

SPEECH BY SENATOR ROBERT MORGAN  
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ON MAINTAINING THE U. S. COMMITMENT TO ISRAEL

THE SERIES OF EVENTS THAT HAVE UNFOLDED IN RECENT WEEKS IN INDOCHINA, IN THE MIDDLE EAST, IN THE MEDITERRANEAN—ALL HAVE BROUGHT THE WORD "COMMITMENT" INTO EXTRAORDINARY PROMINENCE AT HOME AND IN MANY AREAS OF THE WORLD. CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH COMMITMENT IS THE PRESTIGE OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE CREDIBILITY OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY.

IN THESE TROUBLED TIMES, WE FACE IN THE UNITED STATES A SENSE OF FEAR, SCORN, OR SUSPICION ON THE PART OF MANY TOWARD U. S. COMMITMENTS ABROAD, AND WITH IT, A DESIRE TO WITHDRAW FROM THE WORLD. ABROAD, WE FACE MISTRUST OR DOUBT AMONG OUR ALLIES, AND WHAT APPEARS TO BE INCREASED DETERMINATION ON THE PART OF OUR ADVERSARIES.

THE DIRECTOR OF THE PRESTIGIOUS INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STRATEGIC STUDIES RECENTLY CONCLUDED THAT "THE CRUMBLING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA DOES NOT JUSTIFY THE VIEW THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD GIVE UP COMMITMENTS ELSEWHERE THAT IT CONSIDERS VITAL TO ITS INTERESTS. U. S. CREDIBILITY DEPENDS LESS ON VIETNAM THAN ON THE PROBLEMS

WITHIN THE UNITED STATES TO CONDUCT A FOREIGN POLICY." THIS STATEMENT GIVES ME CAUSE FOR PROFOUND CONCERN. I HAVE NOTED A CONSPICUOUS TREND OF LATE, EXPRESSED BY VARIOUS SPOKESMEN FOR BOTH THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES OF OUR GOVERNMENT, ADVOCATING A COMPLETE REVISION OF OUR COMMITMENTS ABROAD. I URGE EXTREME CAUTION IN THIS MATTER, BECAUSE THERE IS A VERY GRAVE POTENTIAL FOR RECKLESSNESS IN HASTILY CASTING OFF COMMITMENTS THAT MAY AFFECT OUR VITAL INTERESTS. A COMMITMENT IS NOT A DIPLOMATIC BAND-AID; IT IS A SOLEMN UNDERTAKING. IF WE ARE NOT CAREFUL, WE SHALL BE LEFT WITH ONE VERY PERMANENT OBLIGATION: NAMELY, ETERNAL DISHONOR.

I HAVE A PARTICULAR CONCERN AT THIS TIME FOR THE MIDDLE EAST—AN AREA IN WHICH THE UNITED STATES HOLDS VITAL INTERESTS AND WHERE IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT OUR GOVERNMENT MAINTAIN A CLEAR AND UNAMBIGUOUS POSITION AND POLICY. THESE INTERESTS INCLUDE CONTINUED ACCESS BY OURSELVES AND OUR ALLIES TO THE REGION'S OIL RESOURCES; USE OF THE LAND, SEA, AND AIR ROUTES, AND TRANSIT FACILITIES OF THE REGION; THE STRENGTHENING OF ECONOMIC TIES WITH MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRIES AND ACCESS TO THEIR MARKETS FOR U. S. TRADE AND INVESTMENT; THE PREVENTION OF AN EXTERNAL POWER ESTABLISHING A PREDOMINANT POLITICAL AND MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE REGION.

THE UNITED STATES ALSO HAS A LONG-STANDING COMMITMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST—THE SURVIVAL OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL. I STRONGLY BELIEVE IT SERVES THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE UNITED STATES TO PROVIDE ISRAEL WITH THE ECONOMIC, MILITARY, AND POLITICAL SUPPORT NECESSARY TO DETER ATTACK AND TO KEEP ALIVE THE SEARCH FOR A JUST AND LASTING PEACE IN THE AREA. THE ISRAELIS THEMSELVES POSSESS THE WILL TO SURVIVE. AND THEY HAVE NEVER ASKED THAT AMERICAN TROOPS BE SENT TO DEFEND THEIR COUNTRY—THEY ONLY HAVE ASKED FOR THE MEANS FOR SURVIVAL.

FROM RECENT STATEMENTS, I FEAR THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE WHO ARE MORALLY MORTGAGING THEMSELVES AND WHO WOULD DEPRIVE ISRAEL OF THE POWER TO DEFEND ITSELF. THE SEARCH FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST WILL NOT BE SERVED BY FORSAKING OUR COMMITMENT TO ISRAEL. RATHER, I FEEL THAT ANY REDUCTION—LET ALONE CESSATION—OF U. S. AID TO THAT COUNTRY WOULD BE INTERPRETED AS A SIGN OF AMERICAN WEAKNESS, AND WOULD ENCOURAGE INTRANSIGENT ATTITUDES TOWARD ANY SETTLEMENT BY THE ARABS.

THIRTY YEARS AGO, AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION WAS APPALLED BY THE EVIDENCE UNCOVERED BY ALLIED FORCES OF WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO THE JEWS IN THE NAZI DEATH CAMPS. UNDER HITLER, THE JEWS HAD BEEN DOOMED NOT SO MUCH BECAUSE THERE HAD BEEN NO ESCAPE, BUT BECAUSE THERE HAD BEEN NO REFUGE. JEWISH PEOPLE EVERYWHERE LOOKED FOR A HOMELAND

TO WHICH THE REFUGEES AND THE PERSECUTED COULD GO. FOR UNDERSTANDABLE HISTORICAL AND RELIGIOUS REASONS, MANY JEWS LOOKED TO PALESTINE. THE AMERICAN PEOPLE OVERWHELMINGLY ENDORSED THE CONCEPT THAT PALESTINE BE ESTABLISHED AS A JEWISH COMMONWEALTH, INTEGRATED IN THE STRUCTURE OF THE NEW, POSTWAR DEMOCRATIC WORLD.

WHEN THE STATE OF ISRAEL WAS FORMALLY PROCLAIMED ON MAY 14, 1948, IT WAS IMMEDIATELY RECOGNIZED BY THE UNITED STATES. ISRAEL, THEREFORE, BECAME THE REPOSITORY FOR ALL THE UNREALIZED HOPES OF THE SIX MILLION JEWS WHO HAD PERISHED AT THE HANDS OF THE NAZIS.

IN REFLECTING UPON THIS OCCASION, I CANNOT BUT FEEL CERTAIN THAT IF WE FORGET THE UNIQUE LESSONS OF THE NAZI HOLOCAUST, WE WILL SURELY REPEAT THE BLUNDERS OF YESTERDAY. IT WAS WHEN IT APPEARED THAT THE WORLD DIDN'T CARE THAT THE NAZIS KNEW THEY HAD A FREE HAND.

SINCE 1948, ISRAEL HAS BEEN ENGAGED IN A FIGHT FOR NATIONAL SURVIVAL. COMMENCING AT THE TIME OF ITS INCEPTION, FOUR FULL-SCALE WARS HAVE TAKEN PLACE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND ITS ARAB NEIGHBORS. YET, POSSESSING A UNITY OF NATIONAL PURPOSE, THIS UNIQUE COUNTRY REMAINS ONE OF THE MOST DEMOCRATIC LANDS IN THE WORLD AND, AMONG ITS CITIZENS, THERE IS A DIVERSITY OF BACKGROUNDS, IDEAS AND OUTLOOKS.

DESPITE THE EVER-PRESENT SENSE OF ENCIRCLING DANGER, HOWEVER, THERE IS NO CONFUSION OR DESPAIR. NOR IS THERE ANY SENSE OF PANIC IN THE FACE OF THE CONSTANTLY VOICED THREAT OF ANNIHILATION BY ITS NEIGHBORS.

THE AMERICAN COMMITMENT TO ISRAEL'S SURVIVAL HAS BEEN AFFIRMED BY SIX PRESIDENTS AND THIRTEEN CONGRESSES. THE UNITED STATES HELPED SUSTAIN THE NEW STATE OF ISRAEL IN ITS FORMATIVE YEARS. IN 1950, THE UNITED STATES JOINED THE UNITED KINGDOM AND FRANCE IN ISSUING A TRIPARTITE DECLARATION, GUARANTEEING THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRIES.

IN 1955, PRESIDENT NASSER OF EGYPT ANNOUNCED HIS ACCEPTANCE OF SOVIET WEAPONS TO STRENGTHEN HIS MILITARY FORCES AGAINST ISRAEL. THE FOLLOWING YEAR, A SECOND ARAB-ISRAELI WAR ENSUED, AND THE ARABS WERE DEFEATED. THEREAFTER, SOVIET ARMS Poured INTO EGYPT AND INTO SYRIA. PRIME MINISTER BEN-GURION IN 1963 PRESSED IN VAIN FOR A UNITED STATES-SOVIET GUARANTEE OF ISRAEL'S FRONTIERS. HE SUBSEQUENTLY REQUESTED A MUTUAL DEFENSE ACCORD BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE UNITED STATES.

ALTHOUGH PRESIDENT KENNEDY REJECTED SUCH A PACT, HE DID PLEDGE U. S. ECONOMIC AND ARMS SUPPORT IN THE EVENT OF ARAB AGGRESSION. AS THE WAR CLOUDS ONCE AGAIN GATHERED, PRESIDENT JOHNSON SAID IN MAY, 1967 THAT THE UNITED STATES WAS "FIRMLY COMMITTED TO THE SUPPORT OF THE POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF ALL NATIONS IN THE AREA. THE UNITED STATES STRONGLY OPPOSES AGGRESSION BY ANYONE IN THE AREA, IN ANY FORM, OVERT OR CLANDESTINE." HE ALSO STATED: "ISRAEL WILL NOT BE ALONE, UNLESS IT DECIDES TO GO ALONE." IN JUNE OF THAT YEAR, THE THIRD ARAB-ISRAELI WAR TOOK PLACE.

WE ALL KNOW THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAS GIVEN DETERMINED POLITICAL AND—TO THE EXTENT THAT SOVIET INTERESTS WERE SERVED—MILITARY SUPPORT TO THE ARAB STATES SINCE 1955. IT INTENDS TO MAINTAIN ITS PRESENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. THE SOVIETS HAD CONSPIRED WITH SYRIA IN 1967 TO URGE NASSER INTO FOOLHARDY ADVENTURISM PRIOR TO THE JUNE WAR.

AFTER THAT WAR, THEY CONTINUED TO ARM ON A MASSIVE SCALE EGYPT AND SYRIA. FROM ALL APPEARANCES, THEY WERE COGNIZANT OF THE COORDINATED SURPRISE ATTACK BY EGYPT AND SYRIA UPON ISRAEL IN OCTOBER 1973. ISRAEL AGAIN PREVAILED IN THAT FOURTH ARAB-ISRAELI WAR—AND THE UNITED STATES, ALONE OF THE WESTERN POWERS, MAINTAINED ITS COMMITMENT BY PROVIDING THE MEANS FOR ISRAEL'S SURVIVAL.

WE ALL KEEP ALIVE THE HOPE THAT A TRUE SETTLEMENT MAY FINALLY BE ACHIEVED BETWEEN ISRAEL AND ITS ARAB NEIGHBORS. SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER'S EFFORTS IN THE STEP-BY-STEP NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND ITS ARAB NEIGHBORS SINCE THE CEASE-FIRE IN NOVEMBER, 1973 ARE TO BE COMMENDED. THE FACT THAT HIS MOST RECENT JOURNEY IN MARCH OF THIS YEAR DID NOT RESULT IN ACHIEVING A FURTHER STEP IN THE DIRECTION OF A PERMANENT SETTLEMENT SHOULD NOT CAUSE A MAJOR REVISION OF U. S. POLICY TOWARD ISRAEL.

SECRETARY KISSINGER DECLARED IN 1969 THAT THE UNITED STATES "WILL NOT NEGOTIATE OVER THE SURVIVAL OF ISRAEL." HE SAID: "THIS WOULD BE AN ACT OF SUCH EXTRAORDINARY CYNICISM THAT THE WORLD WOULD BE MORALLY MORTGAGED IF IT EVER HAPPENED. BUT IT WON'T HAPPEN."

WHEN HE RETURNED FROM HIS TRIP TO EGYPT AND ISRAEL IN MARCH OF THIS YEAR, HE SAID HE DID NOT THINK ANY ADMINISTRATION WOULD LET ISRAEL "GO DOWN THE DRAIN." BUT HE DID SAY THAT THE ISRAELIS WERE QUESTIONING THE DURABILITY OF U. S. ASSURANCES.

I STRONGLY URGE THAT THERE WILL BE NO EROSION OF AMERICA'S LONG-STANDING COMMITMENT TO ISRAEL. ISRAEL IS A REAL DEMOCRACY THAT SHARES THE BASIC PRINCIPLES, MORALITY,

AND FREE WAY OF LIFE OF THE UNITED STATES. I CONSIDER THAT A STRONG ISRAEL IS AN ASSET TO THE UNITED STATES IN THIS VITAL REGION. I CANNOT AGREE WITH THOSE WHO STATE THAT OUR SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL—EVEN THOUGH MORALLY JUSTIFIABLE—HAS CREATED A BARRIER BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE ARAB WORLD. EVIDENCE WOULD SUGGEST OTHERWISE.

THE UNITED STATES HAS NOT BEEN BARRED FROM THE MIDDLE EAST AS A RESULT OF THE SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL BY VARIOUS ADMINISTRATIONS. IN FACT, THE ARABS HAVE REALIZED THAT THE UNITED STATES IS A FACTOR AND PLAYS A LEADING ROLE IN ANY EFFORT TO ACHIEVE A JUST AND LASTING POLITICAL SETTLEMENT OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT.

THE SOVIET UNION CONTINUES TO SUPPLY VAST AMOUNTS OF ARMS TO THE ARAB STATES. THE ARAB STATES ALSO ARE ACQUIRING ARMS THROUGH A COORDINATED PROCUREMENT PROGRAM WHICH HAD BEEN WORKED OUT AT THE RABAT CONFERENCE LAST FALL. THEY APPEAR TO HAVE GREATER POLITICAL UNITY THAN EVER BEFORE. THEY POSSESS THE POWER OIL EMBARGO AS A WEAPON.



THERE ARE THOSE WHO PREFER TO BELIEVE THAT AMERICAN PROBLEMS IN THE MIDDLE EAST WILL SIMPLY EVAPORATE IF ONLY THE ARAB-ISRAELI PROBLEM WOULD DISAPPEAR. I BELIEVE THIS TO BE AN ERRONEOUS VIEW. THE MIDDLE EAST IS A GORDIAN KNOT THAT MUST BE UNTIED, NOT CUT. THE FORCES OF INSTABILITY ARE ENDEMIC IN THE REGION AND I CAN SAY, WITHOUT RESERVATION, THAT THE EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL HAS BEEN A FACTOR OF STABILITY AND HAS PRECLUDED DISINTEGRATION.

THE UNITED STATES CANNOT TURN ITS BACK ON ISRAEL MERELY BECAUSE THE SITUATION IS DIFFICULT AND COMPLEX. WE HAVE CONSIDERABLE STAKES IN THE MIDDLE EAST—ECONOMIC, STRATEGIC, AND POLITICAL. THERE IS ALSO A MORAL STAKE IN THE REGION—ONE WHICH I VALUE VERY HIGHLY—AND THAT STAKE INVOLVES OUR COMMITMENT TO ISRAEL. IT IS A QUESTION OF HONOR, AS WELL AS PRAGMATISM. IN THE WORDS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: "IF IT BE A SIN TO COVET HONOUR, THEN I AM THE MOST OFFENDING SOUL ALIVE!"