

Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi
AIPAC Policy Conference 2007
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Good morning. Amy Friedkin thank you, thank you, thank you for your very generous introduction, for your friendship, for your leadership; as a woman and as a Californian I know I speak for many when I say how proud we were when you became the first woman President of AIPAC – thank you Amy.

And of course as a native Baltimorean I take very special pride in Howard Friedman, President Howard Friedman. I want to acknowledge Howard Kohr and all my good friends who serve in the leadership of AIPAC and to all of you.

All right, let's thank all of the leadership of AIPAC.

And to all of the members of AIPAC, particularly I must acknowledge the nearly 1,200 members who have traveled here from California. Where are you Californians? [*Laughs*]

I want to especially acknowledge the more than 1,000 students who are here today.

The State of Israel is a dream of your ancestors made a reality by your grandparents and your parents. The torch is now passed to you to work for a safe and secure Jewish State of Israel. And while I'm on the subject of young people and Naomi Lauder will know that I can't continue without talking to you about my grandchildren, I – I asked them recently about forum, you know a week and a half ago, I said what is your forum spiel this year, to which they said it was – at their Temple it was the Beatles theme. So they had a theme that centered around – *We All Live in a Yellow Synagogue* and *Estherday* [*Laughs*] but amidst the fun they once again recalled the history of a Persian leader threatening the Jewish people and the heroine Esther who had the courage to speak out and save them. Today the Israeli people have that same courage to meet that same challenge.

I've had the honor of addressing you on a number of occasions. It is now my very special honor to come before you as the Speaker of the House. Although there's so many of you here it is always for me a very personal experience. Thinking about today I thought when was the first time I ever became aware of the State of Israel. Some of you, I know Howard knows of Simon Sobeloff and his wife, Irene, and the Sobeloff family in Maryland who were close friends of my family. Before Mr. Sobeloff became the Solicitor General of the United States and then a Federal Judge, he was part of my father's administration when my father was Mayor of Baltimore. In the late 1940s Mr. and

Mrs. Sobeloff traveled to visit the newly born State of Israel. When they returned they came to our home and regaled us with magnificent tales about this glorious new country in the desert where courageous trailblazers were founding a democratic nation in their historic homeland. As a little girl I was drawn to the stories of turning sand dunes into orange groves, draining swamps to create farmland and creating cities where before there had been none. And along with their stories the Sobeloffs brought me a ring from Israel which I just adored. It helped to create an everlasting bond for me to Israel. And it is in that spirit that I come before you today.

As the Sobeloffs told us so many years ago pioneers founded the State of Israel. Their spirit lives on today as Israel is on the cutting edge of the next generation of discovery, innovation, and growth. Israel's entrepreneurial spirit has produced the world's largest per capita number of engineers and the world's largest number of bio-tech startups. The cell phone was developed there and it was Israelis who invented AOL Instant Messenger.

There's been so much talking about the security situation it's important to know the incredible contribution that Israel is making to the world. With innovation we broaden our horizon and we expand our vision in order to create a better world. That is why House Democrats have introduced our innovation agenda, a commitment to competitiveness to keep America number one. I know this is an area where the United States and Israel can work together as we compete.

To that end at the end of February the House passed legislation to foster joint projects between the United States and key allies such as Israel which offer the promise of using the best new innovation to improve security for all of us.

In Energy Policy, the United States and Israel have another opportunity to combine our best innovative ideas. The US Israel Energy Cooperation Act would help fund joint ventures between the United States and Israeli businesses and academic institutions for the development and commercialization of alternative, renewable energy sources.

American and Israeli ingenuity can put to work what should be put to work to achieve energy independence from Middle East oil. A sustained investment in research and development is crucial to creating cutting edge technologies to develop these clean sustainable alternatives and capitalize on vast renewable natural resources like solar energy and wind power. Essential to Israel's economic security is Israel's national security. With Hezbollah sending rockets from the North, the Palestinian government too heavily in the hands of Hamas who reject Israel's existence and an Iranian President repeatedly

calling for the destruction of Israel we are constantly reminded that Israel lives in a very dangerous neighborhood.

Two weeks ago the acting President of Israel and – and the Speaker of the Knesset, Dalia Itzik came to visit me. She brought with me Karnit Goldwasser, wife of Ehud Goldwasser. Ehud and Eldad Regev came under attack as you know from Hezbollah terrorists during a routine patrol within Israel last July – just a month after Gilad Shalit was captured in the Gaza. Karnit and Ehud had only been married 10 months when he was captured; now instead of enjoying her life as a newlywed she has summoned her inner courage – that's what Israel has always been about from Esther on – inner courage to take the story to these – of these three men to world capitals. As Karnit has said we want the killing to stop on both sides of the fence; in Israel and Lebanon we want everything to go back as it was before – no killing, no kidnapping; we want them back home.

Karnit gave me these copies of their dog tags; I keep them on display in the Speaker's Office as a constant reminder of my promise to do everything in my power to get information on the soldiers and work for their release.

Ehud, Eldad, and Gilad are always in our prayers. After the capture of Ehud and Eldad more than 4,000 rockets fell on Northern Israel; 1,000,000 people were displaced and civilian lives were lost both in Israel and in Lebanon. The UN Security Council responded by passing a resolution establishing conditions for the end of the violence sparked by Hezbollah's unprovoked attack on Israel. Yet Hezbollah continues to violate the Resolution and reportedly continues to rearm with the help of Syria and Iran. The 10,000 US troops – UN troops have not been successful in preventing the shipment of weapons and supplies. The US must demand that the international forces be effectively implementing the Resolution that Hezbollah be disarmed.

When Israel is threatened America's interests in the region are threatened. America's commitment to Israel's security is unshakeable. I'm happy to announce to you today that when Speaker Itzik visited me she invited me to address the Knesset. The invitation alone is the greatest thrill of my official life.

When the time comes that I address the Knesset which I hope is soon I will bring the US pledge of continued unshakeable support. As we all know the source of Hezbollah's weapons is Iran. Two years ago I came before you as leader and said the greatest threat to Israel's right to exist now comes from Iran. For too long leaders of both political parties in the United States have not done nearly enough to confront the threat of Iran, Iran's proliferation I said then. Today I come here to say that two years have passed and we still have not done enough.

President Ahmadinejad continues with hate-filled rhetoric about the US, Israel, and the Holocaust. His recklessness with words underscores our concerns about his development of nuclear weapons. Let us be very clear; Iran must not be allowed to obtain a nuclear weapon. It threatens the security of Israel, the stability of the region and the safety of the world. I'm very proud that Tom Lantos is now the Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives. As Chairman Lantos said last week when he introduced his Iran Counter-Proliferation Act of 2007 – *we must prevent Iran from securing nuclear arms and the means to produce them and insure that we achieve this – this goal in a peaceful manner* – he said. That is why without further hesitation or equivocation we must leverage all of our economic, political and diplomatic power with stronger sanctions and smarter diplomacy.

For example – for example, Chairman Lantos' legislation prohibits Iranian owned state banks from using the American banking system. In terms of diplomacy it proposes that we use our influence with Russia and China to encourage them to join the world community in opposing Iran's nuclear program. And confronting that challenge it is important to note that when – when Israel has a choice to make it makes courageous choices for peace. In the name of peace, time and again, the Israelis have engaged in discussions, made compromises and given up territory. Two years ago I spoke with you with cautious optimism for the future that was echoed by Israelis; in return for pull-out from Gaza the Israelis hoped for a Palestinian government willing to live in peace. Instead today grandmothers still fear going to crowded market places, rockets are still launched into neighboring – neighboring *kibbutzim* – learn from my grandchildren – and weapons are still smuggled into the hands of terrorists willing to use them against Israeli civilians. There are those who contend that the Israeli Palestinian conflict is about Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. In truth the history of the conflict has never been about the occupation.

It is over the fundamental right of Israel to exist. The success of Hamas in last year's election followed by the decision of President Abbas to form a unity government is a major disappointment. Peace efforts are at a standstill because of Hamas' failure to meet the most basic standards of the international community; first Israel – recognition of Israel's right to exist. Second, renunciation of terror; and third they must – there must be acceptance of prior agreements.

I am deeply concerned about the intentions of the government part of whose leadership remains committed to the destruction of Israel. However I am committed as I'm sure everyone here in this

room is to a future for Israel and the Palestinian people living side-by-side in peace and security.

To that end as Israel's trusted friend and ally, the United States has a major role to play. Secretary Rice's effort to conduct talks with President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert is welcomed – but long overdue. The United States must have a high-level, sustained presence in the region to lay the groundwork for the day we all long for when the entire Palestinian government is ready for peace. This week the House Appropriations Committee is considering a spending bill for the War in Iraq. Any military engagement we believe must be judged on three counts – whether it makes our country safer, our military stronger, and the region more stable. The War in Iraq fails on all three counts. The Iraq settlement supplemental – the Iraq supplemental we are considering gives the President everything he asked for to support our troops and goes even further to protect our troops, provide for our veterans and hold the Iraqi government accountable.

Most importantly it rebuilds our military; it enables us to protect the American people and to be a strong ally to our friends as it greatly strengthens America's military readiness.

I want to thank many of you gathered here today; the crowd keeps growing each year but many of you were early to see and certainly the leadership of AIPAC were early to see the new dangers in the Middle East. You were early to see the danger that Iran posed to the world. You were early to see that Russia and China and other countries were transferring dangerous technologies to the Iranians. You were early to see more than five years ago that the international community needed to work with Lebanon to disarm Hezbollah. You were early to see the need to urge world leaders to adhere to fundamental principles when funding the Palestinian Authority. Thank you – thank you for all of that; thank you.

And thank you for promoting ways for both Israel and the United States to work together to be on the cutting edge with new technologies, new ways of thinking and new solutions; today your work continues. When you leave here to visit Congress you will be the cavalry storming Capitol Hill. [*Emphasis Added*] When you do you will be upholding the very best values of our political system – the right of citizens to petition their government.

I salute you for your advocacy for a strong Iran Sanctions Bill, which I know you'll be advocating for today. That Bill will help slow down Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons. I salute you for your work to support key funding for a key US ally, Israel. I also support you and encourage your efforts to strengthen the resolve of European Union countries and others again to adhere to fundamental principles when

engaging with the Palestinians. In America's partnership with Israel we have both given support and drawn strength – strength; we share a common history – nations founded to be beacons of democracy forged by pioneers and fulfilled by immigrants in search of a better tomorrow and I join you today because we share a common cause – a safe and secure Jewish Israel living in peace with her neighbors.

Achieving that goal is in America's national interest. The United States will stand with Israel now and forever. Thank you all very much.