of America. So for the Arabs to say they will recognize Israel's right to exist is hardly a dramatic concession. When they

are able to speak of reconciliation along with recognition, that will be a more serious signal.

The other condition is peace. That, too, is desirable. But it is worth noting that in the present circumstances, a peace of sorts already exists. In the past year, no Israeli soldier has died in hostile action.

This is a peace enforced by the strength of Israeli arms and equally important, by the strength of Israel's military position - which means having control of the Golan Heights, the Sinai, and the West Bank.

So the question is: which situation is better calculated to maintain peace - an Israel which is in a strong defensive position, or an Israel which is in a weak defensive position? I've been out of the Army for thirty years and I don't remember much, but Ezer Weizman tells me it's better to be in a strong defensive position.

A Slow, Structured Approach to Peace

I do not suggest that an enforced peace is better than a negotiated peace. But the history of assassination and coup d'etat' by which governments and government policies change in the Arab states gives little confidence that the agreements made by one government will be binding on its successors.

Further, it gives little confidence that an agreement will not trigger a radical upheaval aimed at eliminating of the agreement, as well as those who made it.

Therefore, a negotiated peace will almost certainly have to be one structured in such a way as to give the Arabs the opportunity to demonstrate that it can and will be kept. And this may take time. So the question will be whether the Arabs want to spend time to get an agreement on mutually acceptable terms, or to spend more lives to try to force an agreement on their own terms. I hope neither the parties to the dispute, nor their allies, will become anxious if a peace which the Arabs have taken thirty years to talk about, should take time to negotiate and a longer time to implement.

The great fallacy in the popular evaluation of the Middle East is that Israel's agreement to withdraw to the pre-1967 borders would lead to peace, and this would result in the stabilization of the Middle East.

1967 Borders Not Sacred

This baffles me. For one thing, the inescapable truth is that the pre-1967 borders led not to peace, but to war. With the constant cry about the 1967 borders, it is hard to understand why their desirability was not recognized before the six-day war instead of after.

In the months and weeks leading up to the six-day war, the Jordan Valley was being shelled continually from the Golan Heights. Efforts were made to divert the Jordan River and deny Israel water. The call for a "people's war" against Israel was constant, and growing louder by the day. The Egyptian army was concentrated in the Sinai. At Nasser's insistence the U.N. emergency force in the Sinai was withdrawn. The straits of Tiran were closed. A pact of war was established, and armies were massed along the 1967 borders. Reasonable men could not doubt that the intent was to violate these borders.

Prudent men could not help but react.

1967 Borders are 1948 Armistice Lines

So one must ask what is the magic in the borders that makes them so desirable in 1977, and made them so undesirable in 1967? The simple answer is that the Arabs expected to push those borders in, to "push the Jews into the sea." as the saying went--and instead the Jews, in defending themselves, pushed the borders out. If that is not the answer, then we have to ask why the Arabs should have fought two wars just to obtain what they already had in peace. It should be remembered, however, that the so-called pre-1967 borders are not borders at all under any acceptable interpretation of international law. Rather they are the Armistice lines drawn where the efforts by five Arab armies to destroy the state of Israel were finally halted in 1948.

Jordan's representative to the United Nations put the point very well on May 31, 1967 in the Security Council, when he said: "There is an Armistice Agreement. The Agreement did not fix boundaries, it fixed the demarcation line. The Agreement did not pass judgment on rights--political, military or otherwise, thus I know of no boundary: I know of a situation frozen by an Armistice Agreement."

This position was being put forth to defend and justify in advance the intended violation of the Armistice Agreement. Today the Arab states insist that Israel return to borders which, ten years ago, the same states said had no standing.

This is a circumstance which justified caution on Israel's part. But it may also justify optimism about the long-term possibility of arriving at fixed, mutually acceptable borders. In order to find borders sanctioned internationally, it is necessary to go all the way back to 1922. After Britain severed Transjordan, what remained for a Jewish homeland included the West Bank, Jerusalem, and the Gaza. That is a legal argument. There are historical arguments. Some are compelling. All are interesting. Some favor one side, some favor the other.

West Bank Liberated, Not Occupied, Territory

The difficulty of sorting out competing claims is reflected in a long-standing U.S. policy cliché which says "We will not defend Israel's conquests." Even-handedness ought to require, therefore, that we do not defend Arab conquests, and I trust we will not - not in the Gaza strip, and most especially not in the West Bank.

The Arab nations rejected the partition recommendations in 1947, went to war in 1948, and Jordan conquered the West Bank. Her only claim to that territory is by conquest. In 1967, Israel took back the lands provided as a Jewish homeland in the League of Nation Mandate for Palestine of 1922, and recognized by a U.S. Congressional Resolution of September 21, 1922. Therefore, I fully concur with Prime Minister Begin's characterization of the West Bank as liberated territory and not occupied territory.

If Israel wishes to relinquish all or part of the West Bank by negotiation, that is her right. It is not her obligation. Let us not defend Israel's conquests.

But let us also not defend Arab conquests.

The Palestinian Question

Now we have the Palestinian question. It has been suggested that a Palestinian homeland be provided, preferably in conjunction with Jordan.

There is nothing in the history of the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship to suggest that a Palestinian homeland might be established in conjunction with Jordan. The territory most frequently suggested for a Palestinian state is the West Bank. Jordan held the West Bank for nineteen years, and did not establish a Palestinian state there. From the assassination of Abdullah through almost weekly demonstrations and shootings on the West Bank, through September of 1970 to the assassination of Wasfi Tell in Cairo, and on and on, the history of that relationship is not one that would justify hope for the success of a Palestinian homeland in conjunction with Jordan.

Arab Jewish Refugees

But if such a homeland can be established in conjunction with Jordan, that is something which Jordan must work out with the Palestinians, and with her other Arab neighbors. It becomes an Arab question which has no relationship to negotiations with Israel. Israel has already done more than any Arab state, with the exception of Jordan herself, to help the Palestinians and make a home for them. That fact is too often ignored.

Israel has also assimilated Jewish refugees from Arab lands, and nowhere in the discussion of refugees is the difficult situation being discussed.

When the problems of the Palestinians are raised in Geneva, I hope we will insist that the problems - and the legitimate rights of dispossessed Arab Jews are represented equally.

They have no propaganda, and they don't throw bombs and commit terrorism, but their problems are as great as those of the Arab Palestinians, and their numbers are as great.

It is time to recognize that the Palestinian problem will not be resolved until it becomes a humanitarian concern rather than a political opportunity for Arab governments, and for bandits like Yasser Arafat and George Habbash.

Jerusalem Non-Negotiable

Finally, there is Jerusalem. Historically and legally it is a Jewish city. Spiritually, it is the home of three of the world's great religions. Under the never-implemented partition recommendation, Jerusalem was to be an international city. Christian, Moslem and Jew were to have access to their holy places within the old city. But the city was taken by force by the invading armies in the war of independence, and for Christians and Moslems there was access, but to the Jews there was none.

The hotel was in Arab hands. Jewish holy places were desecrated. And those who once called for internationalization were silent. The city that ought to have been a symbol of unity among ranking became one more symbol of the divisions in the Middle East. King Faisal used to say that he wanted to worship at the Dome of the Rock before he died, but he would not do so while the city was in Jewish hands. It is worth noting, however, that he would not worship there during the nineteen years that Jerusalem was in Jordanian hands, either.

Today, the City of David is open to all. For the first time, it has the chance to stand as a unifying symbol, as well as the vibrant, dynamic city that it is. All

religions are respected here. All holy places are protected here. There are those who object--not because it is open, but because it is open under the Jews. It is difficult to build arguments about justice on those grounds. Those who love their holy places more than they cherish their hatreds will have no difficulty going to Jerusalem regardless of who holds it. Those who do not, are perhaps not ready for Jerusalem.

And in the search for a solution to the dilemma which Israel's first President called "a conflict of right with right", whatever else may be negotiable, the capital of Israel clearly is not.

Israel Vital to U.S. Self-Interest

Israel and America are bound by ties of affection and respect, by history, culture, and common tradition. But in the hard logic of international relations, the most important bond between nations is self-interest.

A short time ago, the government of Israel changed hands. It was done peacefully. The man who was unsuccessful in his bid for the leadership is still alive and well. The nation is divided in its politics, as is the United States, it is united in its purposes as is the United States. There has been a smooth, dignified transition.

This is an unusual event in this part of the world. It is an unusual event in any part of the world today. Freedom and democracy are on the defensive all around the world, but we believe they will survive and prevail. The success of Israel serves to justify and strengthen that belief. Perhaps a people who can grow oranges in the desert can also help freedom and democracy to grow in the Middle East. In any event, she can help to defend it wherever it exists. I think it is fair to say that Israel needs America. But I think it is also fair to say that America needs Israel. And we know it.

Whatever the temporary growing pains which may result from our Administrations getting to know each other, we can be confident that these represent a further growing together, and not growing apart.

Eighty years ago, in a gambling casino in Switzerland, the miracle of modern Israel began. It began with an ancient dream stated in the language of modern politics. It began with a flag and a song: Hatikvah (The Hope). That flag flies free in a democratic nation, the hope has become a reality, and the possibility of miracles has been demonstrated anew. With that possibility fresh in our minds, we may hope for another miracle--for the peace which comes not by imposition, but by understanding and reconciliation, for the peace that comes with healing in its wings, and without the seeds of future conflict.

We must work for it as we can, and pray for it as we may: trusting in the words of David: "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even forever...and, peace shall be upon Israel."

Thank you. Shalom.