

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

SABAN FORUM 2014

STORMY SEAS: THE UNITED STATES AND ISRAEL
IN A TUMULTUOUS MIDDLE EAST

ADDRESS BY U.S. VICE PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN

Washington, D.C.

Saturday, December 6, 2014

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JOE BIDEN
Vice President of the United States

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. HAIM: Welcome, Mr. Vice President.

Last year, our 10th anniversary forum was honored to host the President of the United States for a conversation. Lightning, they say, never strikes twice in the same place, but we're pretty darn close here today.

When Martin and I first came up with the idea of the Saban Forum 11 years ago -- as a matter of fact, it was Martin's idea, not Martin and I. It was Martin's idea -- we envisioned a space in which Israelis and Americans could speak frankly with each other, air their differences, and think creatively of better ways to work together. We gather year after year here out of a firm conviction that what we are, Americans and Israelis, have in common is far more than what divides us.

Throughout his long career in public service, Vice President Biden has embodied precisely that spirit. Even when our governments have not seen eye to eye on every issue, Vice President Biden has

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worked to ensure that the interests and values we share transcend any monetary disagreements. So while this is Vice President Biden's first appearance at the Saban Forum, he has been with us in spirit all along. And we are very grateful to you, Mr. Vice President, and to the White House on the future of our relationship and how much you have worked to strengthen it.

Mr. Vice President, I am delighted to welcome you to our dialogue. Thank you for taking the time to be with us today, for your ongoing leadership and service to our country, and for all you do, day in and day out, to solidify the unbreakable bond between Israel and the United States.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming the vice president of the United States, Joe Biden.

(Applause)

VICE PRESIDENT BIDEN: Thank you. Thank you very much. We were a few minutes late because I was in the back with -- I was interviewing for a place on

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one of his many networks he owns. I don't know how I did, but we'll talk about it later.

Look, folks, it's a delight to be here. And Joe, it's a delight to see you. I haven't seen -- I haven't seen Joe Lieberman in such a long time, in DOSSA. Joe's chair in the Senate, seat in the Senate was directly in front of mine for a number of years when Joe was there, and every time Joe would get up to speak I'd whisper in his ear, "Say it ain't so, Joe. Say it ain't so."

It's good to see you, Joe.

And Nita, it's good to see you. I shouldn't probably do this. Robert Wexler is here, I'm told; an old, old buddy. And I see Sandy. It's hard to see in this light. And Dan Shapiro. There are so many good friends that are here.

Before I begin, I'd like to say a brief word about the failed rescue mission that occurred yesterday. As with all of you, I'm sure, our prayers are with the families of Luke Somers, who was murdered yesterday by al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. You

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know, we, the intelligence community, worked very, very hard and relentlessly with the government to try to figure out how we could rescue Luke, who was a photojournalist, like Daniel Pearl and Stephen Sotloff, and James Foley, and so many other brave women and men who travel from the safety of this country into harm's way to tell the stories of the lives of others far away. A noble mission.

The truth of the matter is, since the conflict really began involving us almost 10 years ago, the percentage of journalists and Foreign Service officers who have been killed is almost as high on a percentage basis as some of our military missions.

And to state the obvious, the women and men who -- the Special Forces who were engaged in these two rescue missions, did an incredible job and inflicted serious damage on the captors. But this time -- this time they were unable to save Luke. But I think that we should also note the president and I are grateful to the Yemeni government for their cooperation in these efforts to fight terrorists. We

can only -- I speak for myself, I can only imagine how Luke's parents feel today. Murdered in a second attempt, came so close. This is a despicable crime, and we mean what we say when we say, from speaking for the intelligence community, the military, the government as a whole, we will be relentless in our efforts to bring to justice those who have caused his death. Some already have been brought to justice in the raid, but there's much more to do. It's a tragic reminder of the violence we face in the Middle East and a potent reminder of what Israelis face every day.

Haim, members of the Israeli Cabinet, cabinet ministers, party leaders, old friends, members of the diplomatic corps, it's a pleasure to look out and see so many old faces, people I've worked with, and I hate to admit this, for over 40 years, to make good on our commitment to guarantee a secure nation state of Israeli that is secure, survivable, and is -- you know, I've said before, if there weren't an Israeli, we'd have to invent one. If there weren't an Israel. We always talk about Israel from this

perspective as if we're doing some favor. We aren't meeting a moral obligation. It's so much more than a moral obligation. It's overwhelming in the self-interest of the United States of America to have a secure, democratic friend, a strategic partner like Israel. As I said, it's no favor; it's an obligation but it's also a strategic necessity.

Israeli today is the strongest nation in the Middle East but it bothers me sometimes. I remember when I first got here as a kid, a 29-year-old kid, Israeli was very much looked over by the rest of the world as being somewhat fragile, sitting on the banks of the Mediterranean with millions of Arabs looking at them and wanting to see them gone, et cetera. And as the Israelis themselves or the United States helping to build Israel into the physical, capable power that it is today, there seems to be a mindset that's changed in some parts of the world that somehow there isn't still -- Israeli is still not under siege. Just because it's strong, just because it's vibrant, just because it is physically capable, does not mean that

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it's under siege. Be that mother who every day opens the door and puts their child on a bus to go to school; be that father who -- it amazes me how quickly people's memories fade about how vulnerable individuals within that country -- in the country remains because of the nature of the raid forces against it.

Rockets from the southern frontier, Hezbollah in the north, Nusra and ISIL in the north and east, and across the region, a demographic wave that is gigantic. A sectarian conflict that is reminiscent of predictions of 700 years ago of a Sunni-Shia war. Profound political society upheaval. More profound than any upheaval that's occurred in the region in a century. And looming over everything is Iran and its nuclear program, a long and dangerous reach of its regional ambitions is felt not just by Israeli but by everyone else in the neighborhood. And it's a really tough, tough neighborhood. I know that is the biggest understatement anyone has said to you today because all of you know it, feel it, taste it,

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and have experienced it.

And it requires uncommon courage. The uncommon courage is that displayed by the people of Israel. From the outset, they've lived under siege. From the outset. More recently, they've lived in daily defiance of rockets, terrorist tunnels, unconscionable acts of terrorism like this month's attack -- last month's attack in a synagogue. It took the lives of Jews at prayers, including three Americans, as well as brave Israeli police officers. But for Israeli, this tough neighborhood is home. This tough neighborhood is where they live and will live forever.

I recently heard a story about Weizmann, who, as you all know, is the first prime minister. I'm told he was lobbying the British House of Lords to establish the state of Israel and he was asked pointedly, "Why do you Jews insist on Palestine when there is so many underdeveloped countries you could settle in conveniently?" And Weizmann's reply was, "That's like my asking you why you drove 20 miles to

visit your mother last Sunday when there were so many nice old ladies on your own street."

Pretty apt. Pretty apt.

My father said it a different way. Joe knew my dad. Joe was the first guy that told me the way they referred to my dad, they referred to him as a righteous Christian. Because at my dad's dinner table, it was a place that we sat to have conversation, and incidentally eat. And my dad couldn't understand when I was a kid in grade school and then in high school, he couldn't understand when I was in grade school why there was even a debate about whether or not the state of Israel should be established. And it totally perplexed him, and even in the Jewish community in the United States there was some debate. For he believed, and which all of you do, I hope, that the only ultimate guarantor of the security of the Jewish people worldwide in the face of such tragedy and history, the only way to ensure that phrase that became so prevalent after World War II, never again, was that for it to make a difference

there was only one place in the world that could be secured guaranteed, and that is a state of Israel for the Jewish people.

I remember saying to my dad, "But Dad, you're in America." He said, "Pray God, Joey, that will always be the case." And then he went through and told me the history of what happened and when it was so certain that Jews in Germany and in Spain and other places were part of the fabric of this society, et cetera.

Well, you know, there's never been any doubt in my mind. There's never been any doubt, though I want you to know, because I know some of you importune me not infrequently -- there's no doubt in President Obama's mind either -- that we have an obligation to match the steel in the spine of the people of Israel with an ironclad nonnegotiable commitment to Israel's physical security. And that's why we've invested over a billion dollars. And I'm going to repeat myself here of some things you've already heard and said and you know, but it's worthy for the press to hear it. A

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billion dollars in the production and development of iron dome batteries in interceptors, including almost a quarter of a billion dollars in emergency funding this summer. As those rockets rained down and terrorist tunnels in Gaza appeared, President Obama steadfastly stood before the world and defended Israel's right to defend itself, by itself, like any other nation. Earlier this year, he backed up that commitment once again by securing over \$3 billion in foreign military financing. This is the largest amount of U.S. security assistance for Israeli in all of history; over \$17 billion since we took office, \$8.5 million a day.

Prime Minister Netanyahu, as Mr. Libney knows, has been my friend for over 30 years. We drive each other crazy, but he has truly been a personal friend for well over 30 years. He acknowledge this. I was with him when he acknowledged it in front of the president, and he said it subsequently, that this administration's support of the Israeli is unprecedented.

The president and I have now met with the prime minister more than any world leader. Just last month we held the U.S.-Israeli Consultative Group at the White House, a regular gathering of defense, diplomatic, and intelligence leaders of both countries. It features some of the most candid, strategic conversation we have with any nation, especially with regard to Iran. Again, I'm importune because I speak all over the country and I'm going to say something outrageous, that I have long, long ties with the American-Jewish community. And I get asked questions that perplex me about, "Does the president really mean it?" I get asked questions, "Do you mean what you say about Iran?" Look, I get asked questions, "Does Israeli know what you're doing?" Ask any of your Israeli friends here. They have been in every jot and tittle of everything we've thought about as it relates to engaging Iran from the very beginning.

Look, we're close friends. The American people and the Israeli people, our governments.

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There's absolutely no daylight, none, between us and Israelis on the question of Israeli's security. But as friends, we have an obligation to speak honestly with one another, to talk about, not avoid the tactical disagreements we have. And we have tactical disagreements to lay out for one another each of our perspectives. I know none of you have ever -- I assume none of you ever doubted I've meant whatever I've said to you. The problem is I sometimes say all that I think to you.

We have been in constant, unrelenting contact with our friends in Israeli and continue to do so, just as Israeli has been absolutely candid with us when they have tactical differences. That's what friends do because we have no difference in our strategic perspective. And by the way, folks, I (inaudible) to all of you who know Israeli as well as I do, and you all do, that you can hear the same discussions in the Israeli Parliament. The same differences. You can hear the same discussions in synagogues in Israel. You can hear the same

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discussions in cafes in Israel. The same differences our governments discuss, mostly privately.

So what I urge, and you are the most influential group that could be assembled in one room in this country, on the U.S.-Israeli relationship. Let's not make more of what are normal disagreements that occur between friends than warrants. Israel disagrees with us on a number of tactics. They have a different perspective on how to proceed. But folks, that's the downside of democracy. It also has an upside. We never have to wonder where the other guy is standing. Occasionally, politics on both sides of this divide, these tactical divides, is used to try to gain an advantage. But you're all sophisticated enough to know that. So I urge you, let's talk about what the facts are; what the perspective is of each of us.

With regard to Iran, from the very beginning, we've consulted with the Israeli government militarily, intelligence. I've spent hours, myself personally, and I'm not doing the negotiation. Jake

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Sullivan, my guy, was the guy who was doing a lot of this, and Bill Burns. But every aspect of this policy has been discussed in detail.

You all are very familiar with and occasionally use the word hutzpah. I hope I made you aware of an Irish phrase "malarkey." Malarkey. There's been a lot of malarkey around our position on Iran. So let me state it absolutely clearly. We will not let Iran acquire a nuclear weapon, period. Period. End of discussion. It will not happen on our watch.

A diplomatic solution that puts significant and verifiable constraints on Iran's nuclear program represents the best and most sustainable chance to ensure that America and Israel, the entire Middle East, will never be menaced by a nuclear-armed Iran. And we remain committed to seek an agreement that meaningfully and verifiably blocks Iran from the pathways that it has available to it to create fissile material for a bomb. A nuclear breakout in its uranium enrichment facilities. The plutonium path

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that using Iran's Iraq reactor. Or a covert nuclear program. That's why, through hard-nosed diplomacy, we've rallied the world to put in place the toughest multilateral sanctions in history against the Iranian government. That's what brought Iran to the negotiation table in the first place. Up to that time, Iran was making steady progress in every administration. In every administration they've been making steady progress.

I don't know how many conversations I had with the prime minister and others about how we could never put together a regime of sanctions that could hold. My guy turned out to be right. We could, and he did. As a consequence of our negotiations, Iran has frozen significant elements of its program in exchange for very moderate sanctions' relief through this so-called Joint Plan of Action reached over one year ago. It extended for an additional seven months just two weeks ago. The agreement has brought significant benefits. It doesn't solve the whole problem, but before the agreement, Iran was

accumulating a growing stockpile of low-enriched uranium. Now that stockpile is no longer growing.

Remember the prime minister standing up with that famous drawing of the United Nations with the line, standing as he spoke, of Iran's path to the bomb. Before the Joint Plan of Action, Iran was inching up toward that red line, accumulating 20 percent enriched uranium, far closer to bomb grade. Now, Iran has moved in the opposite direction, neutralizing its entire stockpile of 20 percent of enriched uranium, and under the new extension, it has committed additional steps to turn this material into reactor fuel, taking it off the table, away from a breakout scenario. Before, Iran was installing new and more sophisticated centrifuges. They have a lot of them on the sideline, but now, under the Joint Plan of Action, they've not installed or operated any additional centrifuges, including the next generation models. And the terms of the new extension placed tighter curbs on its ability to pursue any advanced centrifuge program.

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Before Iran was moving toward a heavy water plutonium reactor at Iraq. Now, that effort, too, is frozen. Inspections before were limited. Now, Iran has allowed daily access to Natanz and Fordow and inspections of the new sites, such as the centrifuge production facilities, access that has been expanded even further in the new extension. This doesn't solve the problem, but this matters. The more frequent and intrusive monitoring we have, the sooner we'll be able to know if Iran tries to break out or sneak out, and the longer we have to do what is necessary to prevent it occurring.

The Joint Plan of Action is not a perfect or permanent solution, but it provides us time to negotiate, to see if it's possible to reach a comprehensive agreement that can peacefully ensure that Iran will not develop a nuclear weapon. And all this was accomplished with very modest sanctions relief. And if Iran takes the concrete verifiable steps necessary to achieve a comprehensive deal, it will begin to receive true relief from nuclear-related

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sanctions and be able to offer a better future to its people.

In the meantime, make no mistake about it, the Iran economy remains under tremendous pressure. The overwhelming majority of the sanctions remain in place. It is true that Iran will be able to repatriate \$4.9 billion in revenues as a consequence of the extension, but that's very modest relief overall, a small fraction of 100 billion in Iranian funds remain blocked around the world, the 60 to 70 billion that Iran needs each year to fund its imports; the 35 billion it needs to close its budget deficit. Sanctions have already done significant damage to its economy and continue to do so. The Iranian rial has depreciated about 50 percent since June of '12. Since 2011, sanctions have caused Iran to lose over \$200 billion in oil revenue, including 35 billion just since signing the Joint Plan of Action. Iran's annual inflation rate is about 21 percent. Iran's economy is 20 to 25 percent smaller today than it would have been had it remained on this pre-2011 projectory.

The bottom falling out of world prices has further complicated Iran's economic outlook. And crucially, for the first time, we have a diplomatic context in which the Iranians are continuing to make progress -- they can no longer make progress on their nuclear program while they talk. None of these constraints would be in place without the Joint Action Plan.

And as we pursue a comprehensive agreement, one thing I can guarantee you is what the president told you a year ago, right at this forum, he said, "We will not accept a bad deal." Our decision to extend a joint action plan to prove that we'll continue to press the Iranians to get a good deal that satisfies our bottom-line. The result of our determination has been that the Iranians have begun to show flexibility on some important issues. This progress was not enough to lead to an agreement but it was enough to justify an extension to see whether or not, now that Iran understands the firmness of our core requirements, whether or not we can reach an agreement

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that keeps America, our allies, Israel, and the world safe.

So we have agreed to extend these talks for seven additional months, with a goal of completing a broad agreement on the core elements within four months, and technical annexes over the next three months after that. We believe that we have enough leverage to reach a comprehensive agreement. There's no guarantee of success though to state the obvious, but there are steps we can take. And steps we can hold off that increase the odds or diminish the odds that we could succeed. I know there are some in this room and some on the Hill that believe that this is the moment for additional sanctions.

Remember back several years ago when the understandable pessimism was could we hold the P5+1 together? Could we hold Russia? Could we hold China? One of the elements, as Martin Indyk can tell you, and others that are at stake here is the need to hold the P5+1 together tightly. And actions we take can impact on that probability. There may well come the time

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when increased pressure is needed and welcomed. I've never with over 168 members of the House and Senate. I made it clear there may very well be a time when we are not only welcoming, we're asking for additional sanctions.

Should Iran violate the terms of our agreement, Congress and the administration could immediately impose new sanctions, and the president has made it clear that he will be part of that. But now is not the right time to do that. We could end up with the worst of all worlds -- breaking up the coalition, no peaceful resolution of Iran's nuclear programs, and less leverage to achieve one. And with all this happening in the region, this is not the time to risk a breakdown when we still have a chance for a breakthrough. This is the moment to give our negotiations a little bit more time and space to see if they can reach an agreement that benefits everyone. Our strategy has been underestimated from the beginning. They told you. You remember. Many people said we couldn't even put together the coalition to

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keep the most successful sanctions in modern history. Some people, including some of you in this room, good people, democrats and republicans, said the Joint Action Plan was a mistake. Look where we find ourselves. It is frozen its program. It has given us a shot for a peaceful solution.

I'll tell you, I think it's a less than even shot, but it's a shot. Some said Iran would never abide by the terms of the Joint Plan of Action, but according to each and every monthly report by the IEA, Iran has held up its end of the bargain and honored the agreement. Some said that the modest sanctions relief would provide the ability to see a collapse in the sanction regime. Predicted that companies would flood back into Iran. And we know -- we all know -- we can name the companies in different countries who could hardly wait to flow back in to Iran. But they haven't. They haven't.

So we have made progress. Real progress in that the program is basically frozen. And we've sharpened some fundamental choices for the Iranians.

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Either seize a historic opportunity to prove that its nuclear program is peaceful and fully rejoin the world economy and the community of nations, or face unrelenting pressure. This is not the time, nor do we have the time now, but all of you in this room know there's a lot of change taking place inside Iran as well. Some good, some bad. But the idea there's one single monolith in Iran that is able to be sustained, I think that is a foolish view of modern history. It could be worse, but it also could be better.

A good deal exists that would benefit America, Iran, Israel, and the world if Iran is willing to take the deal. I'm making no predictions that they will, but I guarantee you, unless they do, there will be no agreement. And as we move forward, just as we have done so far, we will continue to consult on every jot and tittle, every detail, with our Israeli friends, every step of the way.

You all know, as well as I do, Israel's future as a democratic homeland for the Jewish people depends on far more than prevailing in keeping Iran

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from becoming a nuclear arms nation. It depends on reaching a two-state solution. Two states or two people.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is a difficult job to stay engaged for Israelis and us in trying to figure out how to arrive at such a solution. But we continue to believe that -- at least I do and the president does -- that the vast majority of the Israelis and Palestinians, they think that it is the right way to go. But it's frightening. It's frightening and the chances that would have to be taken are very, very difficult for leaders to step up and take. And I understand that. The fact is that I think we have no choice but to continue to try. Ultimately, every one of these decisions will be left and should be left to the government of Israeli, but the end result of a two-state solution with each enjoying self-determination, security, and mutual recognition, is, I think -- not only is the right thing vis-à-vis the Palestinians-Israelis, but has the potential to unlock a whole new potential. Given the

demographic realities that remain, the best and only option to ensure the survival of a democratic state and Jewish homeland in Israel, is such a negotiation.

Like you, I understand the obstacles, and we have no illusions about Hamas. It says a great deal that this terrorist group chooses to pour its resources into the ground for sophisticated tunnels to infiltrate Israel instead of building hospitals and schools and meeting the needs of the people of Gaza. But I also remain convinced, as I said, that the vast majority of Israelis and vast majority of Palestinians believe as the president said in Jerusalem last year, that peace is possible, peace is necessary, and peace is just. And just think of the opportunities it could provide.

As you look across the region for the first time in modern history, a surprising thing is happening. Israel and some of its Arab neighbors -- Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and others -- find themselves on the same side of two very important struggles, the first against violent

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extremism, including ISIL, or as our Arab friends say DASH, and a regional struggle against Iran and its proxies. Perhaps the first time in history Israel is interested in general convergence with those basic interests as well as the Arabs. That creates a chance -- nothing more, just a chance -- for closer relations between Israel and the Arab world. In some ways, this is already unfolding in quiet dialogue between security officials from countries whose diplomats wouldn't greet each other at airports in the recent past, and still won't. But the only way to fully realize this opportunity, one that would give Israel more opportunities in the region than it now has, is for Israel and the Palestinians to make progress towards peace. And it's the quickest way to destroy and the quickest way to destroy any prospects of a true strategic realignment in the region, which would take time but can begin, is to deny a political horizon towards a two-state solution. Or worse, to allow a cycle of provocation and violence to be unleashed and unleash the instability on the ground.

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And it's because of America's commitment to Israel's security, not in spite of it, that we are frank with our allies when we have concerns.

We appreciate the critical statesmanship of Prime Minister Netanyahu and King Abdullah of Jordan and President Abbas in working out to reform the historic status quo and to make sure that tensions over the Temple Mount and Haram al-Sharif don't boil into a conflict and conflagration in Jerusalem that engulfs the entire country.

But all sides have work to do to lessen the tensions and prevent further provocations, and I think they understand that, in my conversations at least. We're frank about this with the Palestinians. We have to have tough and honest conversations with them about what they need to do, and they need to do so much more to combat the insistence, the instances of incitement, including on social media. And we're frank with our Israeli friends about the actions we consider counterproductive -- expanding settlement activity and construction, including the (inaudible) east Jerusalem

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and the West Bank. The demolition of homes of relatives of attackers, that can't be a justification for the abhorrent killing of innocent victims, but there is no justification. But punishment of families, collective punishment, risks stroking tensions even further.

We've also spoken about our shared concern about preventing vigilante attacks against Israeli Arabs and Palestinians and investigating those that occur and swiftly bringing to justice the perpetrators of those crimes. And that's what the government is doing now. And has been, quite frankly. It's simply too easy for provocations on either side to ignite violence that no one can control, which ultimately hurts everyone. And all of these instances, all around the world, the lowest common denominator has the ability to bring everything down, and it's hard as hell to overcome that lowest common denominator.

We know from long experience that none of these issues are easy or simple. WE believe there is a better path. And if Israel and the Palestinians can

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find their way to peace, the possibilities are limitless.

There is no more threat that worries me though than the rising tide of anti-Semitism around the world. With the encouragement of some of you in this audience, including Joe, I remember holding hearings in the mid-80s about anti-Semitism in Europe and being criticized, "Why was I holding those hearings?" But you were right, Joe.

When we were expanding NATO, I remember you calling me after I was in Poland, and I was asked before 3,000 people at the University of Warsaw, "Is there anything that could stop Poland's admission?" I said, "Yes, anti-Semitism," because of what was going on at the death camp.

So, but, you know, anti-Semitism goes hand-in-hand. It's bad in any circumstance, but now it goes hand-in-hand with what I would call an overall effort to delegitimize Israel. To delegitimize Israel in almost every quarter. You see it all over the world. This summer during the conflict in Gaza, we

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saw too many people in too many places cross the line from legitimate criticism into demonization and outright anti-Semitism. You saw it in demonstrations that devolved in the mobs that torched the synagogues. You see it in menacing messages on the social media. You see it in the attacks on religious Jews on streets of major European cities. It is a fundamental threat. Not simply to Jews primarily; not simply to Jews but to the legitimization of the state of Israel and to democracy itself. There can be no tolerance. There can be no tolerance for anti-Semitism. And I'm proud that America works to expose and combat such bigotry wherever it finds it around the world.

As the president said in Jerusalem, make no mistake; those who adhere to an ideology rejecting Israel's right to exist, they might as well reject the earth beneath them or the sky above, because Israel is not going anywhere. Anywhere. The preservation of a secure, democratic Israel is the only certain guarantor of freedom and security for Jews worldwide.

Joe and others have heard me tell this story

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but I remember how it struck me. As a young senator, I've had the great privilege of meeting and getting to know every prime minister in Israel since Golda Meir. I was permitted to -- well, I was in Israel just before the Yom Kippur War, days before. And I was meeting with Prime Minister Golda Meir, which because of my job I've gotten to meet almost every world leader in the last 40 years. I mean, not figuratively; literally. And she was impressive. I just was so excited to meet her. And I sat in front of her desk and she had that bank of maps behind her she kept pulling up and down. She had those charts. And I was sitting next to a guy who was her aid on my right in a seat in front of her, a guy named Rabeed. And she kept me there for the better part of -- and I could have stayed another two hours -- about an hour and a half, and she went into vivid detail with me about the Six Day War and reading me letters from Israeli soldiers who had died to their families, et cetera. And chain-smoking and flipping to another map and showing me where -- this went on for well over an

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hour and I was engrossed but I was getting more and more morose as every minute went on. And I know you remember this story, Joe, but it's absolutely true. And finally she just looked at me as if we'd been talking about a recent football match or something and she said, "Would you like a photo opportunity?" And I looked at her and I said, "Yes, Madam Prime Minister." And those double doors would open on that little square of the office there, walked outside and there were a battery of reporters, mostly cameramen. They weren't asking questions; they were just taking pictures. And I was standing to her right, and we were both looking straight ahead. Well, looking straight ahead without turning her head to talk to me she said -- she said, "Senator, you look so worried." And I turned to her when I was supposed to keep looking straight -- I turned to her and I said, "Well, I am, Madam Prime Minister, about what you just laid out." She said, "Oh." Without looking at me, just looking straight ahead, she said, "Don't worry. We Jews have a secret weapon in our struggle with the

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Arabs." And I thought she was about to tell me something profound. It turned out it was profound, but I thought she was going to tell me about some weapon or some plan or whatever. And I turned and looked at her and she still didn't turn and looking at me. Looking straight ahead she said, "Our secret weapon is we have no place else to go."

As long as we keep that in mind as Americans, no matter how frustrated we may get in personal dealings occasionally. And as I said to -- I just spoke to 4,000 members of the North American Jewish Federation with the Israeli prime minister in the front row, and I said, "Send a message to Bibi, 'I love him. I love him.'" And I signed a picture years ago to him. I said, "Bibi, I don't agree with a damn thing you had to say, but I love you." I agree with a lot he has to say, but if friends can't acknowledge -- if friends can't acknowledge the very things that are acknowledged in each of our countries, vis-à-vis one another, then it's not much of a friendship.

So my message to you all is, please, let's

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keep whatever disagreements we have in perspective because they don't go to the heart of soul, they don't go to the essence of who we are as Americans and who Israelis are. There is no daylight. None. None. None. Between Israel's security and the United States.

God bless you all, and may God protect Israel and our troops. Thank you.

(Applause)

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CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

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)Signature and Seal on File)

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