



For Immediate Distribution:
News Release
Dec. 7, 2011

512-351-7068
press@rickperry.org
www.rickperry.org

Text of Gov. Rick Perry's Remarks to the Republican Jewish Coalition

12/7/11, Washington, D.C.

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Texas Gov. Rick Perry today addressed the Republican Jewish Coalition's 2012 Presidential Candidates Forum. Below is the text of Gov. Perry's speech.

**NOTE: Gov. Perry sometimes deviates from prepared remarks.*

Thank you Cheryl. It is an honor to be with you today and to share my thoughts on faith, foreign policy and the free State of Israel.

It is great to see so many friends with the Republican Jewish Coalition ... including two vital supporters, Dr. Jeffrey Feingold and Kirk Blalock.

As we gather today, I am struck by the coincidence that two of the American citizens being unlawfully detained abroad today are Jewish: Alan Gross in Cuba, and Warren Weinstein by al Qaida in Pakistan.

In both cases their offense was spreading political and economic freedom to better the lives of less advantaged people around the globe.

Their selfless commitment to this work is a testament to the great value America's Jewish community has brought to our nation, and our government should be working aggressively to achieve their speedy release.

The repressive Castro regime should not be rewarded with increased tourism while Mr. Gross languishes in prison, and Pakistani authorities should clearly understand the significance of rescuing Mr. Weinstein from terrorist elements

within their borders if they value the foreign aid they seem to take for granted.

We have an Administration in Washington today whose foreign policy is an incoherent mess. They embolden our adversaries while isolating our allies.

There is no greater example of President Obama's failed foreign policy than how he has undermined our historic friendship with Israel.

Israel is the oldest democracy and our strongest ally in the Middle East. Our relationship is founded on three basic principles: prosperity, security and freedom.

With a robust economy, Israel is a strong trading partner, importing our goods and supplying us with both high-tech innovations and specialized natural resources.

I am proud a Texas company, Noble Energy, is supplying a large percentage of the natural gas Israel depends upon today. Israel's security is critical to America's security.

We must not forget it was Israel that took out the nuclear capabilities of Iraq in 1981 and Syria in 2007. In both instances, their actions made the free world safer.

And Israel shares a commitment to our core principles of personal freedom. And yet President Obama has systematically undermined America's relationship with Israel, specifically on the question of a negotiated settlement with the Palestinian People.

I want to be clear I support the goal of a Palestinian state, but it should be the Palestinians who meet certain pre-conditions.

And those pre-conditions must include statehood that is directly negotiated between Israeli and the Palestinian leaders; second, a Palestinian recognition of Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state; and third, Palestinian leaders must renounce the terrorist activities of Hamas.

Instead, the Administration has insisted on previously unheard-of preconditions for Israel, such as an immediate stop to all settlement activity. President Obama has suggested the 1967 borders as a basis for negotiations. And he has instituted the practice of "indirect talks", subverting the Oslo Accords.

Yet his administration seemed blindsided when this fall the Palestinians declared a new state with East Jerusalem free of any Jewish settlements as its capital, based on the 1967 borders, established through the United Nations without Israel's involvement.

But in effect all the Palestinians were doing was taking President Obama up on the concessions he had already made. The threat posed by Iran makes our friendship with Israel all the more critical.

As the International Atomic Energy Agency report last month confirmed, Iran is marching unimpeded toward nuclear weapons.

We also know Iran has chemical and biological weapons programs, and that they are accelerating their ballistic missile capabilities so that they can deliver these weapons. The Islamic Republic has made no mystery of their intent to use these weapons against Israel, and eventually the United States.

As this threat gathers, our President has pursued a failed policy of outreach to Tehran.

This administration was silent during the Green Revolution in 2009. And they have avoided tougher sanctions that would cripple Iran's economy. I have repeatedly called for the sanction of Iran's central bank. Recently, the U.S. Senate vote unanimously to sanction Iran's Central Bank. So now President Obama is isolated even from his own party on the Iranian question.

And here is why. Democrats know what we know: current sanctions may have caused "significant discussion" in Tehran as Vice President Biden recently said, but they have not actually stopped progress towards a nuclear weapon.

This increasingly leaves us with only two options: a military strike or a nuclear Iran.

Many seem to think that Israel can step in and dispense with the Iranian threat with through targeted strikes as they did in Iraq and Syria, taking the pressure off the United States.

But Iran is a much greater challenge, and Israel would face terrible reprisals from Tehran and its terrorist proxies. So the military option is not one that Israel would take eagerly or lightly, but only after long deliberation and in the face of overwhelming evidence that Iran is on the verge of an operational nuclear weapon.

What Israel's military needs from the United States is our ongoing security support through hardware and guaranteed supply chains. But Israel also needs our vocal, unerring moral support in the face of what will be inevitable international condemnation if she is forced to strike.

Here's what Israel does not need.

Israel does not need our President demanding gratitude for being the best friend Israel has ever had while his Secretary of Defense rails that Israel has to "get back to the damn table" with the Palestinians, and his Secretary of State questions the viability of Israel's democracy, even as his Ambassador to Belgium blames anti-Semitism among Muslims on Israel's failure to accommodate the Palestinians all of which happened in the last week alone.

This torrent of hostility towards Israel does not seem to have been coordinated, but rather is the natural expression of this administration's attitude towards Israel.

I want you to know American-Israeli policy is not a box to be checked as part of my campaign. It is both a deeply personal issue for me, and is also a cornerstone of my larger global strategy.

I feel a special connection to Israel, dating back nearly 20 years when I first visited the Holy Land.

I have been to the Western Wall, that most sacred of symbols where Jewish pilgrims gather to pray today, and that has withstood the assaults on the Jewish People since the times of the early Romans.

I walked in the footsteps of the heroes of Massada, a fortress of defiance symbolizing their loyalty to freedom more than life itself.

I took a group of Texas business leaders on a tour of Sderot in Gaza. We walked onto a playground built under a rocket protection shelter, a clarifying moment for each one of us as we recognized the constant threat of attack even the children of Israel live under.

And I had the distinct pleasure of sharing a meal with a former Soviet Dissident who spent nine years in a gulag, including 400 days in punishment cells - Natan Sharansky - that great champion of democracy who now calls Israel home and is a living link to the atrocities of brutal regimes.

When you visit Israel, you gain an understanding of a nation that has survived for more than 60 years despite living in a constant state of siege, but something else becomes evident about the Jewish People in Israel and around the world: a resolve to live free, and a willingness to go to any length to preserve your history, your heritage and your faith that is unsurpassed by any people on earth.

Today six million Jews live in Israel, the largest population of Jews in the world.

Whether you are old enough to remember the 1940s or not, you know the significance of that number. When we speak of the unspeakable, it is often said,

"never again."

In making this vow, we honor those who suffered the most inhumane treatment, those, like us, who were made in the Image of God.

And in making this vow, we recognize that peace and freedom are fragile enterprises that can only be preserved with determined vigilance.

It is in the spirit of those words... "never again"... that we must do everything in our power to make the world safe for freedom and democracy.

We must have faith we are in the right, and we must fight with the might of a super-power.

That is why I utterly reject President Obama's political strategy to hold our military budget hostage unless Congress gives in to his proposed tax and spending increases.

We have already sacrificed too many of our Defense capabilities to misguided austerity that will not balance our budget, and will weaken our ability to defend ourselves and our allies.

We must demand action in Congress to block these cuts that threaten to "hollow out" our forces and prevent President Obama from using the capabilities our war fighters need as political pawns in a budgetary fight.

The men and women of our military are the greatest ambassadors for freedom the world has ever known.

In the last two decades they have repelled the forces of oppression from places like Kuwait, Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan.

In fact, no country has done more to liberate millions of oppressed people, many of them Muslim, since the end of the Cold War.

Our freedom agenda applies to all, regardless of faith, because I believe every human being was created to live free, and worship freely.

And because there are numerous countries that oppress freedom, that deny basic human rights, I am adamant that any discussion of foreign aid should start at zero.

But let me be clear. Israel is our strategic ally. America long ago ended traditional foreign aid to Israel. Strategic defense aid to Israel will increase under a Perry administration. And the money we decide to grant foreign nations should always advance American interests.

Our nation was founded on the principle of religious liberty. Like Israel, many of America's earliest ancestors sought a safe haven from religious persecution. They came to a New World to leave behind the injustices of the Old World. They came here to live in freedom, and for many to live out their faith.

America is rooted in Judeo-Christian Values. Our laws emanate from the ancient law of the Torah.

They come to us as principles handed down from our ancestors, who fought, bled, and died to defend them. But the law is more than that. It is, as Jeremiah wrote, "a law written on our hearts." Faith and freedom are the fiber of our union.

My favorite founding father was also a life-long champion of religious freedom...James Madison.

He wrote in the First Amendment to the Constitution that "the civil rights of none shall be abridged on account of religious belief or worship, nor shall the full and equal rights of conscience be in any manner, or on any pretext, infringed."

My faith will guide me as president.

And what I mean by that is not just faith in God's plan for us as a nation he has blessed, time and again.

But it is also faith in the ability of our people, with his help, to accomplish the impossible, the miraculous, as they have done before and will do again.

As I travel across the country, I see the plight we are in. People without the dignity of a job, uncertain where to turn for help.

And I have turned my thoughts recently toward Nehemiah. I think of his return to Jerusalem, of finding the city walls laid to waste, the defenses crumbling, and the people dismayed. They had almost given up hope.

So he gathered the people together, and he told them what he would do. "Then said I unto them, 'You see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins, and how its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem together, that we will no longer be in disgrace.'"

Nehemiah did not do this work by himself. He did it prayerfully and seriously, because he understood the desperate need. And when their enemies came, he urged the people on, to keep building, with a brick in one hand and a sword in the other, until the city could stand tall again.

Bringing America back starts with faith: Faith in the Almighty, who created us,

faith in our friends and allies, in a time of trouble, and faith in each other, to not give up hope.

We must keep the law written on our hearts. We must put our mind to the things above. And we must set ourselves to the work that must be done.

Come. Let us rebuild together.

Thank you and God bless you.

#####

Paid for by RickPerry.org, Inc.