

Senator Robert P. Casey, Jr.
AIPAC National Summit 2007
October 28, 2007

Thank you very much ladies and gentlemen. I won't be long, but I wanted to thank Larry for his introduction. I also want to acknowledge the presence here of someone who came to this podium ahead of me, someone whom--with whom I've worked very closely since I started in the United States Senate back in January and that's the Senior Senator for Pennsylvania, Arlen Specter, who is right up front here. Thank you Arlen and Joan--and your family--for being here tonight.

I know that Senator Lautenberg spoke ahead of me; I know Governor Rendell spoke earlier today. You have members of our Congressional Delegation here and I join them in welcoming once again to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, AIPAC. This is a wonderful celebration of the work that you do across the country and across the world; thank you very much.

One of the events that I was fortunate enough tonight to attend was a--a small reunion of a group of Pennsylvanians with whom I traveled to Israel with in November of 2005 and I told them tonight that I need to go back and I'm looking forward to doing that for so many reasons. One of the reasons I want to go back is to continue to learn what AIPAC knows about Israel, about the Middle East and about the world, and I look forward to continuing to work with AIPAC in the next couple of months, in the next couple of years on a couple of priorities.

First of all, to do everything we can through federal policy to keep the unshakeable bond between the United States and the State of Israel ever-strong and ever-enduring. I also look forward to continuing to work with AIPAC on a focused strategy--something that you discussed tonight and on many nights, a focused strategy to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

I believe and I know the public officials who have come up to this podium tonight believe that the United States must use all its power, every tool in its arsenal, every resource in its arsenal to prevent Iran from getting that capacity. One of the reasons, one of the reasons I've been so privileged to work with AIPAC is to work together on specific legislation. I'll just mention two in particular; I'm one of the co-sponsors of the Iran Counter-Proliferation Act and--and the Iran Sanctions Enabling Act--very important, very important legislation to keep the pressure on Iran on this question.

I had the opportunity recently to give a speech on the Senate Floor where I focused on a couple of areas as it pertains to Iran--first of all to continue the strategy of the United States to isolate Iran diplomatically; secondly to apply substantial as AIPAC has worked with so many public officials to do, to apply pressure on Iran's energy sector and to continue to employ financial sanctions to keep Iran from developing the capacity we cannot allow them to develop. And finally--finally, we have to make sure we're doing

everything possible to stop the Iranians from supporting Islamic extremism in the region and around the world. We know what they have done to support Hamas; we know what they have done to support Hezbollah and we also know what they've done to support Shiite militias which have gone after and killed American soldiers in Iraq, so for all those reasons and more we have to keep the pressure on.

We have a lot more to do and I'll wrap up with one--one observation. Earlier this year, I worked with a number of US Senators to lobby the United--the United Nations to end years of discriminatory behavior against the Jewish National Fund, thus giving that organization as it should have the same right of access to key United Nations bodies that other NGOs have had for years. It's time that the United Nations ends its--its discriminatory behavior as it pertains to the Jewish National Fund. We [didn't] win this one but we're going to win that battle too.

I've already gone over my limit of time; I don't want to--to interrupt your dinner but I want you--want to say two things really in conclusion. One is to express gratitude to AIPAC for what you've done for me and what you've done for so many elected officials to keep us informed, to keep us focused on these priorities and I think it's critically important that we gather here in Philadelphia and here in other places around the country when AIPAC comes to Washington or other parts of the country. And I'm privileged to say that I'm a United States Senator from Pennsylvania along with Arlen Specter and our Congressional Delegation. We're grateful that you're here; we honor--we're honored by your presence and we hope you keep coming back to Philadelphia. And I'd say in conclusion, next year in Jerusalem. Thank you very much.