

AIPAC

Policy Conference 2006 AIPAC Gala Banquet: Celebrating the U.S.-Israel Relationship

Senator Evan Bayh

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Irvine, CA
(949) 477 4972

Ubiquis Reporting
New York, NY
(212) 227 7440

Redwood City, CA
(650) 365 9199

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Senator Evan Bayh, 3/6/2006

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1		SENATOR EVAN BAYH: Thank you. Thank
2		you for that warm welcome, ladies and
3	21:17:58	gentlemen. I look around the room
4		this evening and I know I am with a
5		roomful of friends, and for that I am
6		most, most grateful. [Applause]
7		I'm also grateful for Tim's very kind
8		introduction. I've learned to not
9		take them for granted during my
10		career. As Tim mentioned, I was
11		elected to the governor of our state
12		at a very young age, the ripe old age
13	21:18:20	of 33. And in 1989, shortly after
14		taking office, we had a reception at
15		the governor's residence for a very
16		prominent group of Americans from
17		across the country, and Susan and I--
18		she was 29 at the time she became our
19		first lady--we were standing on the
20		landing of the residence welcoming
21		the delegations, and along comes the
22		delegation from Tennessee, and I
23	21:18:39	extend my hand in greeting, and I say
24		good evening sir, welcome to the
25		governor's residence.

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26		Well the head of their delegation
27		looks me up one side and down the
28	21:18:49	other and proceeds to place his coat
29		over my outstretched arm. [Laughter]
30		Looks me in the eye and says thank
31		you very much young man, I'll pick
32		this up when I leave. Well, what
33		else could I say but, yes sir, we'll
34		take good care of it. [Laughter]
35		And so, Tim, I'm grateful to you for
36		no cases of mistaken identity this
37		evening.
38	21:19:08	I'm privileged to be with my
39		colleague and friend, Susan Collins.
40		You know, the United States Senate
41		would be a better place if we had
42		more Susan Collinses in the United
43		States Senate. [Applause] In a city
44		that is all too often riven by
45		strident partisanship and ideology,
46		Susan has always been a voice for
47		reason and for consensus, and in that
48	21:19:34	spirit I want to recognize someone
49		else who's been mentioned already in
50		the audience, but first by way of

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51		preface, when I ran for the United
52		States Senate in 1998, from time to
53	21:19:45	time journalists would ask me, they'd
54		say Evan of all the members in the
55		United States Senate that you've had
56		the privilege of seeing, who would
57		you most like to emulate? And I
58		thought it was a difficult question
59		because there are many prominent
60		members in the senate, but I'd always
61		say when it comes to integrity and
62		moral courage, I'd be honored to be
63	21:20:09	like Joe Lieberman. [Applause] And
64		in eight years now I've seen nothing,
65		Joe, to change my mind.
66		A word or two about my friend Howard
67		Friedman. You are blessed to have
68		Howard's leadership. I've been in
69		his home and met his family. We've
70		taken our children to Orioles games
71		together. We've been good friends
72		for many years. He's a good man, a
73	21:20:49	great leader, and AIPAC needs him at
74		this critical hour. Howard,
75		congratulations and good luck.

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76		[Applause]
77		And a word or two about your
78	21:20:59	organization at this important time.
79		I know the topic of lobbying reform
80		is very topical in Washington today,
81		as it should be. Joe Lieberman is
82		helping us to lead the charge, along
83		with Susan Collins. At a time when
84		our government has fallen into low
85		regard with too many Americans, we
86		need to do whatever it takes to
87		rehabilitate their faith and
88	21:21:23	confidence in our government, but at
89		the same time we need to make sure
90		that the free flow of information
91		continues so that those of us who
92		make public policy can make sure that
93		we are making those choices in an
94		informed and intelligent way, and in
95		that regard-[Applause]-and in that
96		regard I want to say how vitally
97		important and beneficial the role of
98	21:21:45	AIPAC has been.
99		Conferences like this, visits to
100		Israel, the role of AIPAC has

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101		strengthened America, it has
102		strengthened the U.S.-Israel
103	21:21:53	relationship, it has strengthened
104		America's place in the world and the
105		educational role of AIPAC must
106		continue. [Applause]
107		My own relationship with the State of
108		Israel goes back many, many years.
109		You could almost say that it's in
110		some ways hereditary. My first visit
111		to Israel was as a college student at
112		Indiana University with my parents
113	21:22:19	when my father was privileged to
114		serve in the senate. I know he would
115		want to give all of you his warmest
116		regards tonight.
117		I remember we spent ten days, we
118		stayed at a kibbutz near the foot of
119		the Golan, traveled across the
120		country, saw the Jordanian gun
121		emplacement on the West Bank, which
122		was closest to Israel, where on a
123	21:22:42	clear day you could almost see across
124		the nation to the Mediterranean
125		Ocean. That had a profound and

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Line#	Timecode	Quote
126		lasting impact on me. The physical
127		intimacy of the place and the special
128	21:22:53	national security concerns that are
129		born of that intimacy.
130		I've been privileged to be back on
131		many occasions. Flew up the coast
132		with an Israeli Colonel to have lunch
133		with several Israeli generals and
134		look out across the plain where the
135		Syrian tanks invaded in 1973. Came
136		back down the Jordan River Valley and
137		can see hilltop to hilltop Arab
138	21:23:15	village, Israeli settlement. You
139		could see the difficult security
140		situation confronting the State of
141		Israel right there with my own eyes.
142		Just a year ago January I was
143		privileged to take Susan with me for
144		the first time. For those of you who
145		follow the Israeli economy, you'll
146		notice that there was a brief spike
147		in retail activity in Israel at the
148	21:23:36	time of our visit. [Laughter] I was
149		informed that Susan was always
150		welcome to return, and I hope that we

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151		can and take my own twin ten-year-old
152		boys with us someday. It would be a
153	21:23:45	special visit for our family to make.
154		[Applause]
155		Just this January in my role as a
156		member of the Intelligence Committee
157		I visited Israel a day after the
158		prime minister was stricken. He
159		remains in our prayers this evening.
160		I met with the Mossad and other
161		intelligence and military officials,
162		and with our own representatives to
163	21:24:10	see what we could do to strengthen
164		our cooperation in the common war
165		against terror.
166		All of these experiences have
167		convinced me that the relationship
168		between the United States and Israel
169		is not based upon temporary
170		expediency, but is instead founded on
171		something far more profound and
172		deeper than that, the very values and
173	21:24:32	principles that go to the core of the
174		founding of our two nations. The
175		embrace of democracy and freedom as

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176		the purest outlet for people's
177		aspirations, their hopes, and their
178	21:24:42	dreams.
179		The embrace of free market capitalism
180		and personal innovation as the best
181		path toward prosperity. The
182		recognition that tolerance and
183		diversity are important to truly
184		flourishing societies. All of these
185		things make the United States
186		special. All of these things make
187		the State of Israel special, and it
188	21:25:04	is these things that will make our
189		bond everlasting, strong, and
190		enduring in good times and in bad.
191		[Applause]
192		Of course it is also these things
193		that have led both of our nations to
194		be challenged today, and these are
195		difficult times. We saw that when
196		3,000 innocents were slaughtered on
197		9/11 by suicide bombers enraged
198	21:25:31	because of radical jihad. We have
199		seen it repeatedly in Israel
200		throughout the Intifada, where

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201		hundreds of innocent men, women, even
202		children, have lost their lives.
203	21:25:46	We've seen it in London, in Madrid,
204		in Aman, in Bali. We see it across
205		Iraq each and every day. It is a
206		dangerous world and we must stand
207		together to prosper within it.
208		The United States and Israel need
209		policies today to ensure our security
210		that are both tough and smart. Let
211		me begin with Hamas. And let me be
212		clear. Hamas is a terrorist
213	21:26:18	organization. It is sworn to destroy
214		the State of Israel. It is
215		responsible for the deaths and
216		woundings of thousands of innocent
217		civilians, and until Hamas recognizes
218		the right of the State of Israel to
219		exist, until it renounces the use of
220		terror, not only in word but in deed,
221		until it recognizes the agreements
222		that have already been struck on
223	21:26:39	behalf of the Palestinian people, it
224		should receive not one penny. Not
225		one penny from the United States of

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226		America or international
227		organizations. [Applause]
228	21:27:04	Many hope, as we all must, that Hamas
229		will change what it fundamentally is.
230		But mark me down as a skeptic. The
231		embrace of Hamas of the destruction
232		of Israel, its founding document, is
233		premised upon its radical
234		interpretation of the Koran. People
235		may negotiate about many things.
236		They may compromise on many things.
237		But it is highly unlikely that they
238	21:27:36	will negotiate or compromise on their
239		core religious convictions.
240		[Applause]
241		I simply am unpersuaded that there is
242		such a thing or could ever be such a
243		thing as a moderate suicide bomber or
244		a pragmatic killer of women and
245		children. [Applause] They are who
246		they are, and must be dealt with as
247		they are, not as we all wish they
248	21:28:16	might be. [Applause]
249		It is tragic what has happened to the
250		Palestinian people. Never has there

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251		been a people more in need of
252		responsible leadership. Never has
253	21:28:32	there been a more important historic
254		juncture, and the need for a
255		reconciliation. A reconciliation
256		among the Palestinians that embraces
257		the future and jettisons their
258		illusions. A reconciliation that
259		embraces the difficult but necessary
260		process of building a state with
261		schools and roads and jobs and
262		hospitals, and gives up the illusions
263	21:28:57	and the embrace, as Senator Collins
264		so eloquently put it, of a culture of
265		suicide and death.
266		That is something for which we must
267		hope, but we must not be deluded by
268		our hopes, nor can we afford to be
269		deluded by the role that Iran is
270		playing today. In my recent travels
271		across the Middle East, I visited
272		Israel. I visited Iraq. I visited
273	21:29:23	Afghanistan. I visited Pakistan.
274		And in each and every one of these
275		countries, the malevolent role of

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276		Iran was mentioned. They are not our
277		friend. They are not freedom's
278	21:29:35	friend, and they must be dealt with
279		in a serious, tough, and smart way.
280		[Applause]
281		Iran is the world's foremost sponsor
282		of terror. They have sworn to
283		destroy the State of Israel. They
284		have slaughtered Americans in
285		Lebanon, in Saudi Arabia, across Iraq
286		today they enable our killers, and
287		their president not too long ago said
288	21:30:10	to an audience of 5,000 in Tehran,
289		just imagine a world without the
290		United States of America. And now
291		these people, led by radical
292		theocrats and an apocalyptic
293		president who envisions the end of
294		time, seek nuclear weapons. Well to
295		that I say not on our watch.
296		[Applause]
297		We have waited at our peril and can
298	21:30:54	afford to wait no more. Iran must be
299		presented with the concrete fact of
300		enforceable, comprehensive economic

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301		sanctions, cutting off their flow of
302		imported petroleum refined into
303	21:31:07	gasoline, for which they require 40
304		percent of their petroleum needs.
305		Cutting off the import of machinery
306		that makes their economy go. Cutting
307		off the other things that provide for
308		their economic progress. They must
309		be confronted with a complete and
310		total travel ban. They must be
311		confronted with a complete freeze of
312		their financial resources and assets
313	21:31:28	around the world. They must be cut
314		off culturally and diplomatically and
315		be turned into a pariah state if they
316		do not agree to change their ways.
317		[Applause]
318		Of course no discussion of Iran can
319		be complete without a discussion
320		about the critically important need
321		for our country to achieve energy
322		independence. [Applause] We must
323	21:32:09	bring a sense of urgency and
324		commitment and sacrifice to this
325		issue, because until we free

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326		ourselves of imported oil from the
327		Middle East, we will be subject to
328	21:32:21	blackmail from places like Iran and
329		Saudi Arabia but also unstable places
330		like Venezuela and Russia, and we
331		must not allow that to continue.
332		[Applause]
333		Until we find alternative fuels for
334		both ourselves and the rest of the
335		world, it will be difficult to
336		convince China, India, and others to
337		do what must be done to isolate the
338	21:32:47	radical Iranian regime. Until we do
339		what it takes to liberate ourselves
340		from petroleum imports, we will find
341		ourselves in the tragic and
342		intolerable position of funding both
343		sides, both sides of the war against
344		terrorism and that must stop.
345		[Applause]
346		Fortunately, there is a vehicle for
347		accomplishing these objectives. It
348	21:33:15	has a very catchy name. It's called
349		the Bayh-Lieberman etcetera etcetera
350		etcetera Act. I recommend it to you.

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351		I don't know why, that just kind of
352		has a resonance with me. Here's what
353	21:33:30	it would do. The president in his
354		State of the Union Address was right
355		to call for us reducing our imports
356		of petroleum from the Middle East by
357		75 percent over the next 20 years.
358		Under the approach that Joe Lieberman
359		and I have endorsed, along with six
360		Republican colleagues and six
361		Democratic colleagues, we would
362		completely eliminate the imports of
363	21:33:48	petroleum from the Middle East in
364		half that amount of time. And that's
365		the kind of urgency that we need to
366		bring to this issue. [Applause]
367		Building the next generation of high
368		mileage vehicles with American
369		workers right here in the United
370		States of America, producing more
371		ethanol and biofuel so that America's
372		farmers can produce America's fuel.
373	21:34:15	Research into things like hydrogen
374		and other possible fuels that will
375		truly set our country free. My

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376		friends, this is vitally important
377		because it's in our economic
378	21:34:23	interests, our financial interests,
379		our energy interests, but above all
380		else it is what it takes to set our
381		children free. That is the challenge
382		of our generation and it is work that
383		we must begin. [Applause]
384		Let me conclude by saying this. I am
385		optimistic that we will ultimately
386		prevail in the great struggle in
387		which we are now engaged, not because
388	21:34:57	I believe it will be easy. On the
389		contrary, I know it will be
390		difficult. It is the work of a
391		generation. I am optimistic not
392		because I believe it will be without
393		sacrifice, far from it. Too often in
394		the days ahead our lot will involve
395		great tragedy and sorrow, but I am
396		optimistic that we will ultimately
397		prevail in our cause, because the
398	21:35:27	United States of America and the
399		State of Israel stand on the right
400		side of both human history and human

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401		nature.
402		I am reminded of something that
403	21:35:38	Abraham Lincoln once said during some
404		of America's darkest times, when he
405		said that a house divided cannot
406		stand, and that America could no
407		longer endure as a country half slave
408		and half free. As I look around the
409		world today and I see the process of
410		global integration, where ideas
411		transcend the globe with the click of
412		a computer key, money flows around
413	21:36:11	the planet, weapons of mass
414		destruction and possible pandemics
415		respect no national borders.
416		I know that the time has come where
417		it will no longer be possible for 80
418		percent of the world's people to
419		labor under the yoke of tyranny and
420		degradation while those of us blessed
421		to be right here tonight seek to
422		celebrate our own freedom. It can no
423	21:36:34	longer be thus. The cause of freedom
424		and liberty throughout the world is
425		not only the right and idealistic

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426		thing to do, it is also very much in
427		our self-interest.
428	21:36:46	It is also in the heart of human
429		nature, because I believe that there
430		are great truths that we are
431		championing here tonight. Friends of
432		America and friends of Israel, I
433		believe that truth is more powerful
434		than deceit, that ignorance will
435		eventually triumph—knowledge will
436		eventually triumph over ignorance,
437		and that love is more ennobling than
438	21:37:14	hate. I believe deep in my heart
439		that the United States and Israel are
440		exceptional nations and have been
441		placed upon this earth to achieve
442		humanity's highest aspirations. And
443		if we do not tire, if we do not
444		cease, if we carry on with our labors
445		through thick and thin, then it is my
446		deepest conviction that one day we
447		will know the blessing of a
448	21:37:41	benevolent god, known by many names
449		in many faiths and many traditions,
450		and that he will bless both us and

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451		our children with the joy of
452		tranquility and peace yet again.
453	21:37:54	This is what has brought us here this
454		evening. It is what animates the
455		policy of our great nation and that
456		of Israel. It lies at the heart of
457		AIPAC. It is the cause that we
458		struggle for together, and with your
459		help and God willing, I know that one
460		day we will prevail. Thank you.
461		[Applause]
462		[Music]