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REMARKS DELIVERED BY U.S. SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION NEIL GOLDSCHMIDT, BEFORE THE UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS MEETING, TORONTO, CANADA, MONDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1979.

At other times in other ages, as Americans and as Jews, we have faced tests. Tests of our freedom; tests of our values; tests of our faith in ourselves, in each other and in God.

Today, a convergence of forces -- economic, social and political -- coming from and centering on the cradle of the world's religions again puts us to the test.

Today, the volatile situation in the Middle East commands our attention, threatening our nation's freedom, our economy, our ability to act on behalf of our friends and allies, and in particular, on behalf of Israel. And for Jews in America, the test of petro-politics takes on an added dimension -- challenging our basic values here at home at the same time as we rally in defense of Israel abroad.

Our dilemma stems from our over-dependence on OPEC oil.

The economic cost to this country of imported oil is staggering; but even more distressing is the political cost today, and the potential political cost in the future. America's political course can be charted on the axis of energy and inflation -- for these are the twin factors against which we will make our choices -- not only as a government, but as a people and as individuals.

Today, we are importing almost 50 percent of our oil at a cost of some \$70 billion -- the equivalent of every man, woman and child writing a \$325 check to OPEC.

In economic terms, that \$70 billion and those individual \$325 checks mean this:

- * It accounts for roughly one-third of the rate of consumer inflation.

- * It steals nearly \$4 billion that would otherwise go into Americans' savings accounts.

- * It is health care for a family for a year, clothing for a family for a year, shelter for a family for four months, food for a family for three months.

It is an economic threat to our nation's well-being.

Moreover, in political terms, the drain of dollars threatens to lead the people of this country to ask, at some point, whether we can afford the price of our international commitments.

This Administration's answer to both threats has been forthright and unequivocal.

This Government has said that Israel's security is not for sale, period. Not for petroleum supplies, not for petroleum price.

And in forging an Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty out of the swords of thirty years of war, the President has spelled out clearly our uncompromising commitment to Israel now and in the future.

America is committed to peace between Israel and all of its neighbors.

We are committed to secure and recognized borders for Israel.

We are committed to economic and military aid to Israel -- and never during this Administration has that promise been threatened.

America is committed to being a full partner in negotiations toward a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East.

We are committed to an undivided Jerusalem with free access for all faiths to their holy places.

To those who have wished Israel ill, our position has been spelled out clearly, as well:

The President has made it clear that he is against an independent Palestinian state.

Nor will this Administration negotiate with the PLO, nor recognize the PLO unless it first recognizes the right of Israel to exist and accepts UN resolutions 242 and 338.

It is past time for the PLO to recognize Israel. It is past time for a total end to terrorism against Israel. That is the basis for peace. And we must insist that everyone accept it.

This President's commitment to Israel is matched by a firm resolve to free our country from the threat of international blackmail created by our reliance on foreign oil and a steadfast determination to return our economy to health by cutting the rate of energy-caused inflation.

These are commitments that speak to our test today. But beyond them is the question of a new decade, the ceaseless challenge to do better, our unwillingness to take full satisfaction out of today without exploring the promise of tomorrow. This capacity for growth and instinct for exploration is a benchmark of the American character and of the Jewish people, and is deeply rooted in our history and in our traditions.

It demands that we ask of ourselves, as Americans and as Jews, how will we choose to fill the unwritten pages in this country's history?

Who will we become and what kind of country will we be?

What values will we embrace?

What beliefs will we hold dear?

What will we say is permanent and fixed about ourselves and our nation, even as we choose to adapt and adjust to the future?

And what vision of America will we describe to our children and our grandchildren as the true measure of this nation's purpose and its promise?

For, me there is Hillel's vision:

"If I am not for me, who will be? But if I am for myself alone, who are we?

If not now, when?"

For American Jews, the message is clear: We who are committed to the survival -- and more than that, the blossoming -- of Israel, must necessarily be committed to fulfilling the promise of America.

We cannot expect America to be strong in the world if we are weak at home.

We cannot accept a solution to the energy crisis that ends our excess import of foreign oil, but allows our continued export of domestic jobs.

We cannot uphold our struggle to see Israel gain full recognition in the Council of Nations, and let fall the banner of equal rights and full opportunity for all citizens of this nation.

We cannot call for increased spending for arms to assure Israel's safety in the world, and be silent on the need for increased spending to assure all American children a good education in the classroom.

Our history and our traditions demand of us a rekindling of our commitment to the values which have guided us.

We are a people who have always recognized the importance of work. Work has been the measure of our sense of self-worth and self-reliance, the vehicle for personal choice and personal advancement. Carl Sandburg wrote, "Rest is not a word of free peoples." And so for us work has always been an expression of freedom -- and particularly for those who have had to battle to gain admission to careers where prejudiced blocked the door.

We can take pride in our accomplishments -- for our people the door to work has been battered open. But there is more to be done if the promise of America is to be kept.

We cannot rest so long as women are discriminated against in the market place. We cannot accept a situation where a woman does the same work as a man and receives but a portion of his wages. Nor in the 1980s, will the charter of our country permit the waste of ability to continue in the Black neighborhoods of America -- where Black teenage unemployment is the norm, with almost half of those who want work unable to find it.

The gains that we have made in equal employment can easily be eroded by the forgetfulness that comes with the passage of time and the indifference that is bred of affluence.

But the Jewish people cannot afford forgetfulness and we cannot tolerate indifference.

We cannot forget our values and remember who we are.

We cannot forget where we have come from in the past if we wish to choose where we are going in the future.

And we cannot forget our commitment to others as we value the commitments others have made to us.

We have always valued good health. Yes, there is the political issue of national health care and health care costs. But our vision is larger than that.

We cannot accept sick and ailing cities and expect to find healthy people living in them.

We cannot see our planet plundered and our environment poisoned and expect to find healthy people.

We cannot witness the plight of undernourished and underclothed and undereducated Americans and expect to find healthy people.

And from those who have borne its burden and sought to stop its spread, forgetfulness that prejudice is mankind's worst disease is unacceptable.

We who pledge never to forget the Holocaust cannot now choose not to stop Cambodia's holocaust.

Ours are the values of family, fostering growth for the young and offering support for the old. How then can we forget our commitment to the family of man?

Our history and traditions have marked us as a conscience to the world. Our understanding finds expression on the gates to the promised land in which we sought refuge:

"Give me your tired, your poor..."

We do not need to re-invent our vision of America; it is a vision written into our Constitution and embodied in our values. It is those values, of Americans and Jews, which give hope and life and meaning and promise:

"I lift my lamp beside the golden door."

If these are simply values in a world where complexities abound, yet they stand as unyielding truths that demand of us that we be truthful -- first and foremost with ourselves.

And they demand of us the vision to dream and the courage to accomplish; the will not to fail though we may falter. For the freedom we seek is the freedom we have; the freedom we have must be sought anew.

For "if a nation values anything more than its freedom, it will lose its freedom; and the irony of it is that if it is comfort or money that it values more, it will lose that, too."

And now the children of another generation have arrived: they carry the memories of their father's fathers, the pain of pogroms and the pestilence of bigotry.

All these things have been faithfully transmitted. But so, too, has the value of life and the virtue of action to improve it. We travel with the tested. They are not Jews alone in this minyan. But all of us, remembering our debts -- repaying with trust -- can conquer our fears and secure peace.

The fuel of hatred is piled high by the wizards of bigotry. So more than ever we search out good men and women -- presidents, ambassadors, citizens -- who have been to the caldron and whose consciences are seared with the truth.

"The fireborn are at home in the fire," Sandburg wrote. And so we are, and so, too, are all those who have helped us. Keep them, keep faith with them, lest the fire spread to consume us all.

Thank you.

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