

Israel Connection

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Purim's Message of Activism

ON PURIM, WE JOYOUSLY DROWN OUT THE NAME OF HAMAN WITH NOISEMAKERS. If only in the real world, it could be so easy to stop those who mean to harm our people.

Today, our brothers and sisters in Israel face a multitude of threats—from Hizballah and Hamas rockets to Iran's race for nuclear weapons.

Israel's enemies will not be driven away by the sound of the grogger. But there is something we can do to help scuttle the plans of modern-day Hamans.

For inspiration, we need look no further than the story of Purim.

Prompted by Mordechai's words, Esther takes the tremendous risk of appearing, contrary to the law, in the king's court without invitation to plead for the safety of her people.

Mordechai says, "Who knows, perhaps it is for just such a time that you have come to royal power." Esther responds, "I will go to the King, though it is not lawful, and if I perish, I perish." (Esther 4:14&16).

If not for Mordechai's words and Esther's deeds, this season might be one

of sorrow and mourning rather than one of strength and celebration. Jewish history is replete with examples of individuals who chose to speak up and take action.

In our day—in a world in which our brothers and sisters in Israel struggle against multiple threats to the very existence of the Jewish state—we, again, find ourselves in need of the wisdom of Mordechai and the courage of Esther.

For us, standing up and speaking out are hardly as treacherous as they were for Queen Esther. As Americans, we have the right and the obligation to make our opinions known to the elected officials who represent us. We have the responsibility not to be silent in the face of danger.

Thousands of years from now, what will our descendants say of us?

If we do what we can to confront the threats that face our people by speaking to our elected leaders and becoming involved in pro-Israel activism, then it will be said that we acted in the tradition of Mordechai and Esther.

A Close Alliance



THE UNITED STATES' SUPPORT IS CRUCIAL TO ISRAEL. What is just as important to remember, though, is that Israel's friendship is also vitally important to the United States.

As a full-fledged democracy, Israel is the only country in the Middle East that upholds and safeguards such American values as the rule of law and respect for minority rights.

It is the only place in the region where Christians, Jews and Muslims can all worship as they please. In Israel, men and women can vote in free elections and the judiciary is independent of political interference.

The United States also derives strategic benefits from its relationship with Israel. The Jewish state has been an important strategic ally of Washington since the early days of the Cold War. Today, it is a key partner in our fight against international terrorism. The United States stores military equipment such as ammunition and armor in Israel, and the two allies engage often in joint military exercises involving land, sea and air forces.

For this alliance to remain strong, pro-Israel Americans will have to make their voices heard. You can do this by educating your elected representatives about how the United States benefits from a strong and close relationship with Israel.



Building relationships: Senator John McCain (R-AZ) meets AIPAC activist Hilary Smith Kapner; AIPAC President Howard Friedman converses with Senator Barack Obama (D-IL).

AIPAC Achievements

AS AMERICA'S PRO-ISRAEL LOBBY, AIPAC WORKS WITH DEMOCRATIC AND REPUBLICAN LEADERS around the country to ensure that the U.S.-Israel relationship remains strong.

With the support of its members nationwide, AIPAC has worked with Congress and the Executive Branch on numerous initiatives, including:

■ **Securing critical foreign aid to Israel**, which totaled \$2.52 billion in 2006 and provided military and economic assistance.

■ **Prohibiting U.S. aid to and contacts with the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority** until its leaders accept Israel's right to exist, renounce terrorism and endorse previous Israeli-Palestinian peace agreements.

■ **Slowing Iran's nuclear arms program** by passing legislation which renews and strengthens sanctions aimed at curtailing funds and cooperation Iran needs to pursue nuclear weapons.

■ **Standing by Israel** by passing resolutions backing the Jewish state's right to self-defense during the height of Israel's war with the terrorist army Hizballah.

■ **Confronting Syria** by passing legislation that authorizes sanctions against Damascus for its continued interference in Lebanon and support of terrorism.

■ **Endorsing an agreement that led to the Israeli medical service** Magen David Adom's admission to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.



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The Meaning of Our Work: One Important Example

DURING LAST SUMMER'S WAR WITH HIZBALLAH, Israeli servicemen were able to use American military equipment already positioned inside Israel, giving them an advantage at a critical time.

Numerous Israeli political leaders and military officials have expressed their gratitude for America's steadfast support during those difficult weeks. Without a strong U.S.-Israel relationship, the Jewish state would have been alone.

With last summer's war in mind, AIPAC worked last fall with leaders in Congress to pass legislation that assisted Israel's war recovery efforts and helped prepare the Jewish state for potential threats in the future. Lawmakers doubled the amount of military equipment that the Defense Department may store in Israel.

In addition, elected officials renewed the Pentagon's authority to transfer surplus military equipment to Israel during a future crisis. Congress also extended through 2011 the time available for Israel to use U.S.-backed loan guarantees.

AIPAC's work is critical to ensuring American willingness to extend military and economic aid to Israel. Because AIPAC members are committed to forming relationships with elected officials, America's leaders understand the importance of a strong U.S.-Israel relationship.

With your support and involvement, AIPAC can continue to be effective in working to ensure that this mutually beneficial relationship will remain strong for generations to come.

Your Involvement is Essential



SUPREME COURT JUSTICE LOUIS BRANDEIS WROTE that there is no higher office than private citizen.

With so much at stake for Israel and the United States, your pro-Israel involvement is critical. There are a number of ways to make a difference.

BECOME INVOLVED WITH AIPAC. AIPAC members have access to the most up-to-date information and analysis. AIPAC events in your hometown give you the chance to meet key leaders and to hear from America and Israel's foremost experts about the issues shaping U.S.-Israel relations. Join and participate in AIPAC to be part of the pro-Israel political movement.

PARTICIPATE IN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS. Getting involved with the political race of your choice is a great way to become acquainted with leaders and help shape their thinking about important subject areas. It isn't too early to begin volunteering and fostering friendships with candidates running for office.

BUILD POLITICAL RELATIONSHIPS. Inviting your elected officials to speak at your home or synagogue gives you the opportunity to get to know one another and to exchange views on issues of importance.

For more information about how to increase your pro-Israel political involvement, visit: www.aipac.org.