

NEAR EAST REPORT

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Grossman: U.S., Israel Confront Burgeoning Iranian Threat

Below are excerpts from a May 5 AIPAC Policy Conference address by AIPAC President Steve Grossman:

We know that Israel's strength, and the strength of the U.S.-Israel relationship, have produced the possibility of peace. We know that real peace, with explicit security arrangements, can significantly enhance Israel's focus on what



AIPAC President Steve Grossman addresses the Policy Conference May 5

I believe to be the two principle strategic threats to face Israel today. In many ways, they pose an existential threat to Israel. The first is the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the second is Islamic radicalism.

We have reports that there has been delivery of the most sophisticated North Korean ballistic missile technology to Iran, which is only the beginning. We know that Iran,

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Sher: AIPAC's Critical Role

Below are excerpts from a May 6 AIPAC Policy Conference speech by AIPAC Executive Director Neal Sher. (President Clinton and Prime Minister Rabin were also on the dais at the time):

Israel is now in the midst of a peace process, in which she is taking great physical risks in the hope of gaining something very simple: the right to live in peace, like citizens of other democratic societies. President Clinton, we appreciate the steadfast support that you have given to that process, because it means so much to Israel, and to the American Jewish community.

Our job is to educate. I believe deeply that we have a sacred obligation to tell our legislators the truth



AIPAC Executive Director Neal Sher addresses the AIPAC Policy Conference

about Israel and the situation in the Middle East. We must ensure that the U.S.-Israel relationship is as strong as it can be.

This is where AIPAC comes in: Because, in the best tradition of America, we go to Capitol Hill—as we will on Tuesday morning—to exercise our rights. We will speak to our elected officials, and urge them to join with us in support of policies that are good for America and good

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Move The Embassy To Jerusalem

The bipartisan Dole-Inouye bill to relocate the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem would rectify a half-century-old wrong; contribute to the peace process; implement the wishes of the American people; and fulfill the hopes of the Israelis.

Although Jerusalem has been Israel's capital since 1949, our Israel Embassy is still located in Tel Aviv. There is no other country where the U.S. refuses to locate its embassy in the city designated by the host nation as its capital. As our closest Mideast ally, Israel deserves better.

The record since the 1980s has disproved the widespread notion that pro-Israeli steps harm U.S. relations with Arabs. The closer the U.S. has moved toward Israel, the more assiduously have Arab states courted Washington. Certainly in the post-Madrid peace process, when the Soviet alternative no longer exists, Arab parties will need to continue working with Washington even after the Embassy is transferred.

Furthermore, it helps the peace process for the Arabs to realize that the U.S. will not pressure Israel to repartition Jerusalem; any such expectation can only lead to hardened Arab positions and obstruct the peace process. In any event, the Embassy is to be located in western Jerusalem, which even the Palestinians are not contesting.

The American people have long supported the status of united Jerusalem as Israel's capital: This position has been affirmed in public opinion polls, the Congress, Presidents Bill Clinton and Ronald Reagan, and party platforms.

The same goes for the Israelis. In a recent poll, 58 percent said "Israel should now encourage the U.S. to move its Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem" (*Yedi'ot Ahronot*, May 12). Prime Minister Rabin stated May 9: "We welcome recognition of the fact that Jerusalem is the capital. We welcome embassies that will come" (AP, May 9). And Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin said he welcomed the legislation, which, he added, would not wreck peace moves (Reuter, May 9). Likud leaders have expressed strong support for the bill.

93 Senators signed the recent D'Amato-Moynihan letter calling for the relocation of the Embassy by May 1999. As we go to press, 29 Senators—including eight Democrats—have signed on to the Dole-Inouye bill as cosponsors. Clearly, the time has come to move the U.S. Embassy to the city that has been the capital of the Jewish people for three millennia and of the Jewish state for nearly five decades.

•More Coverage of AIPAC's 36th Annual Policy Conference

INSIDE

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Sneh: America and Israel—Partners Against Radicalism

Below are excerpts from a May 7 speech by Israel's Health Minister, Gen. Ephraim Sneh, to AIPAC's Policy Conference:

As I watched the horrible images from Oklahoma City on television, I couldn't help but be reminded of another recent tragic event—of bodies, completely torn apart, being carried into the Tel Aviv Medical Center emergency room after the bus explosion on Dizengoff street. We in Israel and the United States stand together on the same front fighting against terror. We, the people of Israel, share Americans' grief over the Oklahoma victims.

This week, 50 years ago, the greatest tragedy that has befallen the Jewish people came to an end. The Holocaust occurred because we were a people alone with no land, no state, no army. Out of this tragedy came our redemption.

Today, almost half a century later, we have put an end to our state of siege. Fifty-seven countries renewed or established diplomatic relations with Israel after the Madrid Conference, and since the agreement with the PLO, twenty-seven more countries have followed suit.

The Middle East has changed. Thanks to the peace process, great opportunities have opened up before us. We have broken many barriers and our economy is facing new frontiers. But the Middle East is still an unstable region. Islamic radicalism, emanating from Iran, is rapidly becoming the most serious threat to the moderate regimes in the region. A real danger exists that, within a few years,

Iran will possess nuclear weapons.

The special relationship between Israel and the United States is one of our most important strategic assets. To maintain this invaluable relationship, we need you, the American Jewish community. Our qualitative edge is also a direct result of this special U.S.-Israel relationship. To maintain this edge, we need the American Jewish community. To stop Islamic extremism and to prevent these fanatics from obtaining weapons of mass destruction, we need a united Western front under the leadership of the United States. To ensure that the United States continues to lead this vital mission, we need you, the American Jewish community. No, the peace process does not reduce the need for a strong, well-organized pro-Israel community.

Our government has decided not to leave problems that can be solved today to our children's generations. Our kids bury their friends in military cemeteries exactly as we, their parents, did. We were unable to spare our children this painful destiny. With relentless effort, perhaps we can spare our grandchildren this fate.

All that I have mentioned this afternoon could not be accomplished without your tireless help, your deep commitment and your loving support. For this reason, I wish to thank AIPAC for the solidarity and friendship you have given to the people and the government of Israel. □

Olmert: Jerusalem Will Remain Israel's Eternal, Undivided Capital

Below are excerpts from Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert's May 9 address to AIPAC's Policy Conference:

About [Jerusalem], here is total agreement between the government and the opposition, between the Prime Minister and myself. There is cooperation on all levels to guarantee that, at the end of the day, there will be universal recognition of Jerusalem as the undivided capital of Israel.

Seventeen years after Camp David, it's about time that the United States recognize Jerusalem as Israel's undivided capital. If we are firm in our position that Jerusalem is not going to be redivided, then isn't it better to put it on the agenda right now—to set the limits, to define the borders, and to remove any unrealistic expectations?

By [acting] now, we will send a very important signal to the Arab countries, to the

Palestinians, to all the world, that Jerusalem is the undivided capital of Israel, and that no pressure can change this political fact.

Jerusalem is very important for the Muslims and Christians. We are fully aware of it.

However, it is everything for the Jewish People.

For 3,000 years, Jerusalem was never a capital of any other nation. When Yasir Arafat claims a political status in Jerusalem based on "historical rights," our answer is that Jerusalem was never a capital for any Arab or Muslim entity. There is no way we can retroactively create historical rights that never existed.

Now, the fact is that there are Arabs living in Jerusalem. We care for these people, they

Grossman...continued

with chemical and biological weapons—and possibly, nuclear weapons—would be a threat to Israel and to American interests throughout the region. Those North Korean ballistic missiles, if activated, could deliver a nuclear, chemical or biological payload to any point in Israel. They are being perfected—in North Korea and Iran—as we come together here today.

While we respect highly the extraordinary initiative by President Clinton, we are dedicated to a legislative agenda that is going to make it very difficult for companies that do business with Iran to do business in the United States.

Islamic radicalism is, as I said earlier, the scourge of democracy. We will work to make sure that those who try to destabilize both American interests in the Middle East are not permitted to do so, and that those who trade with these radicals are not welcome in the United States.

Political outreach activity is what we do. We have a presence in every congressional district in the United States, but it is not enough. Our goal is to have, within the next few years, a congressional caucus in every one of the 435 congressional districts. We are more than halfway there.

The best way to bring people to an understanding of the importance of the relationship is to take them to Israel. Over 50 members of Congress went to Israel under the auspices of the American Israel Education Foundation, our not-for-profit educational arm. I am proud to tell you that, in 1995, we will take more members than ever before.

Our legislative agenda in 1995 is extremely focused. We want to maintain the \$3 billion in aid to Israel, and sanctions on Iran. And we resolve here today to see to it that the U.S. Embassy is in Jerusalem. □

are part of our community, and they will forever remain part of our community. And this is our fundamental commitment: To make sure that they will entertain full religious rights, that there will be complete religious freedom, as was the case since 1967 in Jerusalem. We take great pride in it.

Jerusalem is the ultimate realization of all the dreams, of all the memories, of all the prayers, of all the aspirations of the Jewish people. Our responsibility is to make sure that there is religious tolerance in Jerusalem for all worshippers—Jews and non-Jews alike—and yet to keep it united and undivided as the eternal capital of our people forever. □

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HEARD ON THE HILL**House, Senate Panels Propose Aid Cuts**

The House and Senate Budget Committees have approved their respective versions of an FY1996 budget resolution. Both proposals, aimed at balancing the federal budget by 2002, would substantially reduce international affairs spending.

Over the next seven years, the international account, which includes foreign aid, would be cut by \$39 billion (or 27 percent) in the House proposal and \$26 billion (or 17 percent) in the Senate. For FY1996, the Senate measure entails a \$2.5 billion cut, while the House plan calls for a \$2.1 billion reduction. Both would keep aid to Israel at current levels.

Senate Budget Committee Democrats Move To Restore Aid Funding

In an effort to secure more foreign aid funding, SEN. PAUL SIMON (D-IL) offered an amendment to cut \$10 billion from defense, and to allocate \$1 billion of that to foreign aid. "I know that [aid] is not the most popular issue out in grassroots America, but the greatest instability in the world is not going to come from nuclear war....It is [going to come from] hungry people," Simon said. The amendment was defeated in the Senate Budget Committee by a 17-5 vote.

Another foe of major aid cuts, SEN. PAUL SARBANES (D-MD), warned that "we may be undercutting the ability of our country to be a leader in the world."

House Democrats Criticize Foreign Aid Cuts

"Alarmed by what we see as an attempt by a few isolationists in Congress to slam the door on decades of U.S. global leadership," REP. HOWARD BERMAN (D-CA) held a press conference with five of his Democratic colleagues to oppose aid cuts.

REPS. GARY ACKERMAN (D-NY), ALCEE HASTINGS (D-FL), HARRY JOHNSTON (D-FL), NITA LOWEY (D-NY) and BILL RICHARDSON (D-NM) also participated in the press conference.

House Committee Approves Foreign Aid Authorization

The House International Relations Committee has approved a foreign aid authorization bill, which includes \$3 billion in earmarked assistance to Israel and other important pro-Israel provisions. The panel approved \$80 million in assistance for refugee resettlement in Israel. The legislation also includes an early disbursal provision, which allows Israel to receive the aid soon after it is appropriated, thereby increasing its value without additional cost to the U.S.

The bill would make permanent a number

of key provisions affecting U.S.-Israel military cooperation. Competitive pricing and fair pricing provisions would reduce the costs associated with Israeli weapons purchases. An offshore procurement provision would allow Israel to spend \$475 million of its military assistance there. The bill would also give the U.S. permanent authority to stockpile weapons in Israel, which would be available for use by both allies.

The legislation also includes a plan to abolish the Agency for International Development (AID), the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), and the U.S. Information Agency (USIA). Their functions would be consolidated into the State Department.

An amendment, introduced by REP. TOM LANTOS (D-CA), would deny NATO admission and prohibit aid to any nation that has sold or licensed certain items for sale to Iran or any other country that supports terrorism. The prohibition would apply to those who sell nuclear or dual-use technology or munitions of any kind, including any item included on any lists covered by the Missile Technology Control Regime. The amendment, which passed 22-11, exempted aid for dismantling nuclear weapons in Russia.

Legislation Introduced To Move Embassy To Jerusalem

Senate Majority Leader ROBERT DOLE (R-KS) and House Speaker NEWT GINGRICH (R-GA) have introduced legislation mandating that the Administration move the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem by 1999.

The bill—known as the "Jerusalem Embassy Relocation Implementation Act Of 1995"—states that groundbreaking for construction of the new embassy should begin no later than December 31, 1996, and that it should officially open no later than May 31, 1999. If enacted, half of the funding for building and maintenance of embassies abroad in FY1997 and FY1999 could not be spent until the Administration certifies that the construction and opening of the new embassy have taken place. The bill also earmarks funding to pay for the new building, and requires that the State Department report, at six-month intervals, on its progress.

Sher Testifies Before Senate Foreign Relations

In testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee May 11, AIPAC Executive Director Neal Sher highlighted the need for a robust foreign aid program. He stressed that aid "gives Israel the confidence it needs to take risks for peace" and "combats the spread of Islamic fundamentalism."

SEN. DIANNE FEINSTEIN (D-CA) voiced

concern over Dole's proposal to move the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem. Feinstein said she supported Jerusalem as the undivided capital of Israel, but expressed concern about considering the matter at a "delicate stage" in the peace process.

Foreign Operations Chairmen Reach Agreement On Jordan Debt Relief

As part of the rescissions conference agreement, Senate and House Foreign Operations Chairmen MITCH MCCONNELL (R-KY) and SONNY CALLAHAN (R-AL) have agreed to appropriate the full \$275 million requested by the Administration for Jordanian debt relief. President Clinton has indicated he will veto the bill, however, because it contains domestic program cuts he opposes. □

Sher...continued

for Israel.

We will lobby our Members of Congress to support President Clinton's request that the full \$3 billion dollars in aid be provided to Israel. It is the Number-One issue on our legislative agenda.

Another very important issue is the existential threat to Israel posed by rogue nations such as Iran. Mr. President, I was in the audience April 30 at the Waldorf-Astoria, and I heard your marvelous speech, in which you announced you were imposing the embargo against Iran. We applaud you for that. That was a bold and necessary initiative, and we strongly support your efforts.

The other major issue on our agenda is Jerusalem. We believe the U.S. Embassy should be moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. It is time for all nations to recognize the reality that Jerusalem is Israel's capital.

AIPAC Fills A Vital Role

We gather today, on the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II and the end of the darkest period in our people's history. The truth must be told: At a time when hundreds of thousands of Jews could have been saved, and the United States could have taken a leading role, America failed. The U.S. failed for a variety of reasons, including isolationism and outright anti-Semitism.

But there was another factor, one known to everyone who cares deeply about the fate of the Jewish people. The American Jewish community was politically powerless; it was neither organized nor unified. We had no impact on our lawmakers. The results were tragic and catastrophic.

A strong, vigorous AIPAC will help to insure that the American Jewish community will never again be in that position. □

Gephardt: We Must Stand By Our Allies

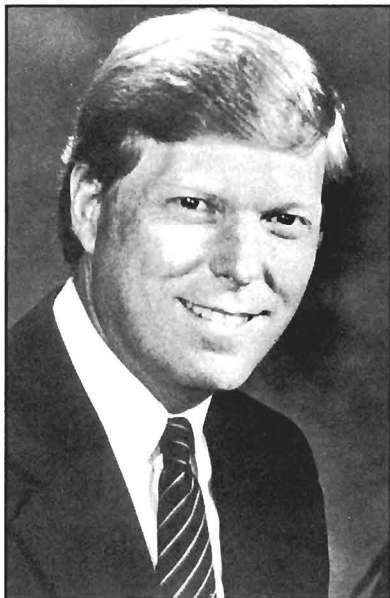
Below are excerpts from a May 9 speech to AIPAC's Policy Conference by House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt (D-MO):

I want to thank [AIPAC] for what you do. These important issues could not be sustained without your willingness to come here.

There are threats which you need to be talking about with your representatives. We know that much of the terrorism in the Middle East is caused by those who seek to destroy the peace process—something we cannot allow.

We face the threat of nuclear proliferation throughout the world, and there is no question that a rogue state can wreak havoc on a nation like Israel. That is why this President is right in standing up to North Korea and Iran. In the area of foreign aid, I

think we have to stand by our allies. There is no region where there is more danger to peace and stability than the Middle East. You are all aware of the challenges: Iran's ongoing ef-



House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt

forts to acquire nuclear equipment, and evidence that Iraq is still working to produce weapons of mass destruction.

I think a line in the sand should be drawn with regard to our commitment to provide aid to Israel, and throughout the Middle East. Without this, the peace process would shatter. We must work to ensure that North Korea and Iran do not export or arm themselves with nuclear weapons. We must [go forward with] an aggressive, well-funded worldwide anti-terrorism campaign.

There has probably not been a time when it was more important for

you to go to have input; this is probably going to be the toughest budget fight in our memory. I admire you for taking the time to come here, and I thank you for it. □

Sharansky: Israel Is Changing

Below are excerpts from remarks by human rights activist and former Soviet refusenik Anatoly Sharansky, who addressed AIPAC's Policy Conference May 7:

More than 10 percent of the population of Israel consists of newcomers; it is as if 25 million people came to America in a four-year period of time. Integrating all these people is a very difficult challenge.

But Israel is changing economically, and is changing its educational system. Israel is turning into a country where all the diaspora cultures can find their place. Today, we have already twice as many doctors as we had before, twice as many scientists, almost twice as many engineers. But what is more important is we can bring, and we should bring, another

million Jews.

After a million Soviet Jews will come to Israel, I believe a million American Jews will come. They will not do so because of pogroms in America, but because Israel will become a much more comfortable, attractive place for them to live. This reminds us of the vitality of Zionism. The Zionist task is not finished. Zionism is vital.

The challenge is great. Israel belongs to world Jewry. We can meet this challenge only if we are one people struggling together. □

Correction:

In last week's *NER*, the following passages on ballistic missile defense were inadvertently omitted from the summary of AIPAC's 1995 Policy Statement:

"The spread of ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, and other delivery systems capable of carrying nuclear weapons to outlaw states such as Iran, has become a particularly critical shared concern for both the United States and Israel. Within the next five years, the number of ballistic missiles aimed at Israel could reach 2,000. In the future, rogue nations may also obtain missiles capable of reaching the continental U.S. Efforts to develop effective defenses against this threat are underway in both nations, including joint programs such as Arrow and Boost-Phase Intercept. The Defense Department's Ballistic Missile Defense Organization (BMDO) is the center of American BMD programs, and works closely on joint projects with Israel's Ministry of Defense.

"AIPAC supports American programs, under the aegis of BMDO, to develop effective missile-defense systems, which will not only provide security for U.S. forces abroad, but can help defend Israel. AIPAC backs cooperative U.S.-Israel efforts to counter missile proliferation."

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Correction:

In a May 8 *NER* listing of the Senators who signed the Mikulski-Mack letter to Argentina's President Carlos Menem, we inadvertently omitted the name of Senator EDWARD KENNEDY (D-MA). The correct number of signatories is 53.

We regret the error.