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AMERICAN-ISRAEL PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
LUNCHEON, ROOM B-339, R.H.O.B.,  
12.15 P.M. MAY 11, 1970.

LAST YEAR I HAD THE HONOR OF  
STANDING BEFORE A SIMILAR LUNCHEON OF THIS  
COMMITTEE HERE AT THE U.S. CAPITOL. WE  
THEN COMMEMORATED THE 21ST ANNIVERSARY OF  
ISRAEL'S INDEPENDENCE. A YEAR HAS PASSED.

MANY CHANGES HAVE TRANSPIRED.  
WE ARE LIVING IN A TIME OF ANXIETY, TENSION,  
AND TRANSITION. BUT THERE ARE SOME FACTORS  
THAT REMAIN CONSTANT. THE MAIN FACTOR THAT  
I WOULD LIKE TO REAFFIRM TODAY IS THE  
CONTINUING SINCERITY OF AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP  
FOR THE STATE OF ISRAEL. LAST YEAR I TOLD  
THIS GROUP THAT "I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT THE  
FATE OF ISRAEL IS LINKED TO THE NATIONAL  
SECURITY INTERESTS OF THE UNITED STATES."  
TODAY I REITERATE THAT CONVICTION.

LAST YEAR I SAID THAT I COULD NOT CONCEIVE OF A SITUATION "IN WHICH THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION WILL SELL ISRAEL DOWN THE NILE." THAT WILL NOT HAPPEN -- NOW OR IN THE FUTURE.

WE ARE WELL AWARE OF THE DEDICATION OF THE ADMINISTRATION TO WITHDRAWAL FROM INDO-CHINA UNDER CONDITIONS OF PEACE WITH HONOR. WE HAVE ALSO CAREFULLY NOTED THAT OUR RECENT PRE-OCCUPATION WITH THE "PRIVILEGED SANCTUARIES" IN CAMBODIA IS BEING EXPLOITED BY THE SOVIET UNION. MOSCOW IS CYNICALLY ESCALATING TENSIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST. THE RUSSIANS HAVE COMMITTED THE SOVIET AIR FORCE TO AN ACTIVE ROLE IN EGYPT ALONG WITH MISSILE TROOPS, SAM-3 MISSILES, AND OTHER ELEMENTS OF MILITARY POWER. THE RUSSIANS APPEAR DETERMINED TO SCREEN THE NASSER REGIME WITH A PROTECTIVE UMBRELLA, CREATING A PRIVILEGED SANCTUARY

FROM WHICH EGYPT MIGHT SALLY FORTH WITH CONTINUED VIOLATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS CEASE-FIRE.

I NOTED THAT ISRAELI DEFENSE MINISTER MOSHE DAYAN A FEW DAYS AGO ANNOUNCED THAT ISRAEL HAS HALTED DEEP PENETRATION RAIDS INTO EGYPT TO AVOID POSSIBLE CLASHES WITH SOVIET AIR AND ANTI-AIRCRAFT FORCES. HE ASSERTED READINESS TO RE-ESTABLISH AN UNCONDITIONAL AND UNLIMITED CEASE-FIRE.

THE ONLY RESPONSE THE ARABS HAVE MADE IS AN INCREASE OF ARTILLERY BARRAGES AND GUERRILLA ATTACKS. SOVIET PREMIER KOSYGIN HAS NOW CONFIRMED SOVIET MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN EGYPT. THE COMMITMENT OF RUSSIAN MILITARY FORCES IS A NEGATION OF THE SOVIET PRETENSIONS TO PURSUIT OF PEACE IN THE REGION. THE COMMITMENT OF WEAPONS AND TROOPS IS NO WAY TO REDUCE TENSIONS.

OUR GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED ON MARCH 23 THAT ADDITIONAL JET SALES TO ISRAEL WOULD BE TEMPORARILY WITHHELD. IT WAS INDICATED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE THAT THIS POLICY OF RESTRAINT WAS REALLY A SIGNAL TO MOSCOW THAT THE UNITED STATES WANTED TO COOL DOWN THE ARMS RACE. WE WERE TAKING THE FIRST STEP SO THAT THE RUSSIANS WOULD KNOW OUR PEACEFUL INTENTIONS AND SIMILARLY EXERCISE RESTRAINT. INSTEAD, THE RUSSIANS IGNORED OUR EXAMPLE. AN ENTIRELY NEW AND DANGEROUS ROLE WAS UNDERTAKEN BY RUSSIAN MILITARY FORCES IN EGYPT.

THE SOVIET AIM IS EXPLOITATION OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT IN A BID FOR COMMUNIST PENETRATION AND PREDOMINANCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. MOSCOW HAS ARROGANTLY AND FLAGRANTLY EMBARKED ON A DRIVE TO DOMINATE THE MEDITERRANEAN, UNDERMINE THE

SOUTHERN FLANK OF NATO, AND EXPAND RUSSIAN INFLUENCE ACROSS AFRICA FROM THE INDIAN OCEAN TO THE SOUTH ATLANTIC. MOSCOW'S MOVES COINCIDE WITH AMERICAN PREOCCUPATION IN INDO-CHINA. WE ARE TRYING TO END ONE WAR. THEY ARE CYNICALLY ESCALATING ANOTHER WAR AND INTRODUCING NEW ELEMENTS, BRINGING DANGEROUS RISKS OF EXPANSION OF AN ALREADY TRAGIC CONFLICT.

LET ME STATE MY OWN OPINION. WE CANNOT PERMIT A SITUATION IN WHICH RUSSIA WOULD COVER BY ITS OWN MILITARY FORCES THE UNRELENTING WAR OF ATTRITION BY ARAB MILITARY AND GUERRILLA FORCES, THE WAR OF LIQUIDATION AGAINST ISRAEL. THE RUSSIAN MILITARY POWER PLAY IS A MATTER OF GRAVE CONCERN. WE ARE TAKING STEPS AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT TO DEAL WITH IT. IT IS VITAL THAT MOSCOW AVOID A FATAL MISCALCULATION.

I USE THE WORDS "GRAVE CONCERN" WITH CAREFUL DELIBERATION. PRESIDENT NIXON STATED ON FEBRUARY 18 THAT "THE UNITED STATES WOULD VIEW ANY EFFORT BY THE SOVIET UNION TO SEEK PREDOMINANCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AS A MATTER OF GRAVE CONCERN." HE WARNED AGAINST THE EXPLOITATION OF LOCAL CONFLICT BY AN OUTSIDE POWER FOR ITS OWN ADVANTAGE. HE PLEDGED ARMS TO FRIENDLY STATES AS THE NEED ARISES.

IT IS NOW APPARENT ~~[TO ME]~~ THAT THE SOVIET ESCALATION HAS CHANGED THE BALANCE OF POWER. NEED NOW EXISTS FOR THE IMMEDIATE SALE OF ADDITIONAL PHANTOM JETS AND OTHER ARMS TO ISRAEL. THIS IS ONE ACTION THAT WILL NOTIFY THE RUSSIANS THAT WE ARE NEITHER COPPING-OUT ON OUR FRIENDS NOR SURRENDERING THE REGION TO THE FORCES OF AGGRESSION.

[ISRAEL MUST NOT BECOME ANOTHER  
CZECHOSLOVAKIA . . . OR ANOTHER HUNGARY.]  
OUR PROMPT ACTION TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL JETS  
WOULD HELP RESTORE A DETERIORATING  
SITUATION, AVERT THE SPREADING OF THE WAR,  
AND SERVE NOTICE TO THE KREMLIN THAT WE  
WILL CONFRONT COMMUNIST AGGRESSION IN THE  
MIDDLE EAST AS WELL AS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

WE HAVE WITNESSED DANGEROUS  
BRINKMANSHIP BY THE SOVIET UNION IN EGYPT.  
I WOULD URGE THE RUSSIANS TO HEED WITH  
SPECIAL CARE A CERTAIN PORTION OF PRESIDENT  
NIXON'S REMARKS OF APRIL 30. [I WOULD ALSO  
URGE THE AMERICAN PEOPLE TO PAY HEED.] I  
REFER TO THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT THAT  
"SMALL NATIONS ALL OVER THE WORLD FIND  
THEMSELVES UNDER ATTACK FROM WITHIN AND  
FROM WITHOUT. IF WHEN THE CHIPS ARE DOWN  
THE WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL NATION -- THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA -- ACTS LIKE A



PITIFUL, HELPLESS GIANT, THE FORCES OF TOTALITARIANISM AND ANARCHY WILL THREATEN FREE NATIONS AND FREE INSTITUTIONS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD." THIS STRONG STATEMENT I WOULD INTERPRET AS HAVING WORLD-WIDE APPLICATION.

I PLACE GREAT EMPHASIS ON THE NEED FOR EARLY ACTION TO PROVIDE THE ADDITIONAL PHANTOM JETS REQUIRED BY ISRAEL. IT WOULD ALLOW ISRAEL TO MAINTAIN A STRONG DEFENSIVE CAPABILITY WITHOUT THE NEED FOR INVOLVEMENT OF AMERICAN PERSONNEL. I DO NOT THINK THE RUSSIANS WILL BE TOO READY TO TACKLE AN ARMED, AND DETERMINED, AND COURAGEOUS NATION -- ESPECIALLY IF THAT NATION IS THE STATE OF ISRAEL, A SYMBOL OF MAN'S HOPE FOR FREEDOM AND REDEMPTION.

IF WE WERE TO ALLOW THE SOVIET UNION, THROUGH BRUTAL APPLICATION OF ITS OWN MILITARY FORCE, TO CRUSH ISRAEL, THIS

WOULD MEAN THE END OF HOPE FOR ALL FREE NATIONS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN [AND EVEN WESTERN EUROPE.]

RUSSIA HAS INVOLVED ITSELF WITH NO INTENTION TO PRESERVE THE CEASE-FIRE. IT IS MORE THAN A THREAT TO ISRAEL. I HAVE NO PATIENCE WITH THOSE WHO SAY THAT WE MUST APPEASE RUSSIA BY ABANDONING ISRAEL. ISRAEL IS AN ASSET TO AMERICA, NOT A LIABILITY. THE RUSSIAN TARGET TODAY MAY BE THE AIRCRAFT OF ISRAEL. TOMORROW THE TARGET OF THE NEW SOVIET EGYPTIAN AIR BASES IS OBVIOUSLY THE UNITED STATES 6TH FLEET. MOSCOW IS CONVERTING EGYPT INTO AN UNSINKABLE AIRCRAFT CARRIER.

THERE IS A WHOLE NEW BALL GAME IN THE MIDDLE EAST. IT IS A VERY GRIM KIND OF GAME. HUMAN LIVES AND HUMAN FREEDOM ARE INVOLVED. THE BALANCE OF POWER HAS BEEN ALTERED IN A DRASTIC MANNER.

A WIDER WAR IS THREATENED. THE BEST WAY TO AVERT SUCH A CATASTROPHE IS TO IMMEDIATELY REDRESS THE BALANCE OF POWER.

WE MUST DRAMATIZE THE CREDIBILITY OF AMERICAN INTENTIONS. I BELIEVE THAT OUR NAVAL VESSELS SHOULD, FROM TIME TO TIME, PAY COURTESY CALLS AT THE PORTS OF FRIENDLY FOREIGN NATIONS. I WOULD BE DELIGHTED TO HEAR THAT A POWERFUL SHIP OF THE U.S. 6TH FLEET MADE SUCH A CALL ON AN ISRAELI SEAPORT. IT WOULD REASSURE OUR FRIENDS AND MIGHT PREVENT OUR ENEMIES FROM MISCALCULATING.

WE BELIEVE IN PEACE AND ARE DEDICATED TO PROMOTING PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. WE REMEMBER THE HORRORS OF WORLD WAR TWO AND -- WHEN WE THINK OF THE WARSAW GHETTO AND THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS -- WE RECALL THE PRICE PAID FOR APPEASEMENT AND VACILLATION.

I SAY TO YOU TODAY. ISRAEL MUST NOT BECOME ANOTHER WARSAW GHETTO.

PRESIDENT NIXON IS WELL AWARE OF THE NEED TO PRESERVE FREEDOM IN THE MIDDLE EAST. HE POINTED OUT THAT ISRAEL'S ENEMIES CAN AFFORD TO FIGHT A WAR AND LOSE. THEY CAN COME BACK TO FIGHT AGAIN. BUT ISRAEL CANNOT AFFORD TO LOSE EVEN ONCE. PRESIDENT NIXON SAID, "AMERICA KNOWS THAT, AND AMERICA IS DETERMINED THAT ISRAEL IS HERE IN THE FAMILY OF NATIONS TO STAY."

THE REAL INTERESTS OF ARABS AND ISRAELIS, OF RUSSIANS AND AMERICANS, REQUIRE PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE. THE UNITED STATES IS COMMITTED TO PEACEFUL AND HONORABLE DEALINGS WITH ALL MEN, AT HOME AND ABROAD. WE ARE DOING EVERYTHING WE CAN, AS MEN OF CONSCIENCE AND INTEGRITY, TO PROMOTE PEACE.

AND IN ISRAEL, THAT LAND WHERE

THE PROPHETS DREAMED THAT NATION SHOULD NOT LIFT UP SWORD AGAINST NATION, LET THERE BE PEACE.

FOR ISRAEL, A NATION OF PEOPLE WHOSE SUFFERING MERITS A LIFE MORE CREATIVE THAN PERPETUAL SERVICE IN AN ARMED CAMP, LET THERE BE PEACE. FOR THE ARABS, WHOSE POVERTY AND FRUSTRATION REQUIRE SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS AND A DECENT LIFE RATHER THAN THE ENDLESS PURCHASE OF JETS AND GUNS, LET THERE BE PEACE.

ISRAEL COULD BE A LIGHT UNTO THE NATIONS OF THAT REGION IF THE ARABS WOULD ACCEPT FELLOW HUMAN BEINGS OF THE JEWISH FAITH AS ENTITLED TO NATIONHOOD AS ANY OTHER PEOPLE. THE GENIUS AND PRODUCTIVITY OF THE ISRAELIS COULD HELP OTHERS MAKE THEIR DESERTS BLOSSOM.

INSTEAD OF THE CRADLE OF CIVILIZATION BECOMING ITS GRAVE, LET THE

CRADLE OF CIVILIZATION GIVE RISE TO TWO PEOPLES, ARAB AND JEWISH, EACH IN THEIR OWN COUNTRIES, WITH COMMERCE AND TRAVEL FLOWING ACROSS PEACEFUL BORDERS, AND WITH A NEW SENSE OF MUTUAL RESPECT IN KEEPING WITH OUR DREAM OF THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN UNDER THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD.

I WANT TO ADD A SPECIAL AND VERY PERSONAL WORD TO THIS AUDIENCE. MANY OF YOU HAVE DEVOTED YOUR LIVES TO THE ISRAELI CAUSE. YOU HAVE SEEN IN ISRAEL A REDEMPTION OF FREEDOM AND HUMAN DIGNITY, THE REBIRTH OF A PEOPLE. BUT WE ARE NOW WITNESSING PAINFUL DAYS, TRAGIC DAYS, IN WHICH THE POWERS AND POLITICAL TRENDS AND PRESSURES OF THE WORLD APPEAR TO BE CONVERGING ON THE MIDDLE EAST.

ISRAEL WAS REBORN IN BLOOD AND FIRE. ISRAEL IS TODAY STRUGGLING IN AN ORDEAL OF BLOOD AND FIRE. BUT THIS TIME

IT IS DIFFERENT. THE STATE OF ISRAEL HAS PROVED ITS METTLE. ISRAEL IS A NATION AMONG THE NATIONS.

YOU CAN TAKE PRIDE, AS DEDICATED SUPPORTERS OF ISRAEL, IN THE NATION YOU HAVE HELPED BUILD. BUT THE WATCHMAN OF ISRAEL DOES NOT SLEEP.

TRYING DAYS LIE AHEAD. YET, IN YOUR HEART OF HEARTS, YOU CAN DRAW FAITH AND SUSTENANCE AND REASSURANCE FROM ONE FACT. THIS IS THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. THIS IS OUR COUNTRY AND WE, JEWS AND NON-JEWS, PEOPLES OF ALL PARTS OF THIS COUNTRY, THE SILENT AMERICANS AND THE ARTICULATE AMERICANS, WILL NOT LET ISRAEL DOWN.

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*M Office Copy*

REMARKS BY REP. GERALD R. FORD, R-MICH.  
REPUBLICAN LEADER, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
AT THE AMERICAN-ISRAEL PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE LUNCHEON  
IN ROOM B-339, RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING, WASHINGTON, D.C.  
12:15 P.M. MONDAY, MAY 11, 1970

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Last year I had the honor of standing before a similar luncheon of this committee here at the U.S. Capitol. We then commemorated the 21st anniversary of Israel's independence. A year has passed.

Many changes have transpired. We are living in a time of anxiety, tension, and transition. But there are some factors that remain constant. The main factor that I would like to reaffirm today is the continuing sincerity of American friendship for the State of Israel. Last year I told this group that "I firmly believe that the fate of Israel is linked with the national security interests of the United States." Today I reiterate that conviction.

Last year I said that I could not conceive of a situation "in which the U.S. Administration will sell Israel down the Nile. That will not happen--now or in the future.

We are well aware of the dedication of the Administration to withdrawal from Indo-China under conditions of peace with honor. We have also carefully noted that our recent pre-occupation with the "privileged sanctuaries" in Cambodia is being exploited by the Soviet Union. Moscow is cynically escalating tensions in the Middle East. The Russians have committed the Soviet Air Force to an active role in Egypt along with missile troops, SAM-3 missiles, and other elements of military power. The Russians appear determined to screen the Nasser regime with a protective umbrella, creating a privileged sanctuary from which Egypt might sally forth with continued violations of the United Nations cease-fire.

I noted that Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Dayan a few days ago announced that Israel has halted deep penetration raids into Egypt to avoid possible clashes with Soviet air and anti-aircraft forces. He asserted readiness to re-establish an unconditional and unlimited cease-fire.

The only response the Arabs have made is an increase in artillery barrages and guerrilla attacks. Soviet Premier Kosygin has now confirmed Soviet military involvement in Egypt. The commitment of Russian military forces is a negation of the Soviet pretensions to pursuit of peace in the region. The commitment of weapons and troops is no way to reduce tensions.

Our government announced on March 23 that additional jet sales to Israel would be temporarily withheld. It was indicated by the Department of State that

(More)



this policy of restraint was really a signal to Moscow that the United States wanted to cool down the arms race; we were taking the first step so that the Russians would know our peaceful intentions and similarly exercise restraint. Instead, the Russians ignored our example. An entirely new and dangerous role was undertaken by Russian military forces in Egypt.

The Soviet aim is exploitation of the Arab-Israeli conflict in a bid for Communist penetration and predominance in the Middle East. Moscow has arrogantly and flagrantly embarked on a drive to dominate the Mediterranean, undermine the southern flank of NATO, and expand Russian influence across Africa from the Indian Ocean to the South Atlantic. Moscow's moves coincide with American pre-occupation in Indo-China. We are trying to end one war. They are cynically escalating another war and introducing new elements, bringing dangerous risks of expansion of an already tragic conflict.

Let me state my own opinion. We cannot permit a situation in which the Russians would cover by its own military forces the unrelenting war of attrition by Arab military and guerrilla forces, the war of liquidation against Israel. The Russian military power play is a matter of grave concern. It is vital that Moscow avoid a fatal miscalculation.

I use the words "grave concern" with careful deliberation. President Nixon stated on February 18 that "~~the~~ United States would view any effort by the Soviet Union to seek predominance in the Middle East as a matter of grave concern." He warned against the exploitation of local conflict by an outside power for its own advantage. He pledged arms to friendly states as the need arises.

It is now apparent to me that the Soviet escalation has changed the balance of power. Need now exists for the immediate sale of additional Phantom jets and other arms to Israel. This is one action that will notify the Russians that we are neither copping out on our friends nor surrendering the region to the forces of aggression.

Israel must not become another Czechoslovakia...or another Hungary. Our prompt action to provide additional jets would help restore a deteriorating situation, avert the spreading of the war, and serve notice to the Kremlin that we will confront Communist aggression in ~~the~~ Middle East as well as in Southeast Asia.

We have witnessed dangerous brinkmanship by the Soviet Union in Egypt. I would urge the Russians to heed with special care a certain portion of Presi-

dent Nixon's remarks of April 30. I would also urge the American people to pay heed. I refer to the President's statement that "small nations all over the world find themselves under attack from within and without. If when the chips are down the world's most powerful nation--the United States of America--acts like a pitiful, helpless giant, the forces of totalitarianism and anarchy will threaten free nations and free institutions throughout the world." This strong statement I would interpret as having worldwide application.

I place great emphasis on the need for early action to provide the additional Phantom jets required by Israel. It would allow Israel to maintain a strong defensive capability without the need for involvement of American personnel. I do not think the Russians will be too ready to tackle an armed, and determined, and courageous nation--especially if that nation is the State of Israel, a symbol of man's hope and redemption.

If we were to allow the Soviet Union, through brutal application of its own military force, to crush Israel, this would mean the end of hope for all free nations of the Mediterranean and even Western Europe.

Russia has involved herself with no intention to preserve the cease-fire. This is more than a threat to Israel. I have no patience with those who say that we must appease Russia by abandoning Israel. Israel is an asset to America, not a liability. The Russian target today may be the aircraft of Israel. Tomorrow the target of the new Soviet Egyptian air bases is obviously the United States 6th Fleet. Moscow is converting Egypt into an unsinkable aircraft carrier.

There is a whole new ball game in the Middle East. It is a very grim kind of game. Human lives and human freedom are involved. The balance of power has been altered in a drastic manner. A wider war is threatened. The best way to avert such a catastrophe is to immediately redress the balance of power.

We must dramatize the credibility of American intentions. I believe that our naval vessels should, from time to time, pay courtesy calls at the ports of friendly foreign nations. I would be delighted to hear that a powerful ship of the U.S. 6th Fleet made such a call on an Israeli seaport. It would reassure our friends and might prevent our enemies from miscalculating.

We believe in peace and are dedicated to promoting peace in the Middle East and throughout the world. We remember the horrors of World War II and--when we think of the Warsaw Ghetto and the concentration camps--we recall the price paid for appeasement and vacillation. I say to you today: Israel must not become another Warsaw Ghetto!

(More)

President Nixon is well aware of the need to preserve freedom in the Middle East. He pointed out that Israel's enemies can afford to fight a war and lose. They can come back to fight again. But Israel cannot afford to lose even once. President Nixon said, "America knows that, and America is determined that Israel is here in the family of nations to stay."

The real interests of Arabs and Israelis, of Russians and Americans, require peaceful coexistence. The United States is committed to peaceful and honorable dealings with all men, at home and abroad. We are doing everything we can as men of conscience and integrity, to promote peace.

And in Israel, that land where the prophets dreamed that nation should not lift up sword against nation, let there be peace.

For Israel, a nation of people whose suffering merits a life more creative than perpetual service in an armed camp, let there be peace. For the Arabs, whose poverty and frustration require schools and hospitals and a decent life rather than the endless purchase of jets and guns, let there be peace.

Israel could be a light unto the nations of that region if the Arabs would accept fellow human beings of the Jewish faith as entitled to nationhood as any other people. The genius and productivity of the Israelis could help others make their deserts blossom.

Instead of the cradle of civilization becoming its grave, let the cradle of civilization give rise to two peoples, Arab and Jewish, each in their own countries, with commerce and travel flowing across peaceful borders, and with a new sense of mutual respect in keeping with our dream of the brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God.

I want to add a special and very personal word to this audience. Many of you have devoted your lives to the Israeli cause. You have seen in Israel a redemption of freedom and human dignity, the rebirth of a people. But we are now witnessing painful days, tragic days, in which the powers and political trends and pressures of the world appear to be converging on the Middle East.

Israel was reborn in blood and fire. Israel is today struggling in an ordeal of blood and fire. But this time it is different. The State of Israel has proved its mettle. Israel is a nation among the nations.

You can take pride, as dedicated supporters of Israel, in the nation you have helped build. But the watchman of Israel does not sleep.

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Trying days lie ahead. Yet, in your heart of hearts, you can draw faith and sustenance and reassurance from one fact: this is the United States of America. This is our country and we, Jews and non-Jews, peoples of all parts of this country, the silent Americans and the articulate Americans, will not let Israel down.

# # #

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I use the words "grave concern" with careful deliberation. President Nixon stated on February 18 that "the United States would view any effort by the Soviet Union to seek predominance in the Middle East as a matter of grave concern." He warned against the exploitation of local conflict by an outside power for its own advantage. He pledged arms to friendly states as the need arises.

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There is a whole new ball game in the Middle East. It is a very grim kind of game. Human lives and human freedom are involved. The balance of power has been altered in a drastic manner. A wider war is threatened. The best way to avert such a catastrophe is to immediately redress the balance of power.

We must dramatize the credibility of American intentions. I believe that our naval vessels should, from time to time, pay courtesy calls at the ports of friendly foreign nations. I would be delighted to hear that a powerful ship of the U.S. 6th Fleet made such a call on an Israeli seaport. It would reassure our friends and might prevent our enemies from miscalculating.

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And in Israel, that land where the prophets dreamed that nation should not lift up sword against nation, let there be peace.

For Israel, a nation of people whose suffering merits a life more creative than perpetual service in an armed camp, let there be peace. For the Arabs, whose poverty and frustration require schools and hospitals and a decent life rather than the endless purchase of jets and guns, let there be peace.

Israel could be a light unto the nations of that region if the Arabs would accept fellow human beings of the Jewish faith as entitled to nationhood as any other people. The genius and productivity of the Israelis could help others make their deserts blossom.

Instead of the cradle of civilization becoming its grave, let the cradle of civilization give rise to two peoples, Arab and Jewish, each in their own countries, with commerce and travel flowing across peaceful borders, and with a new sense of mutual respect in keeping with our dream of the brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God.

I want to add a special and very personal word to this audience. Many of you have devoted your lives to the Israeli cause. You have seen in Israel a redemption of freedom and human dignity, the rebirth of a people. But we are now witnessing painful days, tragic days, in which the powers and political trends and pressures of the world appear to be converging on the Middle East.

Israel was reborn in blood and fire. Israel is today struggling in an ordeal of blood and fire. But this time it is different. The State of Israel has proved its mettle. Israel is a nation among the nations.

You can take pride, as dedicated supporters of Israel, in the nation you have helped build. But the watchman of Israel does not sleep.

(more)



Trying days lie ahead. Yet, in your heart of hearts, you can draw faith and sustenance and reassurance from one fact: this is the United States of America. This is our country and we, Jews and non-Jews, peoples of all parts of this country, the silent Americans and the articulate Americans, will not let Israel down.

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