

**Likud Party Chairman, Leader of the Opposition
and Member of Knesset Benjamin Netanyahu
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Thank you; I remember Larry Weinberg longer than I remember myself. And I've been following with great admiration the terrific work that AIPAC has been doing and each time it renews itself. So I want to salute you for building a new generation to support Israel, support America, support peace and thwart our enemies, the enemies of peace. I just saw 1,000 students; I said to them that you were paying for their lunch but effectively they were donating their passion and their hearts and their enthusiasm; these are Jewish and non-Jewish students coming from 50 States from various college campuses. I thought it was terrific and I applaud you for doing this; do more—more – a lot more. [*Emphasis Added*]

As we let the years past we can notice we've become a little older than the students and we can identify the passage points of history. The greatest tragedies in history occurred when leaders failed to identify great danger in time and failed to prevent them. And the greatest triumphs occurred when they did. We've already squandered precious years; 10 years ago I had the opportunity to speak before the Joint Session of Congress in this city. And the world's attention at the time was focused on the Palestinian Israeli conflict, yet I thought that there was a much more ominous danger looming in the horizon. And I said this and I want to read it to you.

This is also what happens when you stop being a student. I said at the time – *the most dangerous regime in the Middle East is Iran that has led a cruel despotism to a fanatic militancy. If this regime were to acquire nuclear weapons this would presage catastrophic consequences not only for my country, not only for the Middle East, but for all of mankind.* Now that was 10 years ago; what has been done since then to thwart this danger? Tragically not much; the Chief of Mossad in Israel, Meir Dagan, has said recently and this is public and I can repeat it – *that our estimate is that Iran will have nuclear weapons within three years.* Three years may sound like a long time but it's a very short time; it's 1,000 days and this day has just gone by.

A few weeks ago Iran launched a space orbital, a sub-orbital space vehicles and that's a precursor for ICBM missiles. Now they don't need ICBM missiles to hit Israel; they already have that. They

have weapons that can now reach deep into Europe but they need ICBMs to make sure that they reach London and they definitely need ICBMs to make sure that they reach Washington and New York, and that's their plan – to have that capacity to threaten the world. The fact that Iran is building nuclear weapons is beyond question. The fact that this is a great danger to the entire world should be beyond question as well. A nuclear armed Iran is capable of producing many, many threats. The first one is obviously an explosion in the level of terrorism because terrorism backed with a nuclear umbrella would be infinitely more powerful. The ability to mobilize activists because of the providential gaze of Allah on the believers – here Allah is giving them this power; this allows you to mobilize – mobilize anywhere – from Indonesia to Paris to San Francisco – terror will grow. The second of course is that a nuclear armed Iran will dominate the Middle East very quickly and will make a ploy for the world's oil supplies, the oil reserves. If you're worried about the price of oil today – wait. Well don't wait; we have to do something and I'll talk about that in a minute. And third, of course Iran – Iran's arming itself with nuclear weapons will trigger a proliferation race in the entire Middle East; that may already be happening.

Now mind you all nuclear proliferation is bad; but if Holland has nuclear weapons it's not the same as the Ayatollah regime in Tehran. It's totally different. And it will trigger such a proliferation. Fourth, it's possible that you have proxies, terror proxies who are actually given the weapon to enable Iran to threaten others or even hurt others and escape – and have their own immunity by the use of the proxies – the proxy use of nuclear weapons. And fifth, and this is the most amazing thing about Iran; they may actually use the weapons themselves not fearing deterrence, not calculating deterrence because they may be the world's first un-deterable nuclear power.

I asked Professor Bernard Lewis, undoubtedly a great man in my opinion and undoubtedly the great – one of the great scholars of Islam, perhaps the greatest scholar living today. He said for Ahmadinejad mutual assured destruction is not a deterrent but a catalyst for action. This is how he gets the messianic apocalyptic age – the return of the Mahdi and the establishment of a 1,000-year old Islamic right in Israel. That's how it comes about. Millions die on both sides but the Muslim millions, the believers go to a Muslim heaven with all the trappings. You know what that includes? Funny – no; it's not funny – it's dangerous. It's more dangerous than anything that we have seen, more dangerous than the possession of nuclear weapons by the Soviet Union or China or anyone else because they were all deterable.

So is the Iranian regime armed with nuclear weapons a threat to the Jews? Full disclosure – absolutely [*Emphasis Added*] but it's also a danger to the entire world. And I would have said the same if we were in the 1930s; was Hitler a danger to the world – to the Jews? Yes; but he was also a danger to the entire world and when people thought he was a Jewish problem he was but when they thought that he was only a Jewish problem, they were wrong and millions – tens of millions died because they didn't see then what they should see now.

And remember that for the Islamic believers in Tehran, Israel is only the little Satan; you know who the great Satan is – America is the great Satan. Europe by the way has well got into the position of being a middle-sized Satan – not very comfortable and they don't know it but they are. They're in their sights as well. So the danger is clear and the question is what do we do about it? Now there are three possible courses of action. The first is to do nothing or we could take military action; that's the second course. Or third, we could take non-military action. Now if we do nothing Iran will possess nuclear bombs and that is unacceptable. I have to commend the Bush Administration for taking a clear stand on this position that Iran should not have nuclear weapons and equally the leading Presidential candidates from both Parties have taken that stand and it's right to take that stand and it's important that they do.

The second course of action is military action, but that should only be considered as a last resort. And it is – it's been said correctly that the only thing worse than military action, a military strike on Iran is a nuclear armed Iran. And the third course of action is non-military action that could make military action unnecessary. You keep the military option in place; you put it – you keep it on the table – that option but effectively you take other means that can make – that can suffice or prove themselves to be sufficient by themselves. I'm talking primarily – not exclusively but primarily about economic means. The regime in Iran is very vulnerable; it is not a free open economy. It is a corrupt bureaucratic theocracy, so there's no internal growth generated. If you want I'll give you a little talk about how we generate growth by freeing up the Israeli economy – that's not what they did in Iran. They went the other way around okay; so Iran is not growing internally because it doesn't have a free economy and whatever capacities its peoples have and desires and goals and initiatives and ambitions they cannot bring it about in that economy. The economy is dependent on a single crop, primarily a single crop; 80-percent of the government's revenues come from oil and gas. Oil and gas production – oil production has been shrinking in the last three years, 10-percent a year. They desperately need new investment – desperately and they don't have it. They need to get it from European firms, primarily

European firms like Shell or Total, the French company and so – and – and others. They need it.

Unemployment is 20-percent; Ahmadinejad just lost an interim election because of economic woes and this is our opportunity. Our opportunity is to target the 300 or so publicly traded companies that are investing in Iran. You know who else is investing in Iran? You; each of you is probably investing in Iran. Now you don't know that you're investing in Iran, but you are. You have pension funds; you have mutual funds? Those funds do not invest in American companies that operate in Iran because that's forbidden by law, but they're not forbidden by law to put their money – to put your money in those 300 corporations that are now being the – I would say they're the mainstay and supporter of the Iranian economy. So if this is pulled out it does nothing for the pension funds; this is a trickle to the pension funds. It doesn't affect the pension funds' investments at all. Fifty-percent of all investment in the world is US – is American; it's enormous. CalPERS, the State pension fund of California invests \$200-billion okay; this is a trickle. For the pension funds it's nothing; it's a drop in the bucket. It's a drop in the ocean. For the European companies that are trading in Iran it's a lot more. They'll be hurt. For the Iranians it's enormous. They have to sure up their economy or this regime will not survive and they need this investment, so if the pension funds and other financial institutions in the United States, if private investors pull their money from these 300 corporations the Iranian regime could well come tumbling down. Perhaps Ahmadinejad's regime – his own rule will come tumbling down and there's a good chance for us to stop – to freeze the Iranian nuclear program.

This is something we must do. And I think we can do it; it's the most effective thing we can do right now short of military action. And for those who are saying we don't want military action; we say well what else are you doing? Why not do this? And if we do this and it succeeds we'll have nullified the need for something else. And if it doesn't succeed we'll know we have tried in time. And this is what history demands of us; this is what our own conscience demands of us – to do what we can do in time to thwart off the danger.

Now some of this is – is being done. The UN has done some limited sanctions; obviously they don't have very sharp teeth but I'm glad that this has been done. I'm glad that this effort has been undertaken because even this mild effort has already had rippling effects within the Iranian regime. It already has that – that this minor action has had – is bringing prices up. Companies are not coming in; some companies are leaving and this would cascade and multiply enormously with the effort that I'm suggesting here. The US Treasury has done important things in stopping banking activities, but I think

that what I'm suggesting could have enormous action. There are Bills in place in Congress but there are also State pension funds and each of you comes from a State. That State has a Treasurer – a State Treasurer; it has a Governor – you may know them both. For all I know you helped elect them, okay. Talk to them; talk to the State Assembly person and tell them that's it's unconscionable that Americans would be funding a regime that says America and Israel should not exist and is building ICBMs to be able to target the American mainland and is talking about openly wiping Israel off the map.

I think Americans once they're apprised of the fact that their money goes there would want to stop it instantly in a heartbeat. So I ask you to take this on; I ask AIPAC to take this on. And I ask ourselves to take it on because I think we in Israel also have to do our part.

I woke up to the fact one day after several months of working on this and also on trying to put Ahmadinejad to trial. You know he's an international criminal but the 1948 Convention forbidding genocide also forbids for inciting genocide, so he should be put on a watch list. He should be – he should be proscribed from the international community. But as we were doing this – as we were doing this I said wait; you know we have to make sure that in Israel our pension funds – even if it's a tiny – tiny trickle and probably is no more than that – are not going to support the French companies or the German companies or others that are active in Iran, and so I tabled the Bill. I'm not asking you to do what – something that we're not doing; I'm doing exactly what I'm suggesting that we all do together. And we're going to pass that Bill in the Israel Knesset, so nobody will tell you that we're asking somebody to be more Catholic than the Pope or more Zionist than the Zionists; we're not doing that.

I know that there are those who are afraid of using the divestment tool because there have been attempts in the past to divest from Israel and the people are concerned that we'll be establishing a precedent that could be used to – against us. But divestment against Israel is not wrong because divestment in itself is wrong. It's wrong because they're targeting the wrong target – that is the weapon is right; the target is wrong. Israel is a democratic country that wants peace with all its neighbors. It is not a regime that is preaching genocide. And divestment against Iran is right because Iran is openly in contravention of international law, preaching the destruction of an entire people. And of all the crimes committed in the sorted history of crimes of mankind, this is the greatest crime of all. It is now being in the Sudan and there's no reason why we shouldn't join forces with those who want to stop the killings in Darfur and are

talking about divestment in – from the Sudan, I say fine; divest Sudan, divest Iran – invest for peace. [*Emphasis Added*]

I've said that it is 1938 and some people question that. They say this is alarmist; it's not. It's an apt appreciation of the historical juncture we find ourselves. If it's different than the 1930s it's because of two things – because we have the example of the 1930s available to us that they did not, and it's also because we have a Jewish State. Now when we – when we talk to people as I did in the British Parliament the other day and as well in the French Parliament, I said you all say that the great mistake in the 1930s was not acting in time against a ferocious ideology which wanted to arm itself to the teeth and openly proclaim its goal. But what are you doing now? I don't know that they're doing anything; I don't know that they'll do anything but I know that we can do it here. I know that America is different; I know that America can be mobilized. I know that the large band and swag of the American people understand that they have a role to play and are willing to play it and that this is the right thing to do. So I – I think that the most important change right now is to prove indeed that we have learned a lesson of the 1930s and that those who are interested in the future of the free world and our world as a whole will act in time.

Second, I said there's a Jewish State. It has to be honestly said that in the 1930s we didn't have it; we didn't mobilize Parliaments; we didn't harness economic sanctions; we didn't try to put Hitler on trial as an international criminal; we didn't do anything. It may be that we didn't have the power to do anything but it's also true that not many tried. But we have now a changed reality; we have the State of Israel and if there's something that happened to the Jewish people with the return of sovereignty it is the return of the Jews, the – the ability of the Jews to defend themselves. It is not that the founders of Zionism said that all attacks and anti-Semitic ambitions would stop – would disappear from the earth. That is not what they said; they said that with the establishment of the Jewish State the Jews will be able to fend off these attacks and we have done that brilliantly in the military field, yes with some mishaps but I'll tell you that the Israeli army will learn all the lessons and Israeli will be able to decisively defeat any combination of enemies. We will know how to defend ourselves and we have to prepare our defenses. But there is a larger defense. There is a larger defense and the lesson that we as Jews have to learn – it is that military defense is not enough. What you win in the battlefield you can lose in the political battlefield and in order to win in the political battlefield you have to win in the battlefield of public opinion. And in the battlefield of public opinion you have to persuade that public that

your cause is just and your enemy's cause is unjust and we have a perfect setting for this – a perfect setting for this.

The preaching of genocide is unjust; it is evil. The ability to form alliances – vast alliances against this evil is within our reach. It may or may not obviate other means but it has to be done now. So my message to you today is very simple; divest Iran, divest Sudan, invest in peace, invest in Israel; this is what we need to do right now and I know you'll do it. Please carry that message to your State Governors, to your Senators, to your Assemblymen, to your Representatives. Carry it yourselves personally to the State Treasurer; get this divestment off the ground. Thank you very much.