

AIPAC

**Policy Conference 2006 Closing
Plenary Leadership Perspective: The
U.S.-Israel Relationship**

Congressman Steny Hoyer

March 6, 2006

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Line#	Timecoding	Quote
1		ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen,
2		AIPAC board member, Jeff Snyder.
3	10:38:48	MR. JEFFREY SNYDER: Few members of
4		congress have been involved in the
5		pro-Israel movement for as long as
6		our next speaker. In the Maryland
7		state legislature through his 25
8		years in Congress, and now as the
9		House Democratic Whip, Steny Hoyer
10		has been a point man, an activist on
11		our issues. He has a historic record
12		of fighting for human rights,
13	10:39:12	including his service on the Helsinki
14		Commission. Recently, Congressman
15		Hoyer demanded from leaders in Egypt
16		that they remove anti-Semitic banners
17		hanging across the street from a
18		Cairo synagogue.
19		[applause]
20		A short time after his call, the
21		banners were gone.
22		[applause]
23	10:39:41	He has helped strengthen the pro-
24		Israel coalition on Capital Hill, on
25		bill after bill, in debate after

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Line#	Timecoding	Quote
26		debate, and with member after member.
27		He has a special insight into the
28	10:39:53	security risks and the danger of
29		terrorism that Israelis face every
30		single day. As the Democratic Whip,
31		he helps his colleagues understand
32		this fundamental reality of life in
33		Israel by leading delegations to
34		visit the Jewish state, including the
35		largest one ever.
36		[applause]
37		Congressman Hoyer relentlessly makes
38	10:40:20	the case, privately and publicly,
39		that support for Israel isn't about
40		any party affiliation or politics,
41		it's about what is good for America.
42		As he said on this very stage two
43		years ago,-[2259@ Israel's fight is
44		not just the fight for Israel, not
45		just a fight for Jews, it is a fight
46		for all of us who want our children
47		to live in peace and security in the
48		world.
49	10:40:46	[applause]
50		We could not have a better friend for

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Line#	Timecoding	Quote
51		our cause. We could not have a
52		better leader on the issues that
53		matter most to us. Ladies and
54	10:40:58	gentlemen, please join me in
55		welcoming the Democratic Whip, Steny
56		Hoyer.
57		[applause]
58		CONGRESSMAN STENY HOYER: Thank you
59		very much. Thank you very much.
60		Good morning, AIPAC. As your program
61		probably told you, I was scheduled to
62		speak before the Vice President, but
63		my schedule is more flexible than
64	10:41:36	his. I come from the state now known
65		as the state in which Howard Friedman
66		lives.
67		[applause]
68		And we are so very proud of your new
69		President, as you are.
70		[applause]
71		The Baltimore Jewish Times said this,
72		that "Howard Friedman was filled with
73		a burning love for the Jewish people,
74	10:42:14	for the United States of America, and
75		for Israel. You have chosen well."

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Line#	Timecoding	Quote
76		And Bernice, let me congratulate you.
77		Some of you may know that Bernice and
78		I were born in the same hospital in
79	10:42:36	Manhattan. Bernice was born a couple
80		of decades after I was. She has done
81		a wonderful job. Congratulations,
82		Bernice.
83		[applause]
84		Howard Kohr, oh how I would like to
85		steal from you Howard Kohr to run all
86		of my campaigns.
87		[applause]
88		But I know you pay him such an
89	10:43:09	extraordinary salary that I couldn't
90		compete.
91		[laughter]
92		And my friend Jeffrey Snyder, thank
93		you for that warm introduction.
94		[applause]
95		And Ambassador Ayalon and Ann
96		[phonetic], thank you for your
97		representation to this country and
98		with this country.
99	10:43:33	[applause]
100		Now, ladies and gentleman, I feel

Line#	Timecoding	Quote
101		somewhat in the position of the
102		person who said that "everything has
103		been said that needs to be said", but
104	10:43:49	not everybody has said it.
105		[laughter][applause]
106		In this instance, however, it is
107		important that the world knows that
108		America speaks with but one voice.
109		There is no division to be discussed
110		this day.
111		[applause]
112		None of us need be told, Mr.
113		Ambassador, that Israel—always in
114	10:44:46	danger—is in particular danger this
115		day. Throughout the last years
116		Israel—and oasis of freedom in a sea
117		of despair, has been vilified,
118		threatened and attacked by those who
119		seek her destruction. And yet, she
120		has prevailed and prospered, just as
121		she will prevail and prosper today,
122		tomorrow, and always!
123		Our Israeli friends, and those of us
124	10:45:26	here this morning, understand that,
125		as Simon Wiesenthal once said,

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Line#	Timecoding	Quote
126		"Freedom is not a gift from heaven.
127		You have to fight for it every day."
128		And we will do that. And as the Vice
129	10:45:47	President said, as Susan Collins
130		said, as Evan Bayh said, and as I
131		repeat today, Mr. Ambassador—Israel
132		is not alone in this fight, nor will
133		she ever be. Israel's success and
134		security is not only a strategic
135		imperative for the United States, it
136		is a moral imperative as well. Ours
137		is a relationship of shared values
138		and common aspirations, and of
139	10:46:38	principle and conscience. We are
140		nations of immigrants, safe havens
141		for the oppressed and partners for
142		peace. And we are united in fighting
143		terrorism. No people on earth have
144		been subjected to more bigotry and
145		violence than the Jewish people. And
146		no people are more in need of a
147		sovereign, secure homeland to provide
148		safe haven and to protect identity
149	10:47:01	than the Jewish people.
150		[applause]

Line#	Timecoding	Quote
151		"Israel was not created in order to
152		disappear," President John Kennedy
153		observed nearly half a century ago.
154	10:47:30	"Israel," Kennedy assured us, "will
155		endure and flourish." And indeed it
156		has.
157		Today, I want to assure you that the
158		special bond of which the Vice
159		President spoke, that exists between
160		the United States and Israel is
161		strong, growing stronger and will not
162		break.
163		On Capitol Hill, support for Israel
164	10:47:58	and her cause—as you see today, as
165		the world sees today—is bipartisan,
166		deep and unwavering.
167		[applause]
168		Just last month, the House voted 418
169		to 1—you need to keep working—418 to
170		1—to express our belief that no U.S.
171		assistance should be provided
172		directly to the Palestinian Authority
173		if any political party holding a
174	10:48:49	majority of seats in the Palestinian
175		parliament calls for the destruction

Line#	Timecoding	Quote
176		of Israel. Four hundred and eighteen
177		to one.
178		Last year, we voted 409 to 2 to call
179	10:49:05	on the United Nations to officially
180		and publicly condemn anti-Semitic
181		statements at U.N. meetings and by
182		U.N. member states.
183		[applause]
184		The disturbing and undeniable truth
185		is that rank anti-Semitism continues
186		today. Even, tragically, in a world
187		body dedicated to peace,
188		understanding and tolerance. That is
189	10:49:40	unacceptable.
190		[applause]
191		The strong support of the Congress of
192		the United States Congress for Israel
193		results in your hard work, and the
194		dedication and vision of this most
195		effective organization--The American
196		Israel Public Affairs Committee.
197		As some of you know, and has been
198		stated by my good friend Roy Blunt--
199	10:50:10	with whom I work closely day to day
200		on this issue and others--I led a

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Line#	Timecoding	Quote
201		delegation of 14 Democratic Members
202		of Congress to Israel last August, my
203		second Congressional trip to Israel
204	10:50:24	in the last three years and my ninth
205		visit overall.
206		[applause]
207		I want to thank all of you who helped
208		make these trips possible for doing
209		so. They are indispensable to
210		educating members of Congress about
211		the importance of the U.S.-Israel
212		Relationship, particularly those
213		members who are new to the Congress,
214	10:50:51	and those who are not familiar with
215		the inspiring history of Israel, both
216		present and ancient.
217		There have been some recent
218		discussions, by the way, about
219		eliminating those trips. Roy Blunt
220		and I are going to fight to make sure
221		that does not happen.
222		[applause]
223		In our trip in August, we traveled
224	10:51:28	throughout the country, and what our
225		members saw was as you have seen—a

Line#	Timecoding	Quote
226		reflection of themselves—people who
227		love their country, people who want
228		to live in peace and freedom, people
229	10:51:42	who want their children to have even
230		greater opportunities in a peaceful
231		and a secure environment, and we
232		collectively deplore the fact that
233		there are those who see these
234		innocent, peace-loving people as
235		targets for criminal attack.
236		We saw, first hand, the pain caused
237		by the disengagement from Gaza. But
238		more importantly, we saw a people
239	10:52:09	deeply committed to the democratic
240		process and the rule of law, and a
241		future of peace, stability and
242		security.
243		Of course, Israel's unilateral
244		disengagement was spurred by the
245		absence of leadership and a
246		meaningful negotiating partner on the
247		Palestinian side. Today, tragically,
248		that void of leadership has grown
249	10:52:35	even greater. How can Israel be
250		expected to have a relationship with

Line#	Timecoding	Quote
251		the terrorist murderers of Hamas who
252		are committed to her destruction?
253		That is no more understandable than
254	10:52:50	the United States having a
255		relationship with al-Qaeda or Osama
256		bin Laden!
257		As all of you know, and all Americans
258		should know, and indeed all the world
259		should know, that the anti-Semitic
260		hatred in the Charter of Hamas is
261		explicit, sinister and single-minded.
262		In its very first paragraph, that
263		charter states, "Israel will rise and
264	10:53:24	will remain erect until Islam
265		eliminates it." That charter adds—I
266		am sure most of you know—"There is no
267		solution to the Palestinian problem
268		except by Jihad."
269		Ladies and gentlemen, the State of
270		Israel, like any other sovereign
271		nation, retains the inherent right to
272		defend itself, and no one—no one—
273		should expect her or the Israeli
274	10:53:52	people to negotiate with or
275		capitulate to a terrorist

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Line#	Timecoding	Quote
276		organization whose cause is her
277		destruction.
278		[applause]
279	10:54:16	As the Vice President observed, the
280		Palestinian people have made a
281		choice. But democracy requires more
282		than a democratic election. It
283		requires recognition of the rule of
284		law, renunciation of violence, and
285		respect for agreements undertaken by
286		predecessor governments. And we need
287		to expect that to be the case.
288		[applause]
289	10:54:41	Let no one be mistaken, the United
290		States of America must not provide
291		one cent, one nickel, one dime to a
292		government run by terrorists whose
293		very policy and purpose is the
294		destruction of another sovereign
295		nation.
296		This is why I am going to join with
297		Roy Blunt and members on the
298		Republican side and the Democratic
299	10:55:18	side to fight for the passage of the
300		Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act,

Line#	Timecoding	Quote
301		bipartisan legislation that will
302		strengthen the ban on direct aid and
303		limit indirect assistance to the
304	10:55:30	Palestinian Authority until the
305		President can verify that the
306		Palestinian Authority is not
307		controlled by a terrorist group, and
308		that it meets these irrevocable
309		conditions.
310		First, the Palestinian Authority must
311		denounce and combat terrorism, and
312		agree to dismantle the terrorist
313		infrastructure. That has been said
314	10:55:52	before. It bears repeating. Stop
315		terrorism, dismantle terrorist
316		abilities.
317		[applause]
318		Second, the PA must recommit itself
319		and adhere to all previous agreements
320		and understandings with the United
321		States, Israel, and the international
322		community.
323		And third, the Palestinian Authority
324	10:56:12	must publicly acknowledge Israel's
325		right to exist as a Jewish state,

Line#	Timecoding	Quote
326		under whatever leadership may have
327		been chosen.
328		[applause]
329	10:56:26	Ladies and gentlemen, you will not
330		hear partisan divide. I believe the
331		administration is correct in
332		pressuring the Saudis, the Egyptians,
333		and others to stop providing aid-
334		other than for basic humanitarian
335		needs-to a Hamas led government.
336		[applause]
337		Senator Collins did not mince her
338		words, the Saudis can no longer have
339	10:56:55	it both ways. They cannot urge the
340		United States to play a key role in
341		the peace process that would lead to
342		a two-state solution, while also
343		financially supporting Hamas, which
344		rejects a two-state solution as a
345		fundamental principle. This is
346		irrational and unacceptable.
347		Sadly, as grave as the threat from
348		Hamas and Islamic Jihad is to
349	10:57:23	Israel's well-being, it may be
350		eclipsed by the threat posed by the

Line#	Timecoding	Quote
351		Iranian regime, and we must not
352		ignore the dangerous ideological link
353		between Tehran and Ramallah.
354	10:57:37	There is little question that Iran's
355		lies and belligerence are intended to
356		conceal its continuing quest to
357		obtain nuclear weapons. It claims
358		that its nuclear program is purely to
359		produce energy and acquire nuclear
360		technology, yet it sits on the
361		fourth-largest oil reserves and
362		second-largest natural gas reserves
363		in the world, and has rejected deals
364	10:58:05	that would give it properly
365		safeguarded light-water reactors from
366		Russia and the technology it needs
367		without enriched uranium itself.
368		The U.N. has even learned that Iran
369		was experimenting with Polonium 210,
370		a radioactive substance with only two
371		known purposes: deep-space
372		exploration and triggering a nuclear
373		weapon. I do not believe that Iran
374	10:58:34	has its eyes on Mars. Even the French
375		foreign minister stated three weeks

Line#	Timecoding	Quote
376		ago, and I quote, "No civilian
377		nuclear program can explain the
378		Iranians nuclear program. It is a
379	10:58:50	clandestine military nuclear
380		program." So said the French foreign
381		minister.
382		Israel, of course, must do what it
383		deems necessary, Mr. Ambassador, to
384		protect itself, and the United States
385		should make plain: All options, as
386		has been said a number of times, are
387		on the table.
388		[applause]
389	10:59:30	An Iran with nuclear weapons is not
390		only unacceptable to Israel; it is
391		unacceptable to the United States and
392		ought to be unacceptable to any
393		peace-loving person in the entire
394		globe.
395		For one of the world's principal
396		sponsors of state terrorism to have
397		nuclear weapons, is—as I said—
398		unacceptable. It supports Hezbollah
399	10:59:58	and Hamas and Islamic Jihad. It
400		harbors al-Qaeda operatives, and its

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Line#	Timecoding	Quote
401		president has stated his hope for—and
402		Dick Cheney quoted it—"a world
403		without America," and his desire "to
404	11:00:10	wipe Israel off the map."
405		Seventy years ago, the world paid a
406		hellish, haunting price for
407		dismissing the outrageous assertions
408		of the German Fuhrer. We must never
409		again, never again, never again, be
410		so naive and so passive. Senator
411		Collins put it that we are either
412		going to live in a world of
413		Chamberlains or a in a world of
414	11:00:41	Churchills. I suggest to you there
415		is no choice.
416		[applause]
417		This time, this time, in this
418		century, the nations of the world
419		that are committed to peace,
420		security, and the rule of law must
421		embrace their responsibilities and
422		not shrink from them. Iran clearly
423		will seek to divide us, but we must
424	11:01:08	stand united. And so I urge the
425		Security Council to act as one in

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426		sanctioning Iran for its abuses, and
427		to do so before it is too late.
428		The United States must be willing to
429	11:01:21	lead. And so I urge the
430		administration to elaborate a clear
431		plan to facilitate and harness the
432		consensus of the international
433		community and to make clear to the
434		Iranians the heavy price they will
435		pay for continuing down this reckless
436		path. Senator Bayh enumerated that
437		price last night.
438		Today we face danger and uncertainty,
439	11:01:46	but we see hope and promise as well.
440		Let me tell you why I am more
441		optimistic about Israel's future than
442		I have ever been. First--and they may
443		have left, I hope not--let me ask all
444		the students, the student government
445		association Presidents, the young
446		Democrats, the young Republicans who
447		are here, to please stand and be
448		recognized.
449	11:02:08	[applause]
450		Thank you very much, young people.

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Line#	Timecoding	Quote
451		Young people, while we honor the
452		courage and vision of Israel's
453		present leaders, we rejoice in a new
454	11:02:31	generation of Zionists who are
455		committed to continuing the pursuit
456		of the vision called Israel, a
457		generation committed to keeping
458		bright the torch of freedom and
459		security for future generations of
460		Israelis. I met some members of this
461		new generation last summer in the
462		small village of Adiel, in the Negev,
463		where college students have built a
464	11:02:56	community through the nonprofit
465		Ayalim Association.
466		Two of the student leaders, Inbar
467		Zideman [phonetic] and Daniel
468		Glicksberg [phonetic] are here with
469		us today. Would you please stand to
470		be recognized?
471		[applause]
472		I'm not sure I see them, but I hope
473		they are here. They talked at this
474	11:03:27	conference about how the development
475		of the Negev is critical to Israel's

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Line#	Timecoding	Quote
476		future. Shimon Peres was with us.
477		Ariel Sharon shared that vision of
478		development in the Negev. I agree
479	11:03:40	with them, and I believe that the
480		United States must assist Israel in
481		this endeavor.
482		[applause]
483		Ladies and gentlemen, the idealism,
484		the energy and the hope that we
485		observed under an August sun in Adiel
486		recalled the pioneering spirit and
487		thirst for freedom that were present
488		at the founding of Israel. It is the
489	11:04:05	passion and vision of America's
490		pioneers and pilgrims, as well.
491		All in our delegation were inspired
492		by these young people and proud of
493		our nation's strong relationship with
494		them. As we drove away from Adiel,
495		my dear and good friend—who does such
496		an extraordinary job for AIPAC in
497		Israel—Wendy Singer, said to me that
498		she thought this was one of the best
499	11:04:36	examples of the best that is Zionism
500		that she had seen.

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Line#	Timecoding	Quote
501		Where many see a barren land, this
502		new generation—as did their
503		forbearers—see a brilliant
504	11:04:49	opportunity. Where many hear only
505		the gentle desert breeze, they hear
506		the whisper of the Prophet Isaiah,
507		who assured them, “The arid desert
508		shall be glad. The wilderness shall
509		rejoice and shall blossom like a
510		rose.”
511		For millennia and the century that
512		we’re in, and the century we left,
513		for six decades Israelis have fought
514	11:05:21	for every inch of freedom they enjoy
515		today. They have endured a
516		relentless campaign of wanton terror.
517		And still the fire of liberty lights
518		the soul of a new generation who are
519		moved by the courage and sacrifice of
520		David Ben-Gurion, Golda Meir, Moshe
521		Dayan, Menachem Began, Yitzhak Rabin,
522		Ariel Sharon, Shimon Peres and
523		countless other great leaders and
524	11:05:53	those whose names we do not know.
525		They are Realistic—this new

Line#	Timecoding	Quote
526		generation—but they are also
527		irrepressibly optimistic, and are
528		fiercely determined to answer
529	11:06:07	history's call and to defend their
530		homeland and make it prosper. And,
531		all the while, they dream of a day
532		when Israel and its neighbors can
533		live in peace.
534		Israel is the mirror of our resolve
535		to confront terrorism, prejudice,
536		hatred and actions that are
537		demonstrably inimical to peace and
538		international security. Sadly, too
539	11:06:34	many in the international community
540		are blurred reflections in that
541		mirror; reflections of
542		rationalization and justification for
543		patterns of criminal conduct—both
544		collectively and individually—which
545		contradict international norms and
546		expectations.
547		The defense of freedom, both here and
548		around the world, requires a clear
549	11:07:02	and unequivocal reflection of our
550		certain commitment to stand for

Line#	Timecoding	Quote
551		freedom and to oppose—in word and
552		deed—those who would erode freedom’s
553		presence, progress or advent.
554	11:07:20	I believe that probably many of you
555		did not see the Academy Awards on
556		Sunday night. You were meeting here.
557		Reese Witherspoon, for her role as
558		June Carter in “Walk The Line”,
559		received the Oscar. She reflected on
560		June Carter—a Reese Witherspoon fan—
561		she reflected on June Carter, and
562		June Carter was asked, “What do you
563		want to do in life?” And June Carter
564	11:07:53	responded, “I want to matter.”
565		Ladies and gentlemen, you and AIPAC
566		matter. May God be with you in your
567		mission and may God bless America,
568		and Israel and all who seek peace
569		throughout this globe. God bless
570		you.
571		[applause]