

AIPAC

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

Senator Susan Collins

March 6, 2006

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**POLICY CONFERENCE 2006 AIPAC GALA BANQUET: CELEBRATING THE U.S.-ISRAEL
RELATIONSHIP**

Senator Susan Collins, 3/6/2006

| Line# | Timecode | Quote |
|-------|----------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | | SENATOR SUSAN COLLINS: Thank you. |
| 2 | | Thank you so much. Thank you. Thank |
| 3 | 20:49:11 | you Gerry for such a gracious |
| 4 | | introduction. It's a great honor to |
| 5 | | join all of you tonight. By your |
| 6 | | support of AIPAC you strengthen the |
| 7 | | friendship between America and |
| 8 | | Israel. I applaud your commitment to |
| 9 | | that great cause and to this great |
| 10 | | organization. [Applause] |
| 11 | | My years in the senate have convinced |
| 12 | | me that what makes AIPAC stand out |
| 13 | 20:49:49 | from many other advocacy groups is |
| 14 | | its thousands—look at you—thousands |
| 15 | | of enthusiastic, well-informed, and |
| 16 | | articulate members who carry the |
| 17 | | message to each and every member of |
| 18 | | congress. You make a difference. |
| 19 | | [Applause] |
| 20 | | As I thought about being here |
| 21 | | tonight, I reflected on the amazing |
| 22 | | story of the Jewish people. Just |
| 23 | 20:50:24 | think about it. After years of |
| 24 | | struggle, Moses led people out of |
| 25 | | Egypt. Then they wandered for ten |

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| 26 | | years in the wilderness. I guess |
| 27 | | that shows that it's always been |
| 28 | 20:50:41 | true—men just won't ask for |
| 29 | | directions. [Laughter] [Applause] |
| 30 | | Now I'm frequently asked how someone |
| 31 | | who was born and raised in Caribou, |
| 32 | | Maine, could come to be such a |
| 33 | | devoted advocate of the friendship |
| 34 | | between America and Israel. After |
| 35 | | all, when I was growing up, Caribou |
| 36 | | had exactly one Jewish family, the |
| 37 | | Eskovitz [phonetic] family, which |
| 38 | 20:51:13 | lived down the street from mine. |
| 39 | | But the fact is that Joe Lieberman |
| 40 | | and I have had many conversations and |
| 41 | | have concluded that there are a |
| 42 | | number of similarities between being |
| 43 | | Jewish and being Catholic. Take our |
| 44 | | approaches to guilt, for example. |
| 45 | | After many in-depth discussions |
| 46 | | comparing the merits of Jewish versus |
| 47 | | Catholic guilt, I've concluded that |
| 48 | 20:51:47 | you invented it, but we perfected it. |
| 49 | | [Laughter] [Applause] |
| 50 | | The friendship that I feel for the |

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| 51 | | people of Israel is that which our |
| 52 | | two nations share. It is a |
| 53 | 20:52:06 | friendship anchored by common |
| 54 | | principles, a love of liberty and the |
| 55 | | courage to defend it. [Applause] It |
| 56 | | is a friendship cemented by history, |
| 57 | | so great was the Jewish contribution |
| 58 | | to American independence that George |
| 59 | | Washington wrote in 1790, "May the |
| 60 | | children of the stock of Abraham who |
| 61 | | dwell in the land continue to merit |
| 62 | | and enjoy the goodwill of the other |
| 63 | 20:52:45 | inhabitants." |
| 64 | | For more than two centuries, America |
| 65 | | has kept that pledge. We have |
| 66 | | remained the place where the stock of |
| 67 | | Abraham could find new opportunity |
| 68 | | and freedom from persecution. At |
| 69 | | midnight on May 14 th , 1948, when the |
| 70 | | State of Israel came into being, |
| 71 | | America just 11 minutes later became |
| 72 | | the first country to recognize that |
| 73 | 20:53:21 | new nation. [Applause] |
| 74 | | A friendship with such a noble |
| 75 | | history should inspire the entire |

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| 76 | | world. Instead, this great |
| 77 | | friendship is reviled by many around |
| 78 | 20:53:42 | the world. It is seen by some as a |
| 79 | | great power using a small state in |
| 80 | | order to exert influence in a part of |
| 81 | | the world where it does not belong, |
| 82 | | and at the same time as a small state |
| 83 | | manipulating a great power. Events, |
| 84 | | however, continue to expose this |
| 85 | | irrational lie and reveal the |
| 86 | | nobility of a friendship that no |
| 87 | | bizarre combination of anti- |
| 88 | 20:54:14 | Americanism and anti-Semitism can |
| 89 | | destroy. [Applause] |
| 90 | | In his poem, September 1 st , 1939, the |
| 91 | | British Poet W.H. Auden wrote these |
| 92 | | words on the day that Nazi Germany |
| 93 | | invaded Poland, "Uncertain and afraid |
| 94 | | as the clever hopes expire of a low, |
| 95 | | dishonest decade." The world has now |
| 96 | | passed the midpoint of another low, |
| 97 | | dishonest decade. This decade began |
| 98 | 20:55:03 | with the second Intifada, proceeded |
| 99 | | to another terrible September day, |
| 100 | | and then to Madrid, Bali, Istanbul, |

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| 101 | | Beslan, and before, during, and after |
| 102 | | those horrible events to cafes, |
| 103 | 20:55:22 | busses, and street corners throughout |
| 104 | | Israel. |
| 105 | | Once again the world must face the |
| 106 | | truth it has too long ignored. We |
| 107 | | cannot have peace in our time by |
| 108 | | ignoring the violence and threats to |
| 109 | | others. [Applause] The world must |
| 110 | | accept the truth spoken by Winston |
| 111 | | Churchill, "An appeaser is one who |
| 112 | | feeds the crocodile in the hope of |
| 113 | 20:56:00 | being eaten last." [Applause] |
| 114 | | And, my friends, the world must |
| 115 | | decide whether it will be a world of |
| 116 | | Chamberlains or a world of |
| 117 | | Churchills. [Applause] It is a |
| 118 | | decision that must be made now for |
| 119 | | two urgent reasons. The first, the |
| 120 | | Palestinian election. The world |
| 121 | | cannot—it must not—recognize a |
| 122 | | government led by a party that is |
| 123 | 20:56:44 | rooted in hatred, steeped in bigotry, |
| 124 | | and in love with death. [Applause] |
| 125 | | Hamas must remove from its charter |

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| 126 | | its call for the destruction of |
| 127 | | Israel. It must recognize Israel's |
| 128 | 20:57:09 | right to exist. [Applause] And no |
| 129 | | number of schools or health clinics |
| 130 | | it builds can excuse a single act of |
| 131 | | terrorism. [Applause] And unless |
| 132 | | and until Hamas recognizes Israel and |
| 133 | | renounces terrorism, our country must |
| 134 | | end all but humanitarian assistance |
| 135 | | to the Palestinian Authority. |
| 136 | | [Applause] |
| 137 | | Last November I joined my senate |
| 138 | 20:57:59 | colleagues in urging the Palestinian |
| 139 | | Authority to demand that Hamas and |
| 140 | | other terrorist groups disarm before |
| 141 | | fielding candidates. The Palestinian |
| 142 | | Authority failed to do so, and now in |
| 143 | | the aftermath of those elections, the |
| 144 | | crocodile-feeders of the world say |
| 145 | | that it is hypocritical to support |
| 146 | | the spread of democracy while |
| 147 | | objecting to the outcome of an |
| 148 | 20:58:29 | election. |
| 149 | | The flaw in that thinking is obvious. |
| 150 | | Virtually every democracy has rules |

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| 151 | | that ban participation by terrorists, |
| 152 | | so that people can express their will |
| 153 | 20:58:46 | without fear of reprisal or coercion. |
| 154 | | Any party that fills the streets with |
| 155 | | masked men brandishing automatic |
| 156 | | weapons has no place in a democratic |
| 157 | | society. [Applause] |
| 158 | | The crocodile-feeders also say that |
| 159 | | perhaps Hamas, once in power, will |
| 160 | | moderate its positions. Again, my |
| 161 | | friends, the flaw is obvious. We can |
| 162 | | look back to Germany in 1933 for |
| 163 | 20:59:27 | compelling proof that such wishful |
| 164 | | thinking does not apply to parties of |
| 165 | | hate, to those who masquerade as |
| 166 | | politicians while turning democracy |
| 167 | | into dictatorship. [Applause] |
| 168 | | There is a second reason that the |
| 169 | | world must now decide whether it is a |
| 170 | | world of Chamberlains or Churchills. |
| 171 | | It is Iran. That mullah-dominated |
| 172 | | regime is not a government but a |
| 173 | 21:00:07 | racist, death-worshipping cult. |
| 174 | | [Applause] It seized power in a |
| 175 | | revolution and has preserved its |

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| 176 | | position by preventing opponents from |
| 177 | | getting on the ballot. It retains |
| 178 | 21:00:31 | power through tyranny and terror, |
| 179 | | compiling a record of political and |
| 180 | | civil rights abuses that ranks second |
| 181 | | only to North Korea. It is the |
| 182 | | world's leading sponsor of terrorism, |
| 183 | | the driving force behind Hezbollah, |
| 184 | | Hamas, and Islamic Jihad. |
| 185 | | Power has not moderated this regime, |
| 186 | | it has emboldened it. Iran's nuclear |
| 187 | | ambitions combined with the missile |
| 188 | 21:01:10 | technology it already possesses |
| 189 | | should alarm the world and spur it to |
| 190 | | concerted, decisive action. The |
| 191 | | Iranian president's denial of the |
| 192 | | Holocaust at the same time he pledges |
| 193 | | to repeat it should be sufficient |
| 194 | | evidence of a twisted mind that |
| 195 | | cannot be permitted to shape world |
| 196 | | events. [Applause] |
| 197 | | My friends, this crocodile can be fed |
| 198 | 21:01:47 | no longer. The world must not look |
| 199 | | the other way. We cannot allow Iran |
| 200 | | to achieve nuclear weapons |

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| 201 | | capability. [Applause] The tragic |
| 202 | | irony of Iran is that many of its |
| 203 | 21:02:11 | people are among the most pro- |
| 204 | | American in the Muslim world. They |
| 205 | | are being held captive, and must be |
| 206 | | given every opportunity to free |
| 207 | | themselves, and that is why last year |
| 208 | | I proudly cosponsored the Iran |
| 209 | | Freedom Support Act. [Applause] |
| 210 | | But make no mistake, regardless of |
| 211 | | how the world responds to Hamas and |
| 212 | | to Iran, the United States will stand |
| 213 | 21:02:49 | with Israel. [Applause] The United |
| 214 | | States and Israel will stand together |
| 215 | | with other responsible nations of the |
| 216 | | world to defend civilization against |
| 217 | | madness. Confronting the broad |
| 218 | | threats to civilization is the |
| 219 | | greatest challenge of our time. As |
| 220 | | we do so, we must continue to |
| 221 | | confront the daily threat of |
| 222 | | terrorism against our people. |
| 223 | 21:03:24 | The Senate Homeland Security |
| 224 | | Committee, which I chair, is |
| 225 | | committed to the fight against |

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| 226 | | terrorism, and tonight I want to |
| 227 | | highlight our efforts to cut off an |
| 228 | 21:03:36 | essential tool of terrorism, the |
| 229 | | money that flows to support |
| 230 | | terrorists. [Applause] Our |
| 231 | | committee has conducted extensive |
| 232 | | investigations into terrorism |
| 233 | | financing. We've examined everything |
| 234 | | from Islamic charities and banking |
| 235 | | practices to the growing link between |
| 236 | | criminal activity, such as the sale |
| 237 | | of counterfeit consumer goods, and |
| 238 | 21:04:08 | terrorism. |
| 239 | | Terrorists are devious and relentless |
| 240 | | in their pursuit of finances to carry |
| 241 | | out their cruel agenda. We must |
| 242 | | outthink and outwork them. And we |
| 243 | | are succeeding. Phony charities are |
| 244 | | being shut down and their assets |
| 245 | | frozen. [Applause] Banks that fail |
| 246 | | to comply with money laundering and |
| 247 | | counterterrorism laws are being hit |
| 248 | 21:04:41 | with record fines. And with the |
| 249 | | United States leading the way, more |
| 250 | | than 90 nations have adopted banking |

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| 251 | | reforms to help shut off the flow of |
| 252 | | terrorist money. |
| 253 | 21:04:56 | The Intelligence Reform and the |
| 254 | | Terrorism Prevention Act, which I co- |
| 255 | | authored with my good friend, Joe |
| 256 | | Lieberman, strengthens our |
| 257 | | capabilities to combat terrorism |
| 258 | | financing. And we were very pleased |
| 259 | | when the 9/11 Commission in its |
| 260 | | report card in December gave our |
| 261 | | terrorism financing efforts an A-. |
| 262 | | [Applause] |
| 263 | 21:05:26 | But, my friends, there is still much |
| 264 | | work to be done, and nowhere is that |
| 265 | | work needed more than in Saudi |
| 266 | | Arabia. [Applause] At one of our |
| 267 | | committee's first terrorism financing |
| 268 | | hearings, and expert told us that |
| 269 | | Saudi Arabia is the epicenter of |
| 270 | | terrorism financing. Following |
| 271 | | terrorist attacks within the kingdom |
| 272 | | in 2003, the Saudis did take some |
| 273 | 21:06:04 | strides in the fight against |
| 274 | | terrorism, but it is clear that the |
| 275 | | steps taken to crack down on |

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| 276 | | terrorism within its own borders have |
| 277 | | not been matched by sufficient |
| 278 | 21:06:20 | progress in stopping its export. |
| 279 | | [Applause] |
| 280 | | Saudi Arabia remains the epicenter |
| 281 | | for the spread of extremist ideology. |
| 282 | | [Applause] It's always good to speak |
| 283 | | the truth, isn't it? The Saudi |
| 284 | | government continues to spend |
| 285 | | lavishly on schools, textbooks, |
| 286 | | mosques and cultural centers that |
| 287 | | spread the poison of Wuahavism |
| 288 | 21:07:00 | [phonetic] around the world. |
| 289 | | Indeed, a report last year by the |
| 290 | | Center for Religious Freedom found |
| 291 | | that Saudi Arabia is the state most |
| 292 | | responsible for the propagation of |
| 293 | | material promoting hatred, |
| 294 | | intolerance, and violence within |
| 295 | | American mosques and Islamic centers. |
| 296 | | [Applause] |
| 297 | | These trends are not merely |
| 298 | 21:07:31 | disturbing, they are dangerous to the |
| 299 | | future of freedom, and we ignore them |
| 300 | | at our peril. [Applause] That is |

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| 301 | | why I've urged the State Department |
| 302 | | to take action against Saudi Arabia |
| 303 | 21:07:49 | for its egregious violations of |
| 304 | | religious freedom. That is why I've |
| 305 | | requested the Government |
| 306 | | Accountability Office to investigate |
| 307 | | Saudi Arabia's promotion of religious |
| 308 | | extremism around the globe. |
| 309 | | [Applause] |
| 310 | | And that is also why the Collins- |
| 311 | | Lieberman Intelligence Reform Act |
| 312 | | requires the president to review the |
| 313 | 21:08:19 | U.S.-Saudi relationship and report to |
| 314 | | Congress. [Applause] The effect of |
| 315 | | the poison being spread out of Saudi |
| 316 | | Arabia cannot be overestimated. |
| 317 | | Witness the recent essay, "We Were |
| 318 | | Brought Up to Hate", by Noni Darwish |
| 319 | | [phonetic], an Egyptian-born Muslim, |
| 320 | | now an American citizen and the |
| 321 | | founder of the organization called |
| 322 | | Arabs for Israel. |
| 323 | 21:08:52 | Ms. Darwish [phonetic] was raised in |
| 324 | | Gaza and in the Sinai. Every day, |
| 325 | | she tells us, in every aspect of |

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| 326 | | daily life was a lesson in hatred and |
| 327 | | vengeance. Then one day Ms. Darwish |
| 328 | 21:09:12 | [phonetic] took a Christian friend to |
| 329 | | a mosque for Friday prayers. As they |
| 330 | | knelt on the hard ground, they heard |
| 331 | | the voice over the loudspeaker boom |
| 332 | | out calls for the death of the Jews, |
| 333 | | the death of the Christians, the |
| 334 | | death of all infidels. |
| 335 | | This, in her own words, is what |
| 336 | | happened next. My friend looked |
| 337 | | scared. I was ashamed. That was |
| 338 | 21:09:44 | when I first realized that something |
| 339 | | was very wrong in the way my religion |
| 340 | | was taught and practiced. Sadly, the |
| 341 | | way I was raised was not unique. |
| 342 | | Hundreds of millions of other Muslims |
| 343 | | also have been raised with the same |
| 344 | | hatred of the West and Israel as a |
| 345 | | way to distract from the failings of |
| 346 | | their leaders. [Applause] |
| 347 | | Things have not changed since I was a |
| 348 | 21:10:18 | little girl. Is there any surprise |
| 349 | | that after decades of indoctrination |
| 350 | | in a culture of hate that people |

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| 351 | | actually do hate? Noni Darwish |
| 352 | | [phonetic] is proof that hearts can |
| 353 | 21:10:35 | be changed, that the spark of |
| 354 | | humanity, once lit, cannot be |
| 355 | | extinguished. But that spark cannot |
| 356 | | be lit if the heart is continually |
| 357 | | doused in poison. |
| 358 | | Fighting terrorism is a battle for |
| 359 | | hearts and minds, but it is also a |
| 360 | | matter of nuts and bolts. The enemy |
| 361 | | we face is cruel. He is also clever |
| 362 | | and resourceful and will use every |
| 363 | 21:11:08 | aspect of a free society against us. |
| 364 | | We must be more clever and more |
| 365 | | resourceful, and an essential key to |
| 366 | | that is technology. From the |
| 367 | | basic gear for our first responders |
| 368 | | on the front lines to the most |
| 369 | | sophisticated and advanced tools for |
| 370 | | intelligence gathering, technology is |
| 371 | | a powerful weapon and that is why |
| 372 | | last year I was proud to introduce |
| 373 | 21:11:39 | legislation supported by AIPAC to |
| 374 | | establish a program that will ensure |
| 375 | | that nations that have joined with us |

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| 376 | | in the war on terrorism can share |
| 377 | | technology and foster joint research |
| 378 | 21:11:54 | and development projects. [Applause] |
| 379 | | And there is no question that Israel |
| 380 | | will be a crucial partner in that |
| 381 | | program. [Applause] America's |
| 382 | | partnership with Israel is essential |
| 383 | | not merely because the United States, |
| 384 | | Israel and other democratic nations |
| 385 | | happen to be under attack. It is |
| 386 | | essential because we are under attack |
| 387 | | for the same reason. We choose to |
| 388 | 21:12:30 | live in freedom. We know that we |
| 389 | | cannot defend our freedom without |
| 390 | | defending the freedom of others. |
| 391 | | [Applause] |
| 392 | | It seems an obvious choice, an |
| 393 | | irrefutable truth, yet as the words |
| 394 | | of the poet Auden remind us, it is |
| 395 | | the choice the world has not always |
| 396 | | made wisely, and a truth that has too |
| 397 | | often been ignored. For far too |
| 398 | 21:13:10 | long, America and Israel have been |
| 399 | | speaking up and too much of the rest |
| 400 | | of the world has closed its ears. |

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| 401 | | When the Islamic extremists chanted |
| 402 | | death to America and death to Israel, |
| 403 | 21:13:27 | too many did not hear the e |
| 404 | | underlying message. Now from Europe |
| 405 | | across the Middle East and to south |
| 406 | | Asia, the true meaning of those |
| 407 | | chants is exposed. The world must |
| 408 | | speak up. The world must choose. |
| 409 | | Appeasement for now, or civilization |
| 410 | | for all time. [Applause] |
| 411 | | America and Israel have made our |
| 412 | | choice. It is a choice rooted in our |
| 413 | 21:14:11 | common history and strengthened by |
| 414 | | our uncommon friendship. We have set |
| 415 | | an example for the rest of the world, |
| 416 | | and invite the world to join us. To |
| 417 | | borrow once again from the words of |
| 418 | | Winston Churchill, that great leader |
| 419 | | who warned us against feeding the |
| 420 | | crocodile, "We shall not fail or |
| 421 | | falter. We shall not weaken or tire. |
| 422 | | Neither the sudden shock of battle |
| 423 | 21:14:46 | nor the long drawn-out trials of |
| 424 | | vigilance and exertion will wear us |
| 425 | | down. The spark of humanity will be |

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| 426 | | the victor." Thank you. |
| 427 | | [Applause] |
| 428 | 21:15:07 | Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. |
| 429 | | [Applause] |