

# AIPAC

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

Senator Susan Collins

March 6, 2006

Tape

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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 <sup>th</sup> , 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 <sup>st</sup> , 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]