

# Newt Gingrich

## AIPAC Policy Conference 2009

### May 3, 2009

**Newt Gingrich:** Thank you, Donna. And I thank all of you for that warm welcome. The report you just got from Jarrod and Darius is both a sign of what can be done to increase the pressure on Iran at a practical, nonviolent, common sense way, and also a sign of what AIPAC achieves, because their involvement first as students and now as leaders in their own right, was a direct product of a leadership effort that I know that Howard Kohr and others made in order to broaden dramatically the understanding for all Americans that AIPAC is not just about Israel. AIPAC is about the American-Israel relationship, because the future of America and Israel are inexplicably intertwined. A world which destroys Israel will certainly destroy the United States.

So we have a unique self interest in also having a broader interest. The fact is that the threats around the world are real, they are imminent, and they require us as a nation to have a serious adult conversation about reality. When the Polish people began rebelling against communism after the historic visit of Pope John Paul the II for nine days in June of 1979, part of their effort was a slogan. They said two plus two equals four. I know that may seem a little strange, but it came in part from George Orwell's novel, *1984*, in which the torturer on behalf of the state says, "If we tell you two plus two equals five, it equals five. And if we tell you two plus two equals three, it equals three. And who are you to dispute us?"

And the Polish people said, "No. If you tell us two plus two equals five, you're lying. If you tell us two plus two equals three, you're lying." And so as a contest between the authoritarian effort to impose falsehood and the right of a free people to tell the truth and have an honest debate, we are actually engaged in the same contest today, in which many of our elites around the world are utterly incapable of telling the truth, and utterly incapable of standing up for the truth, and utterly incapable of having the courage to confront evil, no matter how obvious it is. Just a little over a week ago, the Holocaust was remembered, and we heard words. But we need to understand the difference between words and policies, between sentiments and actions, because we are at a very dangerous time.

I would carry you back, as a former history teacher, to three other years that ended in nine. One hundred years ago, in 1909, virtually no one in Edwardian England would've believed that the British empire was about to be shattered, that a generation of young men was about to be slaughtered, that the wealth they had accumulated for over a century was about to be spent, that within a very few years, the Romanov empire, the Habsburg empire, the Wilhelmine empire, would all disappear, and that their world would never fully recover from the shattering cost of the First World War. Just 70 years ago, in May of 1939, decent people were trying desperately to avoid the reality of Adolf Hitler. It's grandly painful to look back and to realize that those who could see understood, and in fact, whether it was Winston Churchill or a group of younger

Tories, most of who had served in World War I and knew the horrors of war and therefore were determined to stop Hitler before he became too successful and before he became too powerful.

But the agony of 1939, of what Churchill once said was the unnecessary war -- President Franklin Delano Roosevelt asked him, "What should call this war?"

And he said, "We should call it the unnecessary war." He said, "No war was easier to avoid, if at any point in the 1930s the democracies had had the courage to act in unison." But they didn't. And in fact, Stanley Baldwin lied to the British people, reassured them when he should've frightened them, told them they were fine when they were not safe at all, and tragically, ended up very popular for the moment -- and so guilty that on his 90th birthday in 1945, Churchill would not send him greetings; on the grounds that millions had died because his leadership had been such a failure.

Now go back 30 years, to 1979. When the world was teetering -- it's hard for us to remember now -- but in 1979, the Soviet empire was on the march. It was inevitable. It was powerful. All of our elites knew that we had to find *détente*, a fancy French word meaning understanding. And everybody -- conservatives wanted to have *détente*, where we yelled at the Russians while we lost. Liberals wanted to have *détente* where we hugged them while we lost, but all of our elites knew that the Soviet empire was on the march, that our future was grim. A French intellectual wrote a book called the end of democracy.

And along came one person. Callista and I just released a movie about him, called Ronald Reagan, *Rendezvous with Destiny*. A -- a reporter asked Reagan, "What's your vision of the end of the cold war?"

He said, "We win. They lose." The elites were terrified. The entire New York Times editorial board contemplated moving to New Zealand. Reagan understood something very profound. He understood, first of all, the American people tend to identify with sports, and they would understand the word "we" -- and they would think that we should win. It was bold, it was radical. CBS News never did quite get it. And he understood that they would understand "they," and think that we win, they lose made sense. What was astonishing about Reagan is that in concert with Pope John Paul the II and Prime Minister Thatcher, he actually designed a grand strategy to bring to bear economic, political, intellectual and other pressures in such a way that within 11 years, the Soviet Union disappeared.

I cite these two examples because I think in the next few years, we will make decisions which our grandchildren will realize meant that we were either once again in 1939 or once again in 1979. If we lack the courage to confront honestly how grave the threats are -- if we lack the courage to describe evil as evil, and if we lack the courage to implement the policies that those threats and that evil requires -- then in fact, we are in 1939. But if on the other hand, we are prepared to tell the truth, and we are prepared to develop a worldwide coalition in favor of that truth, then we will be even more surprised by the speed with which our opponents collapse, and the degree to which those evil regimes disappear. And I think virtually -- I think in virtually every case, if we are prepared to show great, strategic leadership, it could happen without firing a shot. Remember, from Estonia to Latvia to Lithuania to Ukraine to Belorussia to Romania to

Hungary to the Czech Republic to Slovak Republic to Poland to East Germany, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan -- all leave the Soviet empire without firing a shot.

The first key to the Reagan strategy and to the Thatcher strategy, and to the strategy that Pope John Paul the II illustrated when he visited Poland, as we will do at the end of this month -- we're making a movie called *Nine Days That Changed the World*, which we think has direct relevance to the world we currently live in. In each case, those great leaders believed confronting evil head on, describing it accurately, and bringing to bear the moral authority of a free people, was the most powerful single step you could take. Now what would that mean? That would mean absolute condemnation and defunding of Durban II and any future effort to organize hatred. That would mean a systematic worldwide campaign to bring forth every illustration of the abuse, destruction, enslavement, and brutality towards women which are at the heart of the extremist wing of Islam, and are the key to the Taliban. That would mean moving to suspend Iran's right to vote in the United Nations so long as its leader wanted genocide of Israel. That would mean enforcing the disruption of gasoline supplies until the Iranian economy broke, the Ayatollahs were ousted, and a new regime was in place without firing a shot. That would mean recognizing honestly the enormous challenge of growing in Gaza a force for peace and prosperity and freedom that was capable of taking on Hamas and capable of defeating Hamas, because as long as Hamas dominates Gaza, there is no partner for peace, there is only an effort for genocide and annihilation.

The great tragedy of the last administration was that it combined two enormous weaknesses that were not characteristic of President Reagan or Prime Minister Thatcher or Pope John Paul II. One you almost certainly will agree with. The other may shock you. The first was it was inarticulate; and that's an enormous, enormous disadvantage, because a free society has to be able to win the moral case that what it is doing is necessary, unavoidable, and morally legitimate. The current administration will not be inarticulate.

There's a deeper challenge. It's a challenge that the last administration had, and that I very much fear this administration has. The threats we are faced with are far more catastrophic than any of our leaders are willing to talk about, and the challenges of unlocking those catastrophes are much harder than any of our leaders have been prepared to talk about. The challenge of the Bush administration wasn't that it tried too much; it was that it underestimated dramatically how hard this is going to be.

Fixing Pakistan, which in some ways is the most dangerous country in the world today because they already have probably over 100 nuclear weapons -- fixing Pakistan is an enormous problem. Defeating the Taliban and Al-Qaeda in the northwest and in Afghanistan is an enormous problem. Stopping a determined Iranian theocracy with its secret police and its Republican Guards so that they do not get nuclear weapons, they do not fund Hamas, they do not fund Hezbollah, they are not the leading exporter of terrorism in the world, is an enormous problem. Recognizing that the leading funder of Sunni extremism on the planet is Saudi Arabia, and that rather than bow to the king, we need a national energy policy to liberate the United States. Make no mistake, an American energy policy developing American sources of -- of oil, American sources of natural gas, American sources of coal, American sources of hydrogen, American

sources of biofuels, American sources of solar, of nuclear, and of wind -- an all-points system to maximize American freedom from the Middle East would be the most powerful national security policy. It was the deliberate driving down of the price of oil which bankrupted Gorbachev and the Soviet Union, and if we made the same strategy, of deliberately driving down the price of oil, the Iranians would presently not have the money to subsidize terrorism around the world.

Let me take just a minute to talk about the scale of the catastrophes -- and I want to do this, you know -- I actively got involved when I was very young. My dad was a career soldier, an infantryman in the U.S. army in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. I grew up traveling around the world. I was born in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. And we were stationed in Orleans, France when I was a freshman in high school. And we were living in a country that had been badly damaged in World War I, bombed in World War II, lost the war in Algeria -- or was losing the war in Algeria, had lost the war in South Vietnam, or Indochina, as it was then called. They had 100 percent inflation. Literally the summer we were there, the French paratroopers came to Paris, killed the fourth republic and brought back General de Gaulle, who created the Fifth Republic, of which President Sarkozy is now the latest example -- the most stable French government since the monarchy.

And as a young kid from Pennsylvania, this was all wild. And then my dad took us, that spring, to Verdun, the largest battlefield of World War I. And we -- this was a huge valley, in which 600,000 French and German soldiers lost their lives in a nine-month campaign. And we spent every day touring this huge battlefield, and we stayed at night with a friend of my father's who had been drafted in 1941, sent to the Philippines, served in the Bataan Death March, and spent three and a half years in a Japanese prison camp. And so I looked at this extraordinary weekend -- the great battlefields at day, the cost of defeat at night. I was going to be either a zoo director or a vertebrate paleontologist. And I loved the natural world, and we were transferred that summer to Stuttgart. And I literally spent the whole summer praying and thinking about what I had experienced that weekend. And in August of 1958, I decided to do what I've done ever since.

So what I'm about to say to you is from my heart, and from everything I've learned in almost 51 years. We are on the edge of catastrophic problems. If you get a chance, read my good friend Bill Forstchen's novel, *One Second After*, which describes the fate of a small town after an electromagnetic pulse attack. This book was inspired by a report that Congressman Roscoe Bartlett got seven nuclear physicists of enormous experience in our nuclear weapons industry to jointly produce.

It's based on fact, it is accurate, and it's horrifying, and we have zero national strategy to respond to it today. Actually three small nuclear weapons at the right altitude would eliminate all electricity production in the United States, which is why I have said publicly I favor taking out Iranian and North Korean missiles on their sites. We need to break the lawyer's sophistry that all nations are equal, and we need to draw a sharp line that says if you have an evil regime, and you engage in evil things, we are not going to let you fire off weapons would could have catastrophic results -- period. The decent, the honorable and the law-abiding cannot survive by trying to apply the same standards to the evil, the aggressive, the criminal and the vicious.

The second great threat is one or more nuclear weapons going off either in an American city or an Israeli city or a European city or a Japanese city -- wherever they went off. They would have horrifying consequences. And I strongly recommend Alex Berenson, a New York Times reporter who recently wrote a novel called *The Silent Man*, which is about an effort to set off a Hiroshima-sized weapon in the Washington D.C. area at the time of a State of the Union. And recognize a Hiroshima-sized weapon has a radius of one mile. There are over 100,000 people in that zone. The idea that you could stop them from driving it in a truck is a fantasy. This is an enormous threat to our very survival.

You've watched the reaction to swine flu. An engineered biological attack, whether it was an engineered virus or it was an anthrax attack, would have horrifying implications and be staggering. And I'm not telling you these things to frighten you. I'm telling you these things for the same reason you tell your children to put on their seat belts. We as a country need to develop some national security seat belts. And then we need to recognize that there are some regimes you will never be able to cut a deal with, because they are in fact evil.

I just want to make two last points. I don't know quite what that is, but I'm going to take the risk of saying it anyway. The first is that talking in good faith with Adolf Hitler and seeking reconciliation with Adolf Hitler would've been a complete dead loser, because he was in fact the personification of evil, and as long as he was in charge, all humanity was at risk. Ahmadinejad, if he gets the weapons, will be every bit as evil as Hitler. He tells us this all the time, and only our unwillingness to admit that two plus two equals four blocks us from seeing what he is doing.

And finally, I want you to feel very comfortable going back home, telling all of your neighbors and your friends you're involved in AIPAC because you're involved in the largest single organization dedicated to the survival of their children and their grandchildren by confronting danger head on and ensuring American safety fully as much as Israeli safety, because the two are permanently intertwined. There is civilization, and there is anti-civilization. AIPAC personifies being committed to our children and our grandchildren living in civilization. And if your friends ask you why you're involved, I hope you'll turn to them and say, "Gosh, why aren't you involved when it is your future for your children and your grandchildren." Thank you very, very much.