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Achievements and Advances in the United States-Israel Relationship

Thomas A. Dine *

. . . We meet today at the end of a most remarkable year, a year full of surprises, unexpected twists of the plot, and challenges that we have never faced before. For the American pro-Israel community, I think it is fair to say that it has been a year Israel was tested by a series of events and stories that put Israel in a negative light with U.S.-Israel relations on a lower plane than when the year began. Voices declared that we had seen "the end of the honeymoon;" the beginning of a new era in which U.S.-Israel relations had supposedly "passed their peak" and would be headed downward.

But the most remarkable fact about the 13 months that have passed since we last assembled is that this "new conventional wisdom" has been proven flat wrong. In spite of the predictions of the prophets of doom, the past year has in fact been a period of striking achievements and advances in the U.S.-Israel relationship and

we are ending this period on a notably higher plane than we began.

What I would like to do this afternoon is to review the story of the past year in order to analyze it and extract very carefully its meaning, because I believe that it contains vital lessons about the nature of our work and how we ought to conduct ourselves in the future. My working assumption, as we go through this, is that our achievements in the face of adversity this past year were not an accident, but the fruits of very sound principles that we have observed in the past and ought to stand by in the future. . . .

With all the negatives, it is not surprising if perhaps our adversaries were rubbing their hands with glee, and our friends were beating their breasts with despair, believing that the mood was turning against Israel and there will be an end to the honeymoon period.

The problems are familiar—Pollard spy case, shipment of arms to South Africa, Israel's entanglement in the Iran-Contra affair, renewed speculation of Israel's nuclear policy, leadership confusion in Jeru-

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salem—all occurring against the backdrop of fiscal and trade crises and Gramm-Rudman-Hollings legislation here in the United States.

But what comes next is much less well-known.

Based on a sober appraisal of the facts, my report to you is this:

We may just have had the worst twelve months on record in terms of publicity, but we have one of the best years on record in terms of concrete legislation, in the strategic relationship between our country and Israel, and in the gains scored by our cause in the results of the 1986 elections. Permit me to dwell on our accomplishments in each of these areas—accomplishments to which we in this room have made a vital contribution—before turning to the underlying question of what explains this excellent performance in what should have been a dismal period of time.

I want to start in the newer area of policy performance—U.S.-Israel strategic cooperation. Progress in this sphere despite the negative stories actually accelerated. Last October, Congress initiated and codified a whole new definition of bilateral strategic cooperation. Based on this initiative, in January, Secretaries Weinberger and Shultz sent the Legislative branch formal notification that Israel for the first time has been designated a major non-NATO ally eligible for special programs. This was an historic step of both symbolic and concrete importance.

The two countries have also made considerable progress on an agreement to build a \$300 million Voice of America transmitter in Israel, one of the largest such U.S. facilities in the world. Most of the construction will be done by Israeli firms, and the transmitter will encourage cooperation between the two countries in new spheres.

Another breakthrough was scored just two weeks ago toward agreement under which the U.S. will co-finance Israel's

development of a defense against the short-range missile threat. This project, known as the anti-tactical ballistic missile, or ATBM, offers hope of protection from surface-to-surface missiles carrying chemical and other warheads, like those in Syria aimed at Israel's population centers. An agreement on the project is not yet in hand, but important progress between our two branches of government and between Washington and Jerusalem has been made. The ATBM will, if it goes through, be a critical breakthrough for three reasons: (1) It means that Israel will be the first country in the world able to protect its population from the threat of terror by ground-to-ground missiles; (2) It means that Israel and the U.S. will cooperate on the frontier of new technology; and (3) It may become the largest contract, in dollar terms, ever negotiated between the Department of Defense and Israel's Ministry of Defence.

Other Israeli sales of goods and services in the Department of Defense have risen dramatically. In 1983, these totaled only \$9 million. In 1986, these reached \$205 million. This year, further progress is being made in such areas as sales of remotely piloted vehicles (RPVs), servicing of U.S. equipment, and provision of specialized engineering equipment.

The past twelve months also saw considerable progress in stepped-up communication and contacts between officials of the Department of Defense and the U.S. armed services and their Israeli counterparts. Up to a few years ago, only a handful of American defense officials had direct contact with Israel. Last year, over 1,200 officials of the U.S. Department of Defense and the services visited Israel on official business—a staggering number. And this does not include the many thousands of U.S. Navy personnel who visited Israel when ships like the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier John F. Kennedy called on the port of Haifa two months ago.

Other areas of progress came through the meetings of the joint political-military group, its military-to-military subcommittees, and the joint security assistance teams. These have included new agreements and activities in the areas of planning for threats, joint exercise, and the use of Israeli sites for prepositioning of U.S. equipment and materiel and other purposes.

Our friends in both governments who care the most about the success of U.S.-Israel strategic cooperation are unanimous in reporting that the process is ahead of schedule, moving forward at impressive speed, and showing no serious damage from the controversies highlighted in the press. So I conclude that, in the strategic arena, we are not only holding steady, but in fact moving ahead quietly yet at an accelerated pace.

The same is true this past year with regard to that which is so familiar to each of you, our concrete legislative objectives. I can report to you today that despite the tensions, since we last met we have witnessed a year of extraordinary achievements by the United States Congress designed to further improve U.S.-Israel relations. If I were to list all of the accomplishments of the Congress in furthering the relationship, it would truly be a filibuster. I refer you to our just published 1986 Legislative Report which consumes over 60 fact-filled pages. It is not an understatement to say the achievements are spectacular.

Equally impressive progress is currently being made in the legislative arena. Foreign aid bills already have been voted out of the respective House and Senate authorizing committees containing \$3 billion in all grant aid for Israel on the most favorable terms available. Both authorization bills contain provisions for the funding of the Lavi and the early disbursement of the funds.

As you are aware, all of us here today worked hard to secure the passage and implementation of the U.S.-Israel Free Trade Area bill of 1984. This year, both Houses of Congress are working on the new comprehensive trade legislation containing tough measures against imports. With the leadership of Senators Lloyd Bentsen and Bob Packwood and Representatives Sam Gibbons and Bill Frenzel, both Houses have agreed to exempt those countries which have a signed Free Trade Area agreement with the United States from these new, more restrictive measures, when they are in conflict with the agreement.

In the area of strategic cooperation, we are working to build upon the successes of last year. Specifically, to support the ATBM project I discussed a moment ago, the defense authorization bills now before both Houses contain provisions which will enable Israel to bid upon contracts in this area, as well as service contracts to repair American defense equipment in Europe. These provisions alone could mean over \$100 million in business for Israeli firms. For the United States, they create an opportunity to take advantage of areas in which the Israelis have developed special high-tech capabilities, and to get a quality product for a lower price.

Congress has also been playing an important political and diplomatic role in dealing with the major controversies of the day. Last month, members of the Black Caucus and Jewish delegation dealt directly and forthrightly with the Israeli sale of arms to South Africa. Congressmen Mickey Leland and Howard Berman took the joint lead in praising Israel's decision not to seek any new arms sales contracts with South Africa and to phase out the old ones. Not one amendment was offered to punish Israel by cutting aid.

To illustrate another type of important Congressional support, Congress has taken

a lead in urging nations like Japan and India to end their compliance with the Arab boycott of Israel. In these and many other ways, Congress has reaffirmed and is reaffirming its strong commitment to close relations between the United States and Israel.

The third major area in which recent achievements defied the gloomy predictions of the doomsayers was the result of Campaign '86 this past November. Never before have we seen the strength of American pro-Israel political action as we have seen in this last election. The overall Senate and House results of 1986 went far beyond the successes of individual races during 1982 and 1984.

The 100th Congress has a broad and deep understanding of the pro-Israel community, it is a Congress with a strong sensitivity to the issues we care so deeply about, it is a Congress of men and women with whom we could have a serious and productive dialogue on U.S.-Israel relations.

How different this year is compared to the post-mortem of the 1980 elections. It was during the height of the 1981 AWACS battle that we realized that our lack of personal relationships with the newly elected Senators from 1980 seriously hurt our chances to win that legislative battle. Let us hope that those days are over—we may not win every issue, but because of your hard work during Campaign '86 and again in Campaign '88, we will have a chance to present our case to every U.S. Senator and Representative. And it is this type of access with important decision-makers that has helped get us through the hard times of the past year.

Overall, then, it has been a surprising several months in the strategic relationship, in traditional and new legislation, and in Election '86. How was this possible? What explains these achievements and advancements?

In my opinion there are five environmental factors that made this possible. I will call these the five building blocks. Our role was to be the mortar holding together these five building blocks. Let me review them one by one and then explain our role.

The first building block is the value system of the American people. For as long as polls have been taken on the subject, the American people have consistently supported Israel over the Arabs in the conflictual situation in the Middle East by very large margins, and have expressed a remarkable degree of support for Israeli positions on a wide variety of issues. The idea that Israel is a reliable, democratic ally of the United States and the country most likely to fight on our side if we need her was a staple of public opinion long before strategic cooperation was introduced into U.S. policy. Indeed, the public consistently ranks Israel among our most reliable partners in the world, having more in common with Britain and France than with the unstable and often unfriendly countries of the Middle East. If the foreign policy of the United States were made directly by the American people, it would be a wonderful day for AIPAC and Israel, because that policy would be friendlier to the Jewish state than anything we have seen up to now.

Support for Israel is also very broad-based among all social groups in every region in the country, regardless of age, religion, or political affiliation. Israel is one issue on which there is a consensus between liberals and conservatives, young and old, Catholics and Protestants, and blacks and whites. Black Americans have supported Israel, in poll after poll over many years, by majorities of at least two-to-one, in spite of statements by some of that community's leaders. Nor are young people "drifting away" from the pro-Israel values of their elders: indeed, on average,

young people are somewhat more rather than less pro-Israel than their parents.

Nor have the negative stories of the past twelve months had much effect on all this, in spite of the predictions of the doom prophets. We now have the results of two recent major polls conducted by the Harris and Roper organizations, and the results show quite the opposite. On almost every question, Israel scores as well or better than a year ago. Israel's rating as an ally is up slightly in the Harris Poll, while its "unfriendliness" rating is down by 25% from a year earlier. Roper finds that Israel's reliability as an ally is now rated just below that of Germany and France. In fact, Harris found that it is the Arab nations, not Israel, who have dipped most in the ratings of allies, with Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia each dropping by 25%. Obviously, Arab and Iranian involvement in terrorism against America and its citizens accounts for much of this. Support for Israel over the Arabs is six-to-one in the Roper Poll and seven-to-one in Harris—near record majorities. Overall, there is hardly a shred of evidence in the polls for the theory that support for Israel among the American people has eroded.

The same basic fact appears when we turn from public opinion to the second building block, which is the solid base of support for Israel on Capitol Hill. I have read in the past few months several articles in the press alleging that support for Israel in Congress has been weakened by the recent series of negative events. All I can say is, this is news to me. You and I are on Capitol Hill and in local Congressional offices day in and day out, and what we collectively see and hear is just the opposite. On issue after issue, across an extraordinary range of topics, as I reviewed earlier, legislation bearing on Israel is passing by record majorities. The old pro-Israel coalition is holding, and to it many new friends are being added. Across the politi-

cal and ideological spectra, Congress is making a resounding statement that Israel is a unique consensus issue for the American people. To cite but one recent example, this past Wednesday Republican Senators Chuck Grassley, Bob Dole, Rudy Boschwitz, and Jesse Helms joined Democratic Senators Frank Lautenberg, Paul Simon, Barbara Mikulski, and Howard Metzenbaum and others introduced [sic] a bill to close PLO offices in the United States and make it unlawful for Americans to take money from the PLO. This is truly a wall-to-wall coalition. Overall, it is clear that, if United States foreign policy were solely made by the Congress, it would, like a policy made directly by the American people, be more pro-Israel than what we have now.

The third building block that supports and protects the structure of U.S.-Israel relations is the President and his administration. There is wide agreement that Ronald Reagan is among the best friends of Israel ever to sit in the oval office, and that George Shultz has been a friend beyond words as Secretary of State. Like Members of Congress, these officials believe befriending Jerusalem is in the best interest of the United States. These stalwarts have truly transformed U.S. policy over the past five years, raising the relationship to a new level. This President's refusal to break with Israel during the Lebanon controversy, in the face of enormous pressure from Arabs and from critics of Israel in the media to do so, was an act of faith and courage. Subsequently, his decision to overrule opposition and establish a new relationship of strategic cooperation with Israel, was an historic threshold in the history of relations between our country and the Jewish State. Beyond this, in concert with Congress, the creation of the U.S.-Israel Free Trade Area, the shift away from loans to all-grant aid, and the \$1.5 billion supplemental assistance package was part of

George Shultz's personal commitment to help Israel restore health to its economy. Taken together these policies and programs have demonstrated the seriousness of this administration's commitment to treating Israel as an ally.

There was some anxiety in our community over the past year that the Pollard episode, combined with Israel's involvements in the Iran-Contra episode, might weaken the administration's commitment to the relationship. Nothing I have seen indicates that this is the case. Officials are, of course, unhappy with some of the aspects of these events—so am I and so are you. But as I recited earlier, on a range of recent developments in the past year, the administration has demonstrated its commitment to continue to move ahead in the building of the U.S.-Israel relationship to new heights. The President sets the tone, and he wants to continue to move forward.

Indeed, you might say of the President and Secretary Shultz what I have already said of public opinion and Congress: If the people at the top could personally control and oversee all aspects of our policy toward Israel and its region, the result would be more pro-Israel than what we already have. The problems that we have are certainly not at the top, but further down among those who have ensconced themselves as a permanent government to pursue a policy of their own according to their theory of the American national interest. I will return to this point in a few minutes.

So far, of the five building blocks that sustain the U.S.-Israel relationship during times of trouble, I have discussed three: public opinion, Congress, and the President. The fourth building block is the nature of the relationship itself. In times of trouble, nations look to their essential values and interests, to distinguish between the ephemeral, passing issues of the moment and the vital objectives that com-

prise the core of foreign policy. It is precisely at moments like this that a clear-headed understanding of the meaning of the moral and strategic alliance between the two countries is so important. It reminds us that, if there are from time to time differences of opinion between allies, this is normal and not something that should be allowed to bring the house down. If there are occasions when we have differences with Israel, this is no less true in our relations with Japan or France or Italy. An alliance is like a marriage. It is a situation where your relationship no longer depends on how you feel when you get up in the morning, or what your spouse did for you in the last ten minutes. It is a commitment based on enduring values and long-term interests, in addition to recurring pleasures, and it is these things that get you past the kinds of problems we have had in the past several months.

Of course, an alliance, like a marriage, also creates certain responsibilities for the parties, who cannot go about pursuing their own interests alone without regard for the needs of their partner. This brings me to the fifth building block of the relationship that has sustained us, namely, the fact that Israel and the United States have treated each other in a more sensible and mature way in the past few years, Pollard notwithstanding. Compare where we are today with the situation of four years ago, to see the contrast. Then, we had at times on the Israeli side, a tendency to bellicose and defiant forms of expression addressed to the United States, while we had on the American side a policy of arms embargoes and pressures and sanctions against Israel. Neither side was a candidate for any awards in the category of acting like an ally. Today, while there are occasional problems, there is a prevailing policy of close consultation between allies, keeping of confidences, and a respect for the legitimacy of different points of view. Running

Pollard as a spy was a mistake of epic proportions, but the fact that Israel issued an immediate and sincere apology, pledged to dismantle the entire unit involved, and committed itself to prevent any recurrence of such misdeeds, helped to ameliorate the tension between the two governments over the affair. It is this attitude that has sustained the alliance and made it a building block of the relationship between the United States and Israel: an unyielding determination to manage such differences as arise in a fashion that befits relations between close allies.

And so what has gotten us through this time of tensions and troubles are these five building blocks of the relationship between the United States and Israel: the values of the American people, the commitment of Congress, the faith of the President, the nature of the relationship, and mature diplomacy between allies. The combination creates for us a hospitable and welcoming environment.

But I must tell you that I am not a determinist. I do not believe that these building blocks come together automatically on their own to form the structure. There must be someone with a human will who stacks the blocks, often helps locate new ones, and applies the mortar to hold them in place for a sound structure.

That someone is you and me, the activists of the American pro-Israel cause, the guardians of the relationship between our country and the Jewish State, the people committed to protect and advance the alliance. We can help strengthen the building blocks, but we are also the ones who must organize and mobilize the friendly public to elect the friendly Congress and President, to nurture and advance the strategic marriage, and remind the two partners, from time to time, of their obligations toward each other. We are, to return to my main metaphor, the

mortar that holds the building blocks together.

This fact, that things do not just happen on their own, but depend on us, is not just an abstract principle or theoretical matter for AIPAC. Believe me, it is a daily experience, the daily experience of our work. Those of you who have joined in the work, who have got down to the business personally of putting the mortar on the bricks to create a part of the building, know just what I am talking about. This doesn't happen by magic, or by sitting around as an observer, but by rolling up your sleeves and putting it together yourself. It is tremendously fulfilling, but it is also extraordinarily hard work.

And what makes us effective as a movement, beyond our commitment as individuals, is our unity as a cause. And unity, too, is not just an abstract principle, but probably the most important concrete reality that determines whether we will succeed or fail in our mission.

Unity means that we have the combined strength for the enormous task that we have undertaken, because no one or few of us could do this alone. Unity means that we can create a coalition of the diverse parts of the political spectrum, and not have one organization for the right and one for the left and one for the religious and one for the secular and one for the hawks and one for the doves, etcetera. Unity means that this organization can have the financial strength to compete with the petrodollars and the corporate lobbies that sometimes go against us. Unity means that we can have numbers that impress our clients and make them willing to deal with us as a force to be reckoned with, people who can deliver. In a word, unity of the American pro-Israel political community is the very cement that enables us to hold together the building blocks of the U.S.-Israel relationship.

I would also like to make this point with equal bluntness from the opposite side. Anything that threatens disunity in our movement, that proposes to tear us asunder, that would splinter us into pieces, is a threat to the vital core of our being and our effectiveness as a movement. From time to time, we hear the siren song of disunity, and it often sounds pretty. "Come and join my faction, where you won't have to be with those others, and there will only be like-minded people who make you feel comfortable and cozy." But this song that always sounds so pretty is in fact the song of weakness and ineffectiveness.

And this is true whether the siren song comes with one set of lyrics or another. One version would split us up by broadening our agenda to become "multi-issue," which translated means that instead of one pro-Israel movement we would have one for the left and one for the right. Another version would divide us and weaken us by attempting to take sides between the major factions in Israel. We have come a long way together, through trials of fire and, in my opinion, one of our primary goals for the future must be to preserve our sense of unified commitment which is the basis of our effectiveness.

Unity of purpose and action will be even more crucial in the years ahead. The stakes are high for our community in Campaign '88—clearly the most important election cycle since 1980 and one of the truly pivotal years since World War II. We will be electing a new President, who in turn will appoint the next Secretary of State, a new Secretary of Defense, and in fact a new administration from top to bottom. There will again be struggle for control of the United States Senate, and with it the key committee and subcommittee chairmanships so crucial to our work. As the U.S. House of Representatives goes through rapid change of membership, that body becomes younger. And implicit in

these electoral decisions the nation will be setting itself on a new course for the first time in eight years—a course that might not change again for another eight years.

Chances are that most of you were not members of AIPAC the last time we chose a new President in 1980, because our membership has quintupled since that election. We face then, a new challenge.

Part of this challenge will simply be to vote. For many years we have been proud of the fact that the American Jewish community votes in record-high proportions—yet we are learning now that we can no longer rest on our laurels. Recent studies by the New York Jewish Community Relations Council and the Synagogue Council of America show that we are facing a new, very serious problem: non-voting in the Jewish community. In New York City alone over 350,000 eligible Jews are not registered to vote, almost the equivalent of the entire population of several American cities. We all know that our small numbers make us a minority, and if we do not even exercise our rights at the ballot box, then we are an impotent, invisible minority. We absolutely must support the voter registration drives being organized by various groups.

However, voting is only the first level of political action, of community duty. Other avenues of involvement include volunteering for a campaign, working to educate and sensitize a candidate about our issues, or introducing your local candidate to other members of our community. One of the highest levels of participatory challenge lies at the national party conventions. It was thrilling in 1984 to see so many members of our community as participants in Dallas and San Francisco. I hope that many in this room will consider becoming delegates to the 1988 conventions in Atlanta and New Orleans, working to advance our issues right on the convention floors. Please note on your program that

tomorrow we will be having a special workshop on becoming a convention delegate.

A third challenge for Campaign '88 is to broaden the base of those in our community contributing time, talent, and resources to political candidates. Every member of our community should be involved in the democratic process, and if you want to be effective this must include giving to candidates within the limits of your means and the limits stated in the federal election laws. Today, our base is too narrow to provide the support that all of our friends want and need. Too few of you are carrying the burden. I call upon those of you who are not doing enough, I implore you to participate actively and fully in the democratic process in Campaign '88.

A fourth goal in the 1988 electoral cycle, in dealing with candidates at the presidential level, is to focus more intensively than we have in the past on one issue whose central importance has become more evident over the years. This is the question of the key cabinet appointments that the candidate intends to make if elected, particularly the kind of people likely to be chosen as Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, Secretary of the Treasury, Director of Central Intelligence, and National Security Adviser. We have seen with vivid clarity and contrast, over the past six years, how the personality at the top of the State and Defense Departments affects the actions of subordinates all the way down the system. We know all too well that there are permanent employees, for instance, in the State and Defense Departments's bureaucracies, who think that U.S.-Israel relations are too close, and that it is in the U.S. national interest to move away from Israel to curry favor with the Arabs. We have also seen that even a staunchly pro-Israel President can make the mistake of appointing to high

cabinet office individuals who do not necessarily share his point of view on our issues. A vital objective in the coming election is to see that the democratic will of the American people, who clearly regard close relations between the United States and its one reliable and democratic ally in the Middle East as a vital national interest, is carried through not only in the selection of a President but also in the appointment of men and women who share in this national consensus and do not oppose it. This should be a goal in our meetings with presidential candidates, some of whom will be with us tomorrow evening.

The stakes are also high in terms of the legislative agenda for the coming year. Traditional issues such as foreign aid and arms sales are becoming more difficult and complex. Other issues such as strategic cooperation and trade are expanding our work with both Houses of Congress and involving us in new committees and in new, more sensitive issues:

1. Obviously, we must work to secure the passage of this year's foreign aid bill—with no cuts from the \$3.0 billion aid level to Israel. This is the amount of assistance recommended by the Reagan Administration, even in the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings environment, and was recently authorized by the Senate Foreign Relations and the House Foreign Affairs Committees.

These committees share in the widely held conviction that an economically stable Israel is in the greatest interest of the United States. Despite the consensus on this point it will not be easy to secure passage of the overall aid bill and to achieve last year's level of aid to Israel. The most difficult obstacle to securing those goals is the low foreign aid budget numbers the House and Senate have provided. We have been and you will be lobbying to ensure that at least the higher House budget figures are ultimately

adopted by the budget conference which meets this week.

We must also make more of an effort to work with our friends in Congress and also our friends outside of Congress, as part of a new coalition designed to build nationwide support for foreign aid legislation. Unless we and other fellow citizens can help generate more public support for foreign aid programs overall, those programs will continue to be severely reduced by Congress, and it will become increasingly difficult to secure \$3 billion in aid to Israel. Another of tomorrow's workshops will focus on this aspect of the foreign aid problem. I believe Secretary Shultz will also talk about this tonight.

2. We must look to Congress for other areas of assistance beyond foreign aid—especially in terms of defense cooperation. By providing special benefits such as reciprocal no-cost leasing of defense materials and matching joint R&D programs which take advantage of Israel's advancing defense industry, Congress can and already has helped pave the way to greater U.S. cooperation with and opportunities for Israel's defense industries. Such initiatives are being taken in two Armed Services Committees and the two Defense Appropriations Subcommittees, which are new areas for many of you. It means we must continue to expand our friendships in these committees. It also means we have to be prepared to lobby on a different set of issues and to fight against various "Buy American" amendments which restrict such bilateral defense cooperation.

3. In the area of arms sales, we must continue to oppose those transfers to nations that oppose peace with Israel that can upset the delicate military balance in the region. We must reinforce the proven thesis that arms sales to Israel's enemies are no incentive for peace. The press is now reporting a new \$500 million sale of ten to fifteen F-15s and accompanying air-to-

ground missiles to Saudi Arabia that will soon be submitted to Congress. Members of Congress this week will be asking many questions pertaining to this reported proposal.

A constant flow of the top American arms to Saudi Arabia which remains at war with Israel is no substitute for a comprehensive and coordinated arms transfer policy. It was wrong in 1978; it was wrong in 1981; it is wrong in 1987. This latest sale sets back the search for peace, which is at a critical juncture today. AIPAC wants to avoid confrontation with this Administration yet opposes this arms sale.

But we can go one step further, beyond any one arms sale.

We must work with our friends in Congress in changing the way the executive proposes arms transfers and Congress is only left with the challenge of amassing two-thirds votes to override a presidential veto. Legislation originally introduced by Senator Joe Biden and Congressman Mel Levine would prevent future arms sales from being passed when only one-third plus one of either House is willing to support the sale.

The main lesson from last spring's sale of missiles to Saudi Arabia is that the United States desperately must reform the manner in which it sells sophisticated weapons abroad. Congress must restore the principle that a sale should not proceed unless a majority of each House approves it, rather than merely one-third plus one of only one House of Congress. Affirmative approval by Congress is the intent of the Arms Export Control Reform Act of 1987, and it is in America's interest to see its passage. Mel Levine will be discussing this during another of tomorrow's workshops.

4. What do we want in the peace process? The answer has not changed. We want Jordan to agree to sit down with Israel for direct and meaningful negotiations; this would bring about peace be-

tween Israel and a second Arab neighbor. We want Syria to move away from radicalism and rejection to accept the reality of the Jewish State. We want the wider Arab world to stop fanning the flames of war. We want an end to the military build-up against Israel, an end to the campaign of diplomatic isolation, an end to tirades at the United Nations and other international gatherings, and an end to the Arab economic boycott of the Jewish nation.

What is the best way to bring this about? Is it an international conference? This is a tactical question, involving many controversial judgments on which honest people are bound to disagree. Many facts are known about it, but not all of the relevant facts. More important, whether to utilize the tactic of a conference is not our decision to make.

It is, however, a decision that the people of Israel must make, through their political institutions. Israel is a true democracy, in which there is a powerful tradition of free speech and a robust national debate about the central issues facing the state. Israel faces very difficult choices. I am confident that, as so many times in the past, Israel's democracy is working today to arrive at a course of action that takes into account all the diverse elements of the nation in order to arrive at one ultimate course of action.

Some people are offended by the raucous nature of the Israeli debate. I am not. Dictatorships make nice neat little decisions in secret, outside the public eye. Democracies make their decisions in public, accepting that this includes the risk of allowing all to see that there is not just one opinion in the country. Israel will, in the end, do the right thing.

I have reported on the strength of the Washington-Jerusalem relationship. I have reported on recent achievements and advances. Like you, I am well aware of the

problems pulling at that relationship, it is an obvious tension.

As AIPAC citizen and professional lobbyists, we deal with this reality in the Executive and Legislative branches on a daily basis. In Israel, its citizens and leadership deal with the reality of the state's strength, but also its lack of peace—and the implications of those tensions.

Our mission: Abide by our principles and work by our fundamental strategies and tactics—and unity.

—The agenda is broad and difficult, and becoming more so every year. As the building blocks of the U.S.-Israel relationship grow higher and wider, there is a greater need for the mortar to hold it all together.

—We need you to be well informed on the issues, whether it is the complexities of changing the Arms Export Control Act or legalities surrounding the closing of the PLO's offices in New York and Washington. Last night at dinner I sat next to a freshman Senator who commented, "It is unbelievable how informed your people are on the issues compared to all the others who call on me."

—We need you to make renewed special efforts to get to know Members of Congress who sit on critical committees beyond those that consider foreign aid; more and more decisions affecting the U.S.-Israel partnership are being made in the Budget, Armed Services, Finance/Ways and Means Committees. We must develop more friends on those committees in both Houses.

—We need you to establish more regularized, organized sessions with your Representatives and Senators—to meet with them even when there is no immediate legislative priority and to broaden the base of constituents who know their elected Members.

—We need you then to establish Congressional caucuses, particularly in areas

where there is little organized Jewish presence.

—We need you to reach out to form working coalitions with other groups in your communities. As our agenda becomes more difficult, it behooves us to communicate to our natural allies on given issues and work with them to advance the common agenda.

We, the American pro-Israel community, are secure in the knowledge—rein-

forced by our achievements and advances—that what is good for America is good for Israel, and that what strengthens Israel equally strengthens America.

These are the values which bring us together—love for America and love for Israel. I feel privileged to share in this work with you. Our task is far from over, but with each new day we must and we will enhance our structure of policy action and political action.