



**Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on the State of U.S.-Israel Relations at the
American Israel Public Affairs Committee Annual Policy Conference
March 22, 2010, Washington, DC**

On Monday, March 22, 2010, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton addressed the American Israel Public Affairs Committee's annual Policy Conference and spoke about the current state of the U.S.-Israel special relationship. Clinton's remarks highlight the commitment of President Barack Obama and his Administration to Israel's security, the Obama Administration's vow to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran, and the United States' role in striving to achieve Israeli-Palestinian peace.

On the Administration's Commitment to Israel's Security

"Given the shared challenges we face, the relationship between the United States and Israel has never been more important. The United States has long recognized that a strong and secure Israel is vital to our own strategic interests. And we know that the forces that threaten Israel also threaten the United States of America. And therefore, we firmly believe that when we strengthen Israel's security, we strengthen America's security."

"... For President Obama and for me, and for this entire Administration, our commitment to Israel's security and Israel's future is rock solid, unwavering, enduring, and forever."

On the Administration's Commitment to Preventing a Nuclear Armed Iran

"We've made extensive efforts to reengage with Iran, both through direct communication and working with other partners multilaterally, to send an unmistakable message: Uphold your international obligations. And if you do, you will reap the benefits of normal relations. If you do not, you will face increased isolation and painful consequences."

"... Over the last year, Iran's leaders have been stripped of their usual excuses. The world has seen that it is Iran, not the United States, responsible for the impasse. With its secret nuclear facilities, increasing violations of its obligations under the nonproliferation regime, and an unjustified expansion of its enrichment activities, more and more nations are finally expressing deep concerns about Iran's intentions."

“Our aim is not incremental sanctions, but sanctions that will bite. It is taking time to produce these sanctions, and we believe that time is a worthwhile investment for winning the broadest possible support for our efforts. But we will not compromise our commitment to preventing Iran from acquiring these nuclear weapons.”

On Hamas and Palestinian Incitement

“Our message to Hamas is clear: Renounce violence, recognize Israel, and abide by previous signed agreements. That is the only path to participation in negotiations. They do not earn a place at any table absent those changes. And I will repeat today what I have said many times before: Gilad Shalit must be released immediately and returned to his family.”

“When a Hamas-controlled municipality glorifies violence and renames a square after a terrorist who murdered innocent Israelis, it insults the families on both sides who have lost loved ones over the years in this conflict. And when instigators deliberately mischaracterize the rededication of a synagogue in the Jewish quarter of Jerusalem's old city and call upon their brethren to ‘defend’ nearby Muslim holy sites from so-called ‘attacks,’ it is purely and simply an act of incitement. These provocations are wrong and must be condemned for needlessly inflaming tensions and imperiling prospects for a comprehensive peace.”

On the Current State of Peace Talks

“The conflict with the Palestinians and with Israel's Arab neighbors is an obstacle to prosperity and opportunity for Israelis, Palestinians, and people across the region. But it also threatens Israel's long-term future as a secure and democratic Jewish state. The status quo is unsustainable for all sides.... Both sides must confront the reality that the status quo of the last decade has not produced long-term security or served their interests. Nor has it served the interests of the United States.”

“The status quo strengthens the rejectionists who claim peace is impossible, and it weakens those who would accept coexistence. That does not serve Israel's interests or our own. Those willing to negotiate need to be able to show results for their efforts. And those who preach violence must be proven wrong. All of our regional challenges - confronting the threat posed by Iran, combating violent extremism, promoting democracy and economic opportunity - become harder if the rejectionists grow in power and influence.”

On Fostering a Two-State Solution to End the Conflict

“... A two-state solution would allow Israel's contributions to the world and to our greater humanity to get the recognition they deserve. It would also allow the Palestinians to have to govern to realize their own legitimate aspirations. And it would undermine the appeal of extremism across the region.”

“It is our devotion to this outcome - two states for two peoples, secure and at peace - that led us to condemn the announcement of plans for new construction in East Jerusalem. This was not about wounded pride. Nor is it a judgment on the final status of Jerusalem, which is an issue to be settled at the negotiating table. This is about getting to the table, creating and protecting an atmosphere of trust around it - and staying there until the job is finally done.”

“We objected to this announcement because we are committed to Israel and its security, which we believe depends on a comprehensive peace, because we are determined to keep moving forward along a path that ensures Israel's future as a secure and democratic Jewish state living in peace with its Palestinian and Arab neighbors, and because we do not want to see the progress that has been made in any way endangered.”

Source:

“Remarks to AIPAC.” Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. March 22, 2010.
http://www.aipac.org/PC2010/webPlayer/mon_clinton10.asp