

SPEECH

**Rep. Dennis Cardoza (D-CA) & Dr.
Joseph Englanoff**

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DR. JOSEPH ENGLANOFF: "Joe," a friend said to me, "I want you to meet someone." How often do we hear those words at gatherings? Usually what follows is a quick handshake, maybe a quick nice to meet you, and maybe even let's have lunch, but what happened then followed for me was an incredible experience.

In the seven years since I first was introduced to then-candidate Dennis Cardoza from California Central Valley, in the six years since he was elected to Congress, in the five years since we traveled to Israel together, and the subsequent years that our families have gotten to know each other, Congressman Dennis Cardoza and I have become the closest of friends. And it all started right here at our very first APAC policy conference where I, a modern Orthodox emergency room physician from Los Angeles became good friends with a congressman of Portuguese descent from California's farm belt.

REP. DENNIS CARDOZA (D-CA): Getting elected to Congress is obviously a life-changing experience and my wife and I decided to adopt two beautiful children that same year. We were navigating our dual careers, bi-coastal marriage, and well, let's just say it was never dull. With so much going on and so much new to learn about foreign policy in the Middle East in Congress, Joe was an important friend to have, always available with a quick response and the right information. We talked about our kids, our wives, Kathy and Gilat, both of them who are primary care physicians. And of course we talked about politics and policy, too.

In my first run for Congress I made two promises. One promise to a group of Hispanic women to make a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal, the Catholic shrine there to Mary; and I made a promise to my friend Joe that if elected, I would make one of my first Congressional fact finding missions to Israel. I kept both promises.

Before going to Israel I knew that Israel was a crucial ally and an embattled democracy, but I could never have appreciated everything that Israel represents. In 2003 at the height of the second intifada, I joined 28 members of congress to an AIPAC mission to Israel and got to see how incredible that country truly is. And even better, my good friend Joe came with me. The trip was transformative. I was fascinated by how democratic and open the society was; by the incredible professionalism and thought and sensitivity that went into Hadassah Hospital's trauma unit, by the -- by the inspiration of the Ethiopian village, and by the smallness of the country and by the greatness of the people.

And as someone who represents a farming district I was particularly moved by a nation that literally makes the desert bloom. At some point during the trip Joe asked me what I thought so far. I told him, "Joe, you had me at 'shalom'."

DR. ENGLANOFF: A few months later the congressman took me on a different tour. After AIPAC's annual banquet, Congressman Cardoza agreed to take me, my wife, Gilat, and several high school students from my synagogue who were attending the policy

conference for a special tour of the Capitol. We showed up at the Capitol around midnight. The congressman took us through every nook and cranny of the place. He relished every moment, sharing not just the architecture and history itself but his passion for the incredible work that takes place there. Those students had a once in a lifetime experience, beginning a special friendship of their own with the United States congressman.

REP. CARDOZA: Joe and I have made a point of checking in and taking the time to find out what's going on in each other's lives. Our families have bonded through barbecues at my house -- it's great having him over because he brings his own kosher meat -- and Shabbat dinner at Joe's home where we all sing Eshet Hail. And with my district bearing the brunt of the economic crisis right now with unemployment at 21 percent and the highest foreclosure rates in the country and a significant drought affecting our farmers, I appreciate that Joe understands the concerns and the many issues that are vying for my attention.

DR. ENGLANOFF: And with all that is on Congressman Cardoza's plate, he has consistently found ways to help strengthen the U.S.-Israel alliance. He and his staff scrutinize, analyze, and dissect each piece of legislation placed in front of him. In some instances we've debated policy issues for hours with each encounter having the same affect on our relationship, making it deeper, more honest, and that much stronger. And to date, Congressman Cardoza has signed on to every significant piece of pro-Israel legislation that has crossed his desk.

REP. CARDOZA: Joe, it's easy to do what's right. My friends, I'll tell you what I told Joe many years ago when a particular piece of legislation was on the house floor. Now, I know you've typically relied, Joe, on Jewish members to congress to champion the pro-Israel legislation. I'm here to tell you that if you want a Portuguese Catholic from the Central Valley of California to lead the charge to protect our relationship with Israel, I won't let you down.