

Bob Dole



NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

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AIPAC POLICY CONFERENCE REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY SENATE MAJORITY LEADER BOB DOLE

It is a privilege to be here, and I am especially honored to be introduced by Max Fisher. As I'm sure you know, Max has been advising Republican presidents on U.S.-Israel relations for quite some time.

Many of you may have read about Max's decisive role in working with President Nixon to get the U.S. emergency airlift up and running during the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Many believe without that tireless input, those 566 U.S. re-supply flights to Israel might not have taken off in time--and Israel might not have prevailed in that conflict.

Presidents Ford, Reagan, and Bush also knew the value of Max's wisdom and advice. Now, advising four Republican presidents is very impressive, but advising five would be even better.

I know the hour is late, and that you have heard many speeches over the past few days, so I will keep my remarks brief. In fact, this being V-E Day, I was tempted to honor my hero, Dwight Eisenhower, by doing what he once did when he was President of Columbia University.

At the end of a long evening of speeches, Eisenhower's turn came. After being introduced, he stood up and reminded his audience that every speech, written or otherwise, had to have a punctuation. He said, "Tonight, I am the punctuation. I am the period." And he sat down. He said later that was one of the most popular speeches he ever gave. I could think of quite a few senators who could learn from that example.

U.S. - Israel Partnership

I promise that I will sit down in a few minutes, but I do have a few thoughts I want to share about the past, present, and future of U.S.-Israel relations. I first visited Israel during the Johnson administration. I attended my first AIPAC policy conference back in 1971 as a freshman senator. The next year, Vrem Levens, an AIPAC executive committee member from Kansas, arranged for Yitzhak Rabin, who was then Israel's ambassador to the United States, to come to Kansas City to speak at an Israel Bonds Dinner in my honor.

This is the first AIPAC gathering since the terrible events in Oklahoma City, and I want to speak to that right up front. I have committed to putting an anti-terrorism bill on the President's desk by the end of the month.

I also aim to ensure that even though we will act with speed, we will also act with care. We will not trample on anyone's civil rights. My goal is to write legislation that will look as good one year, five years, or ten years from now as it does today.

The terrorist attack inXOklahoma City was homegrown in America. But it reminds us of what the citizens of Israel have endured, and continue to endure, on a daily basis.

So I think all of us here tonight feel a new understanding of their courage in the face of evil, and a renewed partnership based on shared purpose and experience.

The partnership between the United States and Israel is truly remarkable. I said at this conference in 1984 that "America has no better friend than Israel, and Israel has no better friend than America." And the same is true today. Let me give you a few examples of how this partnership works for both countries.

Look at the United Nations. No other country votes more consistently with the United States than Israel--well over 90% of the time. That's more than Britain, more than France, Japan, Germany, or any of our Western allies.

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And, of course, it was the United States who always insisted that the United Nations repeal U.N. Resolution 3867, which equated Zionism with racism--and who finally secured that overwhelming renunciation in 1991.

Today, Israel remains our most important ally in the fight against radical Islamic forces and against the spread of weapons of mass destruction in the region. And, working together, the United States and Israel are developing defenses against ballistic missiles. Anyone who saw the Iraqi scud's landing on Tel Aviv knows how important having a defense against them can be.

And because of American insistence that the former Soviet Union open its borders, 500,000 Jews have emigrated to Israel, more than at any other period in Israel's history. The United States also provided loan guarantees--which I supported--to help Israel absorb the refugees.

I was also proud to have shepherded the U.S.-Israel free trade agreement through the Senate--the first and most far reaching agreement of its kind. As a result, Israel enjoys lower U.S. tariff rates than any country in the world, and the U.S. is the single largest export market for Israeli exports--with two way trade approaching eight billion dollars.

I could go on and on and on about the mutual acts of friendship between the United States and Israel. But the bottom line is this: America is better and safer because of our partnership. Israel is better and safer because of our partnership. And the world is better and safer because of our partnership.

And as we look around the world today, I believe that our partnership is needed now more than ever.

Middle East Peace Process

For Israel is entering a critical time in its long struggle for a just, secure, and permanent peace. The peace process is turning out to be difficult, complex, and often frustrating. And success has not come quickly or easily. Talks with Syria are proceeding at a snail's pace. Talks with the Palestinians are making progress, but extremists in the Palestinian camp have not backed away from their brutal campaign of terrorism against Israel. And there seems to be no end of terrorism and saber rattling emerging from Iran.

Perhaps most worrisome is Iran's push to acquire a nuclear weapons capability and the missiles to deliver them. There should be no mistake: Israel can never be secure with a nuclear-armed Iran.

Many in Congress, including myself, have been calling for an end to all U.S. trade with Iran for some time, and we were pleased when President Clinton joined our cause. I met with Prime Minister Rabin earlier today, and I agree with his assessment that Iran is the number one security threat faced by Israel.

Iran is a terrorist state. And it must never be allowed to obtain nuclear weapons. Period. And when President Clinton is in Russia I trust that he will make it very clear to Boris Yeltsin that providing Iran the wherewithal to continue its nuclear drive and a close friendship with the United States are mutually exclusive goals.

There should also be a clear message to Syria. There will be no improvement in the bilateral relationship with the United States until your policies change on a wide range of issues: no more support for terrorism, no more drug trafficking, and no more occupation of Lebanon.

We all hope and pray that the peace process will succeed. And that the remarkable accomplishments of the past few years were just the beginning. But no one should ever doubt that if the peace process fails, America will stand by Israel.

There are some who say that even with all the challenges remaining to achieve peace, enough progress has been made that it's time to reduce the aid the United States provides to Israel.

My response to those urging this course is to tell them to compare our \$3 billion of aid to Israel to the hundreds and hundreds of billions it has cost us--and continues to cost us--to defend Europe and Korea.

Don't misunderstand me, I think it is right and necessary for us to have a presence in Europe and Korea. But the costs of our forward presence puts our aid to Israel in a different perspective. And let's not fool ourselves: the Middle East is a rough neighborhood, one in which the United States has some vital interests. Imagine how much more it would have cost us to defend our interests there on a permanent basis, as we do in Europe and Korea, if there were no Israel. The bottom line is simple: aid to Israel is in America's interest, and now is not the time to reduce our aid to Israel.

Jerusalem Embassy Relocation Implementation Act of 1995

Let me now turn to Jerusalem. It is a remarkable and unique city that perhaps more than any other has helped mold the spiritual life of western civilization. Think about it: no other city on
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earth besides Jerusalem is the capital of the same country, inhabited by the same people, speaking the same language, and worshipping the same God, as it was 3,000 years ago.

Jerusalem is today as it has been for three millennia the heart and soul of the Jewish people. It is also, and should remain forever, the eternal and undivided capital of the state of Israel.

Years ago, I was one of those who questioned the wisdom of moving the American Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. I felt that doing so at that time could undermine our efforts and ability to act as a peacemaker.

Today, however, much has changed. There is no Soviet Union. A multinational coalition led by the United States defeated Iraq. Israel is at peace with Egypt and Jordan. The peace process has made great strides, and our commitment to that process is unchallengeable. Delaying the process of moving the Embassy now only sends a message of false hopes. So what are we waiting for?

I was proud to join with 92 of my Senate colleagues in signing a letter last March urging the administration to move our embassy no later than May 1999. As has so often been the case on Jerusalem, Senators D'Amato and Moynihan led that effort.

The time has come, however, to move beyond letters, expressions of support, and sense of the Congress resolutions. The time has come to enact legislation that will get the job done.

Tomorrow, along with Senator Dan Inouye of Hawaii and Senator John Kyl of Arizona and many others, I will introduce the Jerusalem Embassy Relocation Implementation Act of 1995.

It mandates that the United States open a new Embassy in Jerusalem no later than May 31, 1999. The legislation also requires groundbreaking for construction next year -- in 1996--the 3,000th anniversary of King David's establishment of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

I have discussed this matter with Speaker Gingrich, and I am pleased to inform you that he will introduce identical legislation in the House of Representatives tomorrow.

Lessons of World War II

Let me conclude by noting that today is the 50th anniversary of VE-Day.

And, as we celebrate this anniversary, let us remember a few lessons that World War II taught us--lessons that remain vitally important for America today.

We learned that we can not turn our backs on what happens in the rest of the world.

We learned that we must never again allow our military to reach low levels of preparedness and supplies--and, given President Clinton's massive cuts in the defense budget, I'm afraid we may be on the verge of doing just that.

We learned that we cannot appease tyrants and dictators.

Importance of American Leadership

And, perhaps above all, we learned the critical importance of American leadership. Despite what you might hear from the White House these days, Republicans are not retreating from our involvement around the world.

We know American leadership enabled the Allied forces to win the war. But for six million Jews, that leadership came too late. My point is this: the vow we all made after the war was "never again." Never again would America sit on her hands, if our leadership was needed to confront genocide.

Ladies and gentlemen, the fact is that American leadership has been and is needed to put an end to genocide and "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia. And the fact is we have not provided that leadership.

How many more innocent civilians must die before we end this unjust and illegal policy? In this case, leadership does not mean U.S. troops or unilateral military action. But it does mean is allowing another member of the United Nations to defend itself.

I want to leave you tonight with words that were written by a remarkable teen-age girl half a century ago. "How lovely to think that no one need wait a moment," wrote Anne Frank in her diary. "We can start now, start slowly, changing the world. How lovely that everyone, great and small, can make a contribution."

As members of AIPAC, each of you has made a contribution to strengthening the partnership between the United States and Israel -- a partnership that has, and will continue to change the world for the better.

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