

AIPAC

THE REPUBLICAN PARTY AND ISRAEL



AIPAC's testimony to the
Republican Platform Committee

**Statement
of
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to the
Republican Platform Committee
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I thank the Chair for the opportunity to appear before this distinguished Republican Platform Committee on behalf of AIPAC—the American Israel Public Affairs Committee—and the American pro-Israel community. On AIPAC's Executive Committee sit the presidents of 38 major Jewish organizations representing four and a half million active members.

AIPAC is the Washington voice of America—Jewish and non-Jewish—who seek to maintain close and consistently strong relations between our country and Israel. We are guided by a simple thesis: that Israel is morally and militarily important to America, and America is vitally important to Israel. Our concern is for what is in the best interests of the United States. In other words, the base of our support for Israel is neither special advantage nor interest. We see the U.S.-Israel relationship from an American perspective—strengthening Israel strengthens America. And the vast majority of Americans and their leaders understand the strategic value of Israel to Western security—and the democratic value of Israel to the whole of Western civilization.

Republicans have had a long and close association with Israel. In growing up in Cincinnati I remember my own Senator, Robert A. Taft, consistently championing Israel's cause. His commitment was not an anomaly, but a representative expression of Republican values. This is proved in poll after poll over the past 35 years. For example, in all Gallup polls taken over the past decade, when asked "Are your sympathies more with Israel or more with the Arab nations," Republicans have resoundingly answered "Israel!" by an average margin of five to one. Democrats support Israel by an average of four to one.

Presidents Nixon and Reagan greatly advanced U.S.-Israel relations.

In 1970, Richard Nixon was the first President to authorize the sale to Israel of advanced fighter aircraft so essential to the defense of the Jewish nation. In the past year, Ronald Reagan has taken two different but unique and historic steps to strengthen and reaffirm the bonds between our country and Israel. He has initiated steps to enhance strategic cooperation between the two countries, strengthening the strategic links between America and its most reliable ally in the Middle East. And he has undertaken to create a U.S.-Israel Free Trade Area, strengthening the economic and trade links between the two countries. I heartily applaud these steps.

With this foundation, the Republican Party should set forth the reasons why there is a strong Republican-Israel bond, and spell out the main principles and policies of the Reagan Administration which protect and strengthen this bilateral friendship.

Republican support for Israel is a natural expression of the inherent values of this party. First, Israel is a democracy, a member of the small family of free nations in a world abounding in tyrannies and dictatorships. Israel shares with America the basic beliefs and values that protect freedom in our own land: the belief that government derives its just powers from the consent of the governed; that the uncontrolled growth of government power is a menace to the freedoms of the people; that the free market of ideas, and of economic initiative, is the wellspring of growth and advancement; and that the protection and expression of individual rights must be the first priority of a free nation. As a sister democracy, Israel is the only nation in the Middle East with meaningful elections, a free press, checks and balances to prevent and correct abuses of authority, and guarantees for the rights of the individual.

Second, Israel is America's faithful ally. It is the one nation in the Middle East that we can be sure will be there when we need her. According to our Ambassador to the U.N. and to Senator Robert Kasten's Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Israel's U.N. voting record in support of the United States exceeds by far that of any nation, including Canada and Great Britain. In the field of military and terrorist intelligence, Israel's noted intelligence corps shares on a ready and regular basis tangible and relevant intelligence data about the Soviet Union, its Middle Eastern surrogates, and about anti-American forces in the area. Israel's commitment to America, then, is not just an alliance of convenience, a fair weather friendship that might be thrown away for some other advantage that Israelis saw elsewhere tomorrow. No, Israel's commitment to America is not a sometime thing, but a permanent fact, because Israel shares with America a bedrock of common values. The

people of Israel know that their very survival depends on the strength of America, and that if the Soviet Union were to become the dominant power in the region and the world, it would be only a matter of time before they perished as a nation. And, from America's point of view, Israel is both a reliable ally and an effective one. It is not a weak dependency or a client state we must send troops to defend, but a strongly determined partner who is in the trenches along with and alongside us, a powerful friend we can count on.

The Republican platform should express these values. These values are and must remain the roots of an American policy toward the Middle East. But beyond these basic values, the platform should contain more specific planks to show how these values would be expressed in tangible policies during the next four years if the candidate of the party is elected. Specifically, it seems to me that there are eight planks that should stand on the foundation of the party's commitment to our most reliable ally and the one democracy in the Middle East.

First, the platform should contain a commitment to preserve Israel's qualitative margin of military superiority, sufficient to guarantee her defense against any combination of her quantitatively superior adversaries. This means providing to Israel arms that are essential to her survival, and it means denying to states still at war with Israel arms that they could use for aggression against her. Just this weekend, for instance, it was reported that Saudi Arabia has requested 3,000 more AIM-9-L and AIM-9-P Sidewinder air-to-air missiles from the United States. If this sale takes place, it would provide Saudi Arabia a ratio of nearly 17 Sidewinder missiles per aircraft, an inventory greater than that of the U.S. Air Force's 4 per plane. Israel has about 1.5 Sidewinders for each of its fighter aircraft.

Second, the platform should endorse the principle of aid to Israel, to meet the economic requirements of her defense. Because the Arabs are able to accelerate the arms race by investing the profits of inflated oil prices and because the Soviet Union heavily backs its chief allies such as Syria and Libya, U.S. assistance is essential to Israel's security, and this should be affirmed in the platform of the Republican party.

Third, the platform should reaffirm the party's commitment to the Camp David accords. We can have no confidence in the future of the peace process, if the only peace treaty ever signed between Israel and an Arab neighbor continues to erode. Egypt must warm the cold peace, and the other Arab nations must agree to sit down to negotiate. And to make this commitment a reality, it must be clear to Arab nations that they cannot expect American arms and American aid as long as they

continue to reject negotiations with Israel.

Fourth, the platform should reaffirm that America will not recognize or deal with the PLO so long as that organization promotes terrorism, rejects Israel's right to exist, refuses to accept U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338, and spreads hatred against America. Last Tuesday, Arafat addressed an African-Arab solidarity conference in Tunis and said, "True Arab solidarity with the peoples of Africa has to be translated into rigorous positions against the United States for it to be effective." Arafat and the PLO are not just anti-Israel, they are anti-American. There is no room for an appearance of weakness on this point; the platform should be firm and crystal clear concerning the PLO.

Fifth, the platform should express the party's—and the President's—commitment to the U.S.-Israel Free Trade Area. It provides for the elimination of Israeli tariffs on American exports as well as American tariffs on Israeli goods, and it will offer substantial economic gains and increase employment in both countries. It is truly a case of mutual beneficiality—good trade policy and good foreign policy for both countries.

Sixth, the Republican platform should acknowledge the leadership of President Reagan and Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick at the United Nations. The U.S. is once again assertive at this unfriendly international forum. Mrs. Kirkpatrick has been courageous and outspoken in her defense of America and the West. Take on America and you are taken on in return. She has strongly supported the Israeli positions in the General Assembly, the Security Council, UNESCO, and related U.N. agencies. Mr. Reagan is the first President to state that if Israel is voted out of the U.N., then the U.S. would leave that body as well.

Seventh, the platform should recognize and respect the established status of a unified Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. It should reaffirm President Reagan's preference for keeping Jerusalem "undivided under Israeli rule." Israel is the only country in the world in which we have declined to establish our embassy in the administrative city. This policy should be changed; the U.S. Embassy should be relocated to Israel's capital, Jerusalem.

Finally, the platform should endorse the steps that the President has taken to enhance strategic cooperation with Israel, and call for continued progress in enhancing the alliance between the two countries.

As the U.S.-Israel relationship has become closer and stronger these past several years, the above eight points are building blocks for the future. They are worthy of inclusion in the 1984 Republican Party Platform, and I respectfully urge their adoption.

Thank you.