

**Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert**  
**AIPAC Policy Conference 2007**  
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Thank you very much Bernice for your beautiful words; thank you for the introduction. President Howard Friedman and Executive Director, the famous Howard Kohr, the members of the Board of AIPAC, the honorable Ambassador of the State of Israel to the United States, my dear personal friend Sallai Meridor who just came a few weeks ago to America and he's already well-known all over the capital, and members of Congress, supporters of the State of Israel and the 1,000 members of AIPAC that came from across America all the way to this very unusual annual meeting in Washington – to all of you I say I'm so happy and delighted. Even though it's now 4:00 a.m. in the morning in Jerusalem – but I say to myself how can I miss this powerful inspiring so exciting and moving event even when I'm not in Washington? I've had the privilege of doing it so many times in the past from that podium where you stand now Bernice and I say to myself I'm not going to lose this one only because I'm here in Jerusalem, so thank you very much for allowing me to speak at 4:00 a.m. in the morning from Jerusalem and share with you some thoughts and concerns and fears and hopes that we have for the State of Israel and the Jewish people.

First of all thank you for AIPAC – for the never-ending support of AIPAC for the State of Israel but also for being one of the most powerful vehicles of improving and upgrading the great relations that exist between the State of Israel and the United States of America. I want to speak tonight about two major issues; first and foremost the threats that come to Israel from Iran. Iran is the main threat to the State of Israel. There has never been such a brutal explicit and direct threat to the very existence of the State of Israel by any nation since Israel was proclaimed as today is the threat of Iran to the very life of our country. This is the first time since the Second World War that a leader of a nation, a member of the United Nations stands up publicly and explicitly and talks about the liquidation of the State of Israel. Not only this, but this country is creating a very sophisticated weaponry system with ballistic missiles that can deliver bombs through the very heart of the State of Israel as well as through the very heart of many European cities and many other major cities across the world.

But not only this; this country tries to create nuclear capacity and they explicitly and publicly and brutally talk about the need to wipe Israel off the map. Not since the Second World War did we hear

such words coming from a leader of a nation against another nation and you people gathered here in Washington tonight you know that when it comes to this when we hear such threats we lose our sense of humor. We take it seriously; we have no choice but to take it seriously. And we must address ourselves to these threats and make sure that no one really has the capacity, the means, and the opportunity to exercise their hatred against the Jewish people and the State of Israel, particularly not those who might have nuclear capacity.

Naturally the preferred solution for the Iranian issue is a diplomatic one. Israel is very much in favor of a diplomatic approach that can be useful and that can be helpful. Sanctions which were already taken by the UN Resolutions 1737 and hopefully additional measures which will have to be taken soon by countries across the world, economic measures, diplomatic measures, political measures will all be effective and will be felt and will help to force the Iranians to reconsider their position and to decide whether it's worthwhile for them to carry on this challenge without additional restraint.

But at the end of the day I think we all know and we have to recognize that President George W. Bush is the only leader and the United States of America is the only country that can be of enormous influence on what the Iranians will do. They're the only ones that can confront effectively the aggressiveness of the Iranians in their plans to buildup nuclear capacity. I know that all of you friends of the State of Israel, well-wishers for the State of Israel, all of you who are concerned about the security and the future of the State of Israel understand the importance of strong American leadership addressing the Iranian threat. And I'm sure that you will not hamper or restrain that strong leadership unnecessarily.

I also want to add – I also want to add what might be the consequences of premature action in Iraq. What these might – might create to Israel's security – to the security of the Gulf States, to the stability in the Middle East, and to the ability of the United States to cope with threats emerging in different parts of the world, particularly those threats emerging from Iran. Now let me be very sincere and very open with you. All of you are friends of the State of Israel and all of you care deeply for the security and the well-being and the future of the State of Israel. And I'm sure that all of you are willing to support efforts made by Israel, the United States and other nations in order to stop Iran from becoming a nuclear power. I don't want to enter into American politics; believe me I have enough politics of my own back home and that's quite a lot – sometimes too much. **[Laughs]**

All I care about is Israel's security and its well-being. And therefore, not out of my personal friendship to President Bush, not because of any involvement of interest in American politics, just out of

these deep concerns for the future for the State of Israel that I have to say to you that any outcome that will not help America's strengths and would in the eyes of the people in the region undercut America's ability to deal effectively with the threat posed by the Iranian regime will be very negative for those who love the State of Israel and for those who care for the ability of the State of Israel and other nations in the region to cope with the problems coming from Iran.

Those who are concerned for Israel's security, for the security of the Gulf States and for the stability of the entire Middle East should recognize the need for American success in Iraq and responsible actions there.

Now my dear friends let me say a couple words about the Palestinian situation. The other day I met this person, Mahmoud Abbas, who was a guest in my home here in Jerusalem. We had a very candid and friendly talk. And I told him that regardless of political circumstances, and as long as he's the leader – the elected leader of the Palestinian people I will continue my strategic cooperation with him because I want to maintain a link to the Palestinian people. But at the same time I said what all of the civilized world says including America and of course Europe – that a unity government amongst the Palestinians based on Hamas that will not recognize the four principles of the Quartet will not be recognized by the State of Israel. We will not cooperate with the Hamas government and we will not recognize or work on a daily basis with Ministers who are members of the Hamas government regardless of the affiliation of some of the Ministers whether they are Hamas or Fatah or any other organization. A Hamas government, any Palestinian government must recognize the Quartet's principles, must release Corporal Shalit without any conditions, must stop the unending rocket Qassam shooting on the innocent Israelis in the south part of our country, and must work on the basis of principles of human decency, of patience, of tolerance, and of friendship, which is the way in which we relate to the Palestinian government.

These are not easy times. But we still expect very much that all of the international community will continue to establish the policies with regard to the Middle East on the basis of the great principles of the Quartet which were the guidelines – the guidelines for the policies of those countries for the last year in the Middle East. And of course, I want to take this opportunity also to express our deep thanks and appreciation and respect for the role that the United States Administration, President Bush, and Secretary Rice play in the politics of the Middle East. I know how complex it is; I know how difficult it is; I know how sensitive it is – how grateful we are to you President and to you Secretary Rice for your involvement, for your care, for your

friendship, for your support that makes – that keeps the hope for a future Middle East with the possibility of a peace process still alive.

We will continue to be partners in these efforts to advance peace and negotiations and recognition between us and the Palestinians alive with great chances of moving things forward.

And finally my dear friends let me thank all of you; you know how much we love you and you know how much we thank you for your friendship. You know how much we appreciate the friendship, the involvement, and the concern of so many important Congressmen from across the aisle – the two sides in American politics who are united in their support and in their dedication and in their convictions as far as Israel is concerned. And how grateful we are to you members of AIPAC, the most powerful Jewish organization in the world, which entirely and exclusively is dedicated to the well-being of the State of Israel and the Jewish people; and I want to thank all of you members of the Board, all of the activists, all of those who come now from across America from one side to the other – leave everything behind them and come to Washington so that everyone will know that this tiny State of Israel does have representatives who care so deeply who are ready to act so much and who are so involved in everything that happens to us. And again I want to thank the Israeli Ambassador in Washington, Sallai Meridor – powerful, dynamic, influential, knowledgeable and well-liked by everyone – the new Ambassador of Israel Sallai Meridor.

And I now understand also that my dear colleague and partner and friend the Minister of Defense of the State of Israel, Mr. Amir Peretz is with us here in this hall tonight. Amir Peretz is my partner and I'm very happy to recognize you my dear friend to be here tonight and to feel directly your presence there – the warmth, the friendship, the support that we have with such great friends in America. Thank you all for your friendship. I want to thank again President Bush and Secretary Rice and Vice President Cheney and the American leadership and the American Congress for their support of the State of Israel. When America is strong, Israel is strong; when America succeeds in Iraq, Israel is safer in Israel. When America is strong in coping with the terrorists in Iraq, Israel is in a better position to cope with the effects in Iran. The friends of Israel know it, the friends who care for Israel know it, the friends who are worried about the future of the State of Israel want that America will be successful, want that America will be strong, and wish for the Administration that will keep the American presence strong and powerful and convincing so that everyone will know that this is only – the only way to deal with the threats that might be posed against America and American friends in that part of the world.

On this note I want to thank you all and to hope to be able to see some of you in the State of Israel. Let me tell you; this is the most beautiful period now in the life of our country. It's the new spring starting to spread all over the place and wherever you go you can see the beauty of Israel and particularly here in Jerusalem you can see the beauty and you smell the beautiful history and the beauty and the glory of the City of Jerusalem. So I'm taking out a great challenge; I want on behalf of the State of Israel to invite each and everyone of you members of AIPAC, supporters of AIPAC, Congressmen, Ambassadors, friends from all over – please come to Israel and be my personal guest, and you'll feel safe and you will enjoy and you will share in the glory of Jerusalem. Thank you.

Thank you very much Bernice.