

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Speech at AIPAC Conference March 4, 2014



Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you.

I bring you greetings from Jerusalem — the eternal, undivided capital of Israel and the Jewish people.

I want to thank all of you for working so tirelessly to strengthen the alliance between Israel and America. American support for Israel and for that alliance is at an all-time high. And I can tell you that there is no country on earth that is more pro-American than Israel.

So I want to thank the leaders of AIPAC, the officers of AIPAC, the 14,000 delegates of AIPAC — the members of Congress, the members of the Israeli government — **Tzipi Livni, Limor Livnat, Yuval Steinitz, Deputy Minister Elkin**, members of the Knesset — and our two able ambassadors, the ambassador of Israel to the United States, **Ron Dermer** — and the ambassador of the United States to Israel, **Dan Shapiro**, and our U.N. ambassador, **Ron Prosor**. Everyone, I want to thank you all for safeguarding and nurturing the most precious alliance in the world, the alliance between Israel and the United States of America.

My friends, I've come here to draw a clear line.

You know that I like to draw lines — especially red ones. But the line I want to draw today is the line between life and death, between right and wrong, between the blessings of a brilliant future and the curses of a dark past.

I stood very close to that dividing line two weeks ago. I visited an Israeli army field hospital in the Golan Heights. Now, that field hospital wasn't set up for Israelis. It was set up for Syrians. Israelis treated nearly a thousand wounded Syrians — men, women and a lot of children. They come to our border fence bleeding and desperate. Often they're near death.

And on my visit I met two such Syrians, a shellshocked father and his badly wounded 5-year-old boy. A few days earlier the man's wife and baby daughter were blown to bits by Iranian bombs dropped by Assad's air force. Now the grieving father was holding his little boy in his arms, and Israeli doctors were struggling to save the boy's life.

I heard from them and from the other patients there what all the Syrians who've come to be treated in Israel are saying. They all tell the same story. They say, all these years, **Assad** lied to us. He told us that Iran was our friend and Israel was our enemy. But Iran is killing us, and Israel, Israel is saving us.

Those Syrians discovered what you've always known to be true: In the Middle East, bludgeoned by butchery and barbarism, Israel is humane; Israel is compassionate; Israel is a force for good.

That border, that runs a hundred yards east of that field hospital, is the dividing line between decency and depravity, between compassion and cruelty. On the one side stands Israel, animated by the values we cherish, values that move us to treat sick Palestinians, thousands of them, from Gaza. They come to our hospitals. We treat them despite the fact that terrorists from Gaza hurl thousands of rockets at our cities.

It's those same values that inspire Israeli medics and rescuers to rush to the victims of natural disasters across the world, to Haiti, to Turkey, to Japan, the Philippines, to many other stricken lands.

Now, on the other side of that moral divide, steeped in blood and savagery, stand the forces of terror — Iran, Assad, Hezbollah, al-Qaida and many others. Did you ever hear about Syria sending a field hospital anywhere? Did you ever hear about Iran sending a humanitarian delegation overseas? No? You missed that memo? You know why? You know why you haven't heard anything about that? Because the only thing that Iran sends abroad are rockets, terrorists and missiles to murder, maim and menace the innocent.

And what the Iranian people — or rather, what the Iranian regime does abroad is just as — is similar to what they do to their own people. They execute hundreds of political prisoners, they throw thousands more into their jails, and they repress millions in a brutal theocracy.

If you want to understand the moral divide that separates Israel from its enemies, just listen to **Hassan Nasrallah**, the head of Hezbollah, Iran's terror proxy in Lebanon. He said this. He said: Iran and Hezbollah love death and Israel loves life.

And that's why, he said, Iran and Hezbollah will win and Israel will lose.

Well, he's right about the first point. They do glorify death, and we do sanctify life. But he's dead wrong on the second point. It's precisely because we love life that Israel shall win.

In the past year Iran's radical regime has tried to blur this moral divide. It wields out its smiling president and its smooth-talking foreign minister. But if you listen to their words, their soothing words, they don't square with Iran's aggressive actions.

Iran says it only wants a peaceful nuclear program. So why is it building a heavy water reactor, which has no purpose in a peaceful nuclear program? Iran says it has nothing to hide. So why does it ban inspectors from its secret military sites? Why doesn't it divulge its military nuclear secret — the secrets of its military nuclear activities? They absolutely refuse to say a word about that. Iran says it's not building nuclear weapons. So why does it continue to build ICBMs, intercontinental ballistic missiles, whose only purpose is to carry nuclear warheads?

See, unlike Scud missiles, that are limited to a range of a few hundred miles, ICBMs can cross vast oceans. And they can strike, right now or very soon, the Eastern seaboard of the United States — Washington — and very soon after that, everywhere else in the United States, up to L.A.

And the important point to make is this: Iran's missiles can already reach Israel, so those ICBMs that they're building, they're not intended for us. You remember that beer commercial, "this Bud's for you"? Well, when you see Iran building ICBMs, just remember, America, that Scud's for you.

Now, it's not only that — only the Americans got that joke. It's not only that Iran doesn't walk the walk. In the last few weeks, they don't even bother to talk the talk. Iran's leaders say they won't dismantle a single centrifuge, they won't discuss their ballistic missile program. And guess what tune they're singing in Tehran? It's not "God Bless America," it's "death to America." And they chant this as brazenly as ever. Some charm offensive.

And here's my point. Iran continues to stand unabashedly on the wrong side of the moral divide. And that's why we must continue to stand unequivocally on the right side of that divide. We must oppose Iran and stand up for what is right.

My friends, yesterday I met with **President Obama**, with **Vice President Biden**, with **Secretary Kerry** and with the leaders of the U.S. Congress. We had very good meetings. I thanked them for their strong support for Israel — for our security, including in the vital area of missile defense.

I said that the greatest threat to our common security is that of a nuclear-armed Iran. We must prevent Iran from having the capability to produce nuclear weapons. And I want to reiterate that point. Not just to prevent them from having the weapon, but to prevent them from having the capacity to make the weapon. That means — that means we must dismantle Iran's heavy water reactor and its underground enrichment facilities. We must get rid of Iran's centrifuges and its stockpiles of enriched uranium and we must insist that Iran fully divulge the military dimensions of its nuclear program.

Now 17 countries around the world have peaceful nuclear energy programs. They're doing this without spinning centrifuges, without enriching uranium, without operating heavy water facilities and without conducting military nuclear research.

You know why Iran insists on doing all these things that the other peaceful countries don't do? It's because Iran doesn't want a peaceful nuclear program, Iran wants a military nuclear program.

I said it here once, I'll say it here again: If it looks like a duck, if it walks like a duck, if it quacks like a duck, then what is it?

Well, it's ain't a chicken — and it's certainly not a dove. It's still a nuclear duck. Unfortunately, the leading powers of the world are talking about leaving Iran with the capability to enrich uranium.

I hope they don't do that because that would be a grave error. It would leave Iran as a threshold nuclear power. It would enable Iran to rapidly develop nuclear weapons at a time when the world's attention is focused elsewhere. And we see, as we speak, know that could happen. In one part of the world today, tomorrow in another part — maybe North Korea.

So just remember what **Khamenei** wrote a few years ago. He wrote this in a rare moment of candor. He said: If a country can enrich uranium, even to a low level, it can effectively produce nuclear weapons. Precisely. And leaving Iran as a threshold nuclear power, would deliver a death-blow to nonproliferation. Iran is an outlaw state. It's violated multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions prohibiting enrichment.

If we allow this outlaw terrorist state to enrich uranium, how could we seriously demand that any other country not enrich uranium?

My friends, I believe that letting Iran enrich uranium would open up the floodgates. It really would open up a Pandora's box of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East and around the world. That must not happen. And we will make sure it does not happen.

Because letting the worst terrorist regime on the planet get atomic bombs would endanger everyone, and it certainly would endanger Israel since Iran openly calls for our destruction.

70 years ago, our people, the Jewish people, were left for dead. We came back to life. We will never be brought to the brink of extinction again

As Prime Minister of Israel, I will do whatever I must do to defend the Jewish state of Israel.

You know, I'm often — I'm often asked whether Israel truly wants diplomacy to succeed, and my answer is, of course we want diplomacy to succeed, because no country has a greater interest in the peaceful elimination of the Iranian nuclear threat. But this threat — this threat will not be eliminated by just any agreement, only by an agreement which requires Iran to fully dismantle its military nuclear capability.

Now you know how you get that agreement with Iran? Not by relieving pressure, but by adding pressure. Pressure is what brought Iran to the negotiating table in the first place, and only more pressure will get to abandon their nuclear weapons program. Greater pressure on Iran will not make war more likely; it will make war less likely — because the greater the pressure on Iran, the greater the pressure on Iran and more credible the threat of force on Iran, the smaller the chance that force will ever have to be used.

Ladies and gentlemen, peace is Israel's highest aspiration. I'm prepared to make a historic peace with our Palestinian neighbors — a peace that would end a century of conflict and bloodshed. Peace would be good for us. Peace would be good for the Palestinians. But peace would also open up the possibility of establishing formal ties between Israel and leading countries in the Arab world.

Many Arab leaders — and believe me, this is a fact, not a hypothesis, it's a fact — many Arab leaders today already realize that Israel is not their enemy, that peace with the Palestinians would turn our relations with them and with many Arab countries into open and thriving relationships.

The combination of Israeli innovation and Gulf entrepreneurship, to take one example — I think this combination could catapult the entire region forward. I believe that together, we can resolve actually some of the region's water and energy problems. You know, Israeli has half the rainfall we had 65 years ago. We have 10 times the population. Our GDP has shot up, thank God — GDP per capita, up. So we have half the rainfall, 10 times the population, and our water use goes up. And which country in the world doesn't have water problems? Yep. Israel.

Why? Because of technology, of innovation, of systems. We could make that available to our Arab neighbors throughout the region that is not exactly blessed with water. We could solve the water problems. We could solve the energy problems. We could improve agriculture. We could improve education with e-learning, health with diagnostics on the Internet. All of that is possible. We could better the lives of hundreds of millions. So we all have so much to gain from peace.

That's why I want to thank the indomitable **John Kerry**. You know, New York and Tel-Aviv, they're the cities that never sleep. John Kerry is definitely the Secretary of State who never sleeps.

And — and I've got the bags under my eyes to prove it. We're working together, literally day and night, to seek a durable peace, a peace anchored in solid security arrangements and the mutual recognition of two nation-states.

Israel is the nation-state of the Jewish people — where the civil rights of all citizens, Jews and non-Jews alike, are guaranteed. The land of Israel is the place where the identity of the Jewish people was forged.

It was in Hebron that **Abraham** bought the cave of the Patriarchs and the Matriarchs. It was in Bethel that **Jacob** dreamed his dreams. It was in Jerusalem that **David** ruled his kingdom. We never forget that, but it's time the Palestinians stopped denying history.

Just as Israel is prepared to recognize a Palestinian state, the Palestinians must be prepared to recognize a Jewish state. **President Abbas**, recognize the Jewish state, and in doing so, you would be telling your people, the Palestinians, that while we might have a territorial dispute, the right of the Jewish people to a state of their own is beyond dispute.

You would be telling Palestinians to abandon the fantasy of flooding Israel with refugees, or amputating parts of the Negev and the Galilee. In recognizing the Jewish state, you would finally be making clear that you are truly prepared to end the conflict. So recognize the Jewish state. No excuses, no delays, it's time.

Now, my friends, it may take years, it may take decades for this formal acceptance of Israel to filter down through all layers of Palestinian society. So if this piece is to be more than a brief interlude between wars, Israel needs long-term security arrangements on the ground to protect the peace and to protect Israel if the peace unravels. You see, those security arrangements would always be important, but they're even more important and critical today when the entire Middle East is unraveling. Three years ago, our region was a very different place. Can anyone sitting here, anyone listening to us, can anyone tell me and be sure what the Middle East will look like five, 10, 20 years from now? We cannot bet the security of Israel on our fondest hopes.

You know, in the Middle East, that's usually a losing bet. We should always hope for the best, but in the Middle East we have to be prepared for the worst. And despite the best of hopes, international peacekeeping forces sent to Lebanon, Gaza, Sinai, the Golan Heights, they didn't prevent those areas from becoming armed strongholds against Israel.

If we reach an agreement, as I hope, with the Palestinians, I don't delude myself. That peace will most certainly come under attack — constant attack by Hezbollah, Hamas, al-Qaida and others. And experience has shown that foreign peacekeepers — foreign peacekeeping forces, well, that they keep the peace only when there is peace.

But when they're subjected to repeated attacks, those forces eventually go home. So as long as the peace is under assault, the only force that can be relied on to defend the peace and defend Israel is the force defending its own home — the Israeli Army, the brave soldiers of the IDF.

I'm going to reveal to you a secret. This position may not win me universal praise.

That occasionally happens when I state our positions. But I'm charged with protecting the security of my people, the people of Israel. And I will never gamble with the security of the one and only Jewish state.

So as we work in the coming days, in the coming weeks, to forge a durable peace, I hope that the Palestinian leadership will stand with Israel and the United States on the right side of the moral divide, the side of peace, reconciliation and hope.

You can clap. You want to encourage them to do that. I do, and I know you do too.

Thank you.

My friends, one movement that's definitely on the wrong side of the moral divide is the movement to boycott Israel, the so-called BDS. That movement will fail.

Let me tell you why. I want to explain to you why.

They want Israeli technology to help transform their countries as it has ours. And it's not just the small countries that are coming to Israel, it's also the superpowers. You know, the other superpowers: Apple, Google — Microsoft, Intel, Facebook, Yahoo. They come because they want to benefit from Israel's unique ingenuity, dynamism and innovation.

And I could tell you the BDS boycott movement is not going to stop that any more than the Arab boycott movement could stop Israel from becoming a global technological power. They are going to fail. And in the knowledge based century, the knowledge based economy, Israel's best economic day are ahead of it. Mark my words.

Now, wait, wait. I don't want you to get complacent — because the fact that they're going to fail doesn't mean that the BDS movement shouldn't be vigorously opposed. They should be opposed because they're bad for peace and because BDS is just plain wrong.

Most people in the BDS movement don't seek a solution of two states for two peoples. On the contrary, they openly admit that they seek the dissolution of the only state for the Jewish people. They're not seeking peace, they're not seeking reconciliation. But some of their gullible fellow travelers actually do believe that BDS advances peace.

Well, the opposite is true. BDS sets back peace because it hardens Palestinian positions and it makes mutual compromise less likely.

But I think these are all important points, but not the critical point. The critical thing is that BDS is morally wrong. It turns morality on its head. This is the main point. And I can tell you, it's not that Israel, like all states, is not beyond criticism. We have a boisterous democracy where everyone has an opinion. And believe me, no one in Israel is shy about expressing it — about anything. In Israel, self-criticism is on steroids.

But the BDS movement is not about legitimate criticism. It's about making Israel illegitimate. It presents a distorted and twisted picture of Israel to the naive and to the ignorant. BDS is nothing but a farce. Here's why, listen: In dozens of countries academics are imprisoned for their beliefs. So the universities of which country does BDS want to sanction and boycott? Israel — the one country in the Middle East where professors can say, write and teach what they want.

Throughout the Middle East, Christians are fleeing for their lives. So which country does BDS want churches to divest from? You got it — Israel, the one country in the Middle East that protects Christians and protects the right of worship for everyone.

Throughout the Middle East — throughout the Middle East, journalists are jailed, gays are hanged and women are denied their most basic rights. So which country does BDS want to sanction? Take a guess. Israel — the only country in the region with a free press, a progressive gays' rights record and where women have presided over each of the three branches of government.

Now, when you hear this — and anybody can verify this — so you have to wonder, how could anyone fall for the BS in BDS? How can they fall for this?

Well, you shouldn't be surprised. Throughout history, people believed the most outrageously absurd things about the Jews, that we were using the blood of children to bake matzos, that we were spreading the plague throughout Europe, that we were plotting to take over the world. Yeah, but you can say how can educated people, how could educated people today believe the nonsense spewed by BDS about Israel? Well, that shouldn't surprise you either. Some of history's most influential thinkers and writers — **Voltaire**, **Dostoyevsky**, **T.S. Eliot**, many, many others — spread the most preposterous lies about the Jewish people. It's hard to shed prejudices that have been ingrained in consciousness over millennia.

And from antiquity to the Middle Ages to modern times, Jews were boycotted, discriminated against and singled out.

Today the singling out of the Jewish people has turned into the singling out of the Jewish state. So you see, attempts to boycott, divest and sanction Israel, the most threatened democracy on Earth, are simply the latest chapter in the long and dark history of anti-Semitism. Those who wear — those who wear the BDS label should be treated exactly as we treat any anti-Semite or bigot. They should be exposed and condemned. The boycotters should be boycotted.

Everyone should know what the letters B-D-S really stand for: bigotry, dishonesty and shame. And those who — those who oppose BDS, like **Scarlett Johansson**, they should be applauded.

Scarlett, I have one thing to say to you: Frankly, my dear, I DO give a damn. And I know all of you give a damn, as do decent people everywhere who reject hypocrisy and lies and cherish integrity and truth.

My friends, on behalf of the people of Israel, I bring you message from Jerusalem, the cradle of our common civilization, the crucible of our shared values. It's a message from the Bible. *Hachayim v'hamavet nahtaatev l'fahnecha ha-b'rahcha v'hafk'lahlah u-vahkhartah bahkchayim l'mahahn teekhyeh ahtah v'zahrehchah*. I have put before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life so that you and your offspring may live.

Ladies and gentlemen, my friends, never forget — America and Israel stand for life. We stand together on the right side of the moral divide. We stand together on the right side of history. So stand tall, stand strong, stand proud. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you all. Keep doing a great job. Thank you.