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Thank you so much for that warm introduction Bob, and thank you for assuring me before I got up here – don't be nervous because a billion Chinese won't care how I speak tonight. What you don't know is my father is out there somewhere.

Good evening everyone; what a great privilege and honor it is to be addressing the plenary of this cutting edge and courageous organization. A year ago – thank you – a year ago today, hard to imagine, two of America's preeminent scholars, Stephen Walt of Harvard and John Mearsheimer of the University of Chicago published an 80-page paper entitled *The Israel Lobby*. And in this paper Walt and Mearsheimer alleged that since 1948 the cornerstone, the centerpiece of American foreign policy in the Middle East has been unequivocal support for the State of Israel, and that the support for the State of Israel has led to a great diversion in America's search for interest in the Middle East and has led America away from its inherent interest in supporting the regimes of Iran and of Syria, of organizations like Hezbollah and Hamas which of course bear no inherent animus toward the United States and its people.

Support for Israel, Walt and Mearsheimer allege is the handiwork of an Israel lobby of which this organization AIPAC is only a small component. The *Israel Lobby* in the description of Walt and Mearsheimer embraces virtually the entire American media including the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times*. All of the research institutes in Washington from the right of center, American Enterprise Institute to the Brookings Institute, left of center. The *Israel Lobby* includes virtually all evangelical Christians in this country, almost all Orthodox Jews, any American Jew who has ever had a role in foreign policy making toward the Middle East irrespective of his or her political affiliation or orientation.

Now 40-pages of this paper are dedicated to footnotes and I'll tell you as a scholar, 40-pages is an inordinate amount of footnotes. What is truly extraordinary is that in all of these footnotes there are many, many references to august works of Middle Eastern scholarship by Noam Chomsky and Norman Finklestein. But there is not one, and I stress not one reference to a declassified document of American foreign policy and not far from here at the United States National Archives you will find hundreds of thousands of declassified documents that will attest to the true centerpiece of American foreign policy in the

Middle East since 1948 and it is not unequivocal support for the State of Israel. It is of course – oil.

But Walt and Mearsheimer's piece overlooked an even more essential source for understanding America's policy toward the Middle East and that is the opinions of the people of the United States. And if you go to one of the most recent polls taken by the Gallop Organization which is not included in the *Israel Lobby* according to Walt and Mearsheimer you will see that upwards of 70-percent of the people of the United States admire the State of Israel and support a continued and robust alliance between Israel and the United States.

Now how can you possibly explain this overriding support for this alliance between Israel and the United States? Well according to Walt and Mearsheimer this must be the influence of evangelical Christians and it must be the influence of American Jews, but the fact of the matter is about one-fifth of the population of this country can be defined as evangelical Christians, woefully less than three-percent are American Jews; how then can you account for the remaining 50-percent? And to understand that deep-seated support one has to go beyond the documents of the National Archives, beyond the pages of the *Wall Street Journal* and even the *New York Times*. One has to go back 400 years nearly to that day when the first buckled shoe alighted on a rock off the Massachusetts shore and the owner of that shoe, a gentleman by the name of William Bradford made an extraordinary declaration – *come let us declare the word of the Lord in Zion* he declared. What did Bradford mean by that? This was Plymouth; this wasn't Zion. To understand what he means you have to understand that he was a Puritan; he had come with 101 of his followers from England where the Puritans had endured just unspeakable oppression at the hands of the State Church. And in an effort to find a model to help them overcome their suffering the Puritans looked back into their Bible; they looked first at the New Testament and didn't find it and then they looked further back into the books of what they called the Old Testament. And there they found something extraordinary; they found a God who spoke directly to his people in their language and he made them a promise. He promised to rescue them from exile and to restore them to their Holy Land and to their statehood. And the Puritans loved this story and they embraced it; they began to look at themselves as the new Israel, the new Jews. England became the New England – new Egypt. The Atlantic Ocean became the new Sinai Desert and they escaped bondage in this Egypt and they crossed that expanse and they landed in a new world which was to them the new Promised Land. And they proceeded to give 1,000 Biblical names to their cities and towns; they gave Biblical names to their sons and daughters – the David's and the Isaac's and the Rebeccah's and the Sarah's and the

Benjamin's. They made Hebrew a mandatory language at all of their universities. Do you know that James Madison was a Hebrew major at Princeton? They put Hebrew in the logo of Yale, Hebrew in the logo of Dartmouth and Columbia and so deep was the identification of the new Jews with the old Jews of the Old Testament and with the old Promised Land that the conclusion of the American Revolution when there was a debate over what was to be the great seal of this new nation, one group proposed that the seal show an American Eagle clutching 13 arrows in his talons, one for each State. But another important group of American policy makers suggested that the seal should show Moses leading the children of Israel out of bondage and into the Promised Land. And it was a hotly contested vote in Congress; America came this close [*Gestures*] from having Moses as its national symbol. That seal designed – that seal of Moses leading the children of Israel out of Egypt into the Promised Land was designed by Thomas Jefferson and by Benjamin Franklin.

Now many of these Puritans and their descendants – descendants in feeling that they were the new Jews – they felt a sense of kinship with the old Jews. Essentially the old Jews were *mishpucha* [family] and they felt a strong attachment to the old Promised Land then known as Palestine, part of the Ottoman Empire, and many of these Puritans and their descendants concluded that as good Christians and as good Americans it was their duty to help God fulfill his Biblical promises to the Jews to rescue them from exile and restore them to sovereignty in their Holy Land. Thus was born the notion of restorationism, which became a remarkably prominent idea in late 18th Century and 19th Century America. Elias Boudinot, the President of the Continental Congress wrote a book in which he predicted that when the Jews returned to their Holy Land they would make their desert bloom like a rose, a hundred years before Ben Gurion said that. John Adams, the second President to the United States said that it was his most ardent wish that 100,000 Jewish soldiers as well disciplined as the French Army – that is the French Army back then – would march back into Palestine and reclaim it as a Judean kingdom. Perhaps the most – the most extraordinary expression of the restorationist idea appeared in a book published in 1844 called *The Valley of The Visions* and *Valley of the Visions* called on the United States government to spearhead an international effort to detach Palestine from the Ottoman Empire and to give it back to the Jews as a State.

The Valley of the Visions became an antebellum bestseller; it sold about 1,000,000 copies and the author of that book was the Chairman of the Hebrew Department of New York University and his name was Professor George Bush, who was a direct descendant of two – direct forebear rather of two later American Presidents by the exact

same name. Asked in 1863 what he thought of the idea of restoring their – the Jews to their ancient land, Abraham Lincoln said *the idea of restorationism he recognized was cherished by a great many Americans* and he, Abraham Lincoln, personally hoped to help realize that dream once America restored its unity after the Civil War.

For some Americans though merely dreaming of the restored Jewish State was insufficient and starting in the 1830s groups of American Christians left the United States and moved to Palestine including a great number of American women by the way, Clarinda Minor from Philadelphia, Harriet Livermore from here in Washington, DC – they moved to Palestine all with the same remarkable goal of teaching the Jews how to farm. These are good Jeffersonian Americans; Jefferson believed that the basis of any viable modern State is an agrarian economy and these Americans understood that the Jews had been exiled for 2,000 years and had forgotten how to farm. And they felt it was their duty to reacquaint the Jews with agricultural life so the Jews could then form a modern State. And so these Americans moved in and they created agricultural colonies in Palestine in 1855. Philip Dixon from Groton, Massachusetts with his wife and twin daughters moved to an abandoned hillside outside of Jaffa that they christened Mount Hope and the Dixon daughters married two Lutheran German teachers, also brothers named Frederick and Johan Grossteinbeck and together they sought to teach the Jews how to farm to make this colony thrive and they suffered terribly from starvation and deprivation and disease. In the December of 1856 the Dixon colony received a rather august visitor in the form of Herman Melville who had come to Palestine because his previous book *Moby Dick* had sold a mere 3,000 copies and he was looking for a new source of inspiration for his next novel and Melville visited this colony and he was overwhelmed by the depth of these commitments of these American Christians to try to teach the Jews how to farm. And a month after he visited this colony the Dixon colony was attacked by Arab bandits and Philip Dixon was knocked mortally on the head. His wife and two daughters were brutally and repeatedly raped. Frederick Grossteinbeck was shot in the groin and died an agonizing and slow death and the only person to emerge unscathed from this attack was Johan Grossteinbeck whom according to consul records at this point left Palestine to move to California to prospect for gold and there he Americanized his name. Melville would write about the rape of the Dixon colony in his 24,000 line poem *Clarel* but so too would Johan Grossteinbeck's grandson who alluded to it in his Biblical and ethnic novel *East of Eden* and he alluded to it again in his other ethnic Biblical novel *Grapes of Wrath*. John Steinbeck grandfather had lunch with Herman Melville in Palestine in 1856 in a colony dedicated to

recreating the Jewish State and still the Americans came. In 1866 George Adams from Indian River, Maine left Maine with 156 of his followers to create another colony outside of Jaffa, dedicated to the recreation of a Jewish State and they too suffered from disease; they died by the dozens. A year later, 1867 the 47 survivors of the Adams colony were evacuated from Palestine aboard a steamship called the Quaker City that was carrying another aspiring American author then too to be known as Mark Twain. And he writes about the plight of these dedicated Americans in the last chapter of his famous book *Innocents Abroad*.

So moved was Mark Twain by his experience in Palestine that later in the century when he visited Vienna Mark Twain made a point of making a lunch engagement with the founder of the newly declared Zionist Movement. His name was Theodore Herzl. Mark Twain had lunch with Theodore Herzl in Vienna and Mark Twain was so taken with Theodore Herzl that he offered to translate Herzl's Zionist play *The New Ghetto* for production on the Broadway stage.

Meanwhile back in America restorationism remained just as an immensely popular movement. Again one of the great expressions of the restorationist idea occurred in 1891 in a petition filed with the White House of Benjamin Franklin by a Midwestern mogul named William Blackstone and Blackstone called on the US government to spearhead an international conference with Queen Victoria of England and the Czar of Russia to present the Ottoman Empire with a fait accompli – give up Palestine and give it back to the Jews and this petition was signed by 400 Americans – not people from the periphery. It was signed by John D. Rockefeller; it was signed by Charles Scribner, the head of the Publishing House; it was signed by Jay Pierpont Morgan and it was signed by a Congressman named William McKinley, later to become President of the United States.

Conspicuously missing from the signatories are large numbers of American Jews. American Jewish population grew from 1865 to 1914 to about 3,000,000 people; very few of them were involved or even interested in Zionism. They were interested acclimating into their new homeland. In fact, a rare exception – in 1884 was Emma Lazarus, the poetess, the Jewish poetess who had inscribed that new colossus poem on the pedestal of the Statute of Liberty. Emma Lazarus created the first American Jewish Zionist Organization and attracted very few followers. She really died quite frustrated with that experience. And by 1912 out of these 3,000,000 Jews only 12,000 are members of the American Zionist Federation.

But the American Zionist Federation was extraordinarily fortunate in having a President by the name of Louis Brandeis. You all know Louis Brandeis; he came from a very assimilated background in

Kentucky; didn't know much about his Jewish heritage but he was an extraordinarily – immensely popular and successful lawyer and – but in a chance meeting with the Zionist editor in 1908 converted Brandeis overnight to Zionism and four years later he is the head of this Zionist Federation and Zion – and Brandeis was also very involved in the Democratic Party and among the people he met while he was in the Democratic Party was an aspiring Princeton Professor who later became the Governor of New Jersey and in the same year as that – that Brandeis became the President of the Zionist Federation he became the President of the United States and his name was Woodrow Wilson.

Now Wilson was the grandson, the son, and the nephew of a Presbyterian minister. He had imbibed this restoration idea literally with his first milk and that ingestion became crucial in 1917 when American joined World War I and Britain sent its Foreign Minister for talks in Washington and his name was Arthur Balfour, the last of the great British restorationists. And Balfour had tried to convince the British government to issue a statement that said that once the British forces had defeated the Turks in Palestine the British government would view with favor the creation of a Jewish national home in Palestine. And he met with almost universal opposition in the British government; they said why do we need this statement like this for? We have hundreds of millions of Muslims in our Empire. If we come out and favor the Jews they'll all revolt. And Balfour hoped that if he could convince Wilson to support this statement the British government would follow suit. And Balfour came to Washington and he was woefully disappointed. He met with American officials and they all said the same thing; we do not want to alienate the Arabs. We have burgeoning oil interests in this area; we're not going to support this Zionist Proclamation. And in frustration Balfour turned to Brandeis, the good friend of Woodrow Wilson and Brandeis said do not worry; leave it to me and on May 10th 1917 Brandeis went into the Oval Office for a 40-minute meeting with Wilson and emerged with Wilson's approval for this statement. And as a result the British government was convinced and in November they indeed issued what became known as the Balfour Declaration expressing the British Empire's support for the creation of a Jewish national home in Palestine, which in turn became the basis of the British mandate in Palestine, which in turn became the basis of the 1947 UN Partition Resolution creating the Jewish State in Palestine – all because going back to the approval of Woodrow Wilson. And asked why he went against the advice of his Senior Counselors and gave this approval, Wilson had a one-word – one-line response. He said *to think that I the son of the manse would have the*

opportunity of restoring the Jewish people to this Holy Land – Woodrow Wilson.

The Holocaust, the Partition Resolution, the Jewish State was set to come into being on May 14th 1948; it was the greatest single test of the restorationist idea in America. Prior to that date the entire American foreign policy establishment, the State Department, the Defense Department, the Pentagon – to a man – came to the White House and warned that if the United States recognized this Jewish State it would affect a global catastrophe. The Arabs would go over to the Soviet side in the Cold War; there would be a cut-off of oil to the West; Europe would fall to the communists. All of these warnings were presented to the President Harry Truman on May 12th 1948; the most revered man of his generation, Secretary of State George Marshall said *Mr. President if you recognize this Jewish State, I, George Marshall, will not vote for you in the 1948 Presidential Election.* Harry Truman who had a strict Baptist upbringing who had memorized the Bible by age 14, had a best friend is a Jew – Eddie Jacobson and had been a member of a restorationist committee; he listened to these warnings and then closed himself into the White House for 48 hours – uncharacteristically. He wrote nothing in his diary; all we know is that on May 14th 6:11 p.m. Harry Truman came out 11-minutes after Israel declared its independence and made the United States the first nation on earth to recognize the recreated Jewish State.

Why would he do this? We don't know; all we know is that several weeks later he was introduced to a group of visiting American dignitaries as the President who helped create the State of Israel and Harry Truman got very insulted. He said *helped create the State of Israel? Helped – create the State of Israel? I'm Cyrus he said – I'm Cyrus – Cyrus of course being the Persian King who restored the Jewish people in the Bible to their ancient homeland. I'm Cyrus.* Since 1948 we have had Presidents in the White House who have been very warm in their relationships with the State of Israel, some less so; but what has been consistent throughout as you saw in this film this evening – what has been consistent throughout is the fundamental support for Israel's right to defend itself and even more basic than that – the right of the Jewish people to have this sovereign State, to maintain it and defend it in their ancient and Biblical homeland. And we know that faith plays a role in that – that America, the most faithful nation on earth, more people attend the House of Worship in this country than any other modernized State; we know faith plays a role. We know that Lyndon Johnson's grandfather told him that if he ever abandons the State of Israel the world would come to an end and we know that Bill Clinton's Pastor who was the surrogate father told him on his deathbed never to abandon the State of Israel. He made

him promise; it was his dying wish. We know too that faith is only one component in the American Israel alliance that the fact that Israel is a democracy struggling to survive in this profoundly undemocratic environment also plays a paramount role in the affection and admiration which Americans harbor for the State of Israel.

Now all of this means nothing to Walt and Mearsheimer – nothing at all but alas Walt and Mearsheimer's insidious thesis is not confined even to academia; it is spread throughout the media; now a leading American publishing house, Farrar, Straus, and Giroux has offered them a three-quarter of a million dollar contract to adapt their 80-page paper to a full-length book and is expected to sell 1,000,000 copies following on the immense success of Jimmy Carter's book which basically has the same thesis and which I had the privilege frankly of knocking off the *New York Times Bestseller List* last week. Thank you.

Be that as it may it is insufficient. All of us supporters of this crucial alliance between Israel and the United States must bind together Jews and non-Jews alike and remind Americans at all times of the words of a John Adams, the words of Abraham Lincoln, of Woodrow Wilson and Harry Truman – to explain to them that this brave organization AIPAC is not merely a lobby for Israel; it is first and foremost an advocate for America and it is an expression of a nearly 400-year long tradition in which the idea of a United States is virtually indivisible and inseparable from the idea of a recreated Jewish State. It is the embodiment of a conviction as old as this nation itself that belief in the Jewish State is tantamount to belief in these United States. Thank you.