

**מדינת ישראל
משרד החוץ**

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March 22, 2016

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Speech at the AIPAC Policy Conference 2016

Good morning, America. Good morning, AIPAC. And a special good morning to the 4,000 students who are cutting class today to be with AIPAC in Washington. Greetings to all of you from Jerusalem.

I first want to send my condolences to the families of those murdered in today's terrorist attacks in Brussels. The chain of attacks from Paris to San Bernardino to Istanbul to the Ivory Coast and now to Brussels, and the daily attacks in Israel – this is one continuous assault on all of us. In all these cases, the terrorists have no resolvable grievances. It's not as if we could offer them Brussels, or Istanbul, or California, or even the West Bank. That won't satisfy their grievances. Because what they seek is our utter destruction and their total domination. Their basic demand is that we should simply disappear. Well, my friends, that's not going to happen. The only way to defeat these terrorists is to join together and fight them together. That's how we'll defeat terrorism – with political unity and with moral clarity. I think we have that in abundance.

And I want to thank today the leadership of AIPAC and each and every one of you. I thank you for the tremendous support you've provided Israel over so many years. I thank you for the clear and unequivocal stand you took last year during the nuclear Iran deal debate, a debate critical for Israel's security. And that debate, though intense, did not undermine the unbreakable alliance between Israel and the United States.

As part of that great alliance, America has generously provided Israel with many of the tools we need to defend ourselves. We are now working on a new agreement to help bolster Israel's security in the years to come. I hope we can conclude that agreement soon. And I take this opportunity once again to thank President Obama for his support, including for ballistic missile defense. Israel deeply appreciates it, and we also deeply appreciate the strong bipartisan support for Israel in Congress and the strong, overwhelming support for Israel among the American people. Year after year, the overwhelming majority of Americans stand with Israel. They know something profound that stands out for all to see today. They know that Israel is an island of liberty and democracy, that Israel must never be an issue that divides Americans, but a great cause of liberty that unites Americans.

My friends, two weeks ago, I visited Yodfat in northern Israel. It was there, 2,000 years ago, that the Romans began their military campaign against the Jews. I'm holding in my hand right now an exact replica of an arrow found at Yodfat – one of thousands used by the Romans in their war to crush Jewish independence. Yet, two millennia later, the Jewish people are once again free and sovereign in our ancient homeland. And in rebuilding our land, our state, our economy, our army, our science, our culture, we've achieved remarkable successes. But it's true we also face great challenges. We are in fact today witnessing two contradictory trends.

First, the positive trend: Every day, high-level delegations land at Ben-Gurion Airport. They come from America. They come from Europe. Increasingly they come from Asia, from Africa, from Latin America. As many of them confront the rise of militant Islam and its accompanying terrorism, they come to Israel to strengthen their security. They wish to learn from Israel's proven security and intelligence capabilities how to better protect their own

people.

But they also come to Israel because they want to upgrade their economies with Israel's technology. And for good reason: Israel's know-how is powering the world's computers, navigating its cars, protecting its bank accounts. It's led to breakthroughs in treating multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's. It helps farmers around the world yield more crops, produce more milk, conserve more water. So, for all these reasons, the world is coming to Israel. Today we have diplomatic relations with 161 countries – more than at any time in our history. And, by the way, there are not that many countries left. There are only about 200 countries in the world.

But, alongside this positive trend, there is a second, negative trend. While Israel is embraced by a growing number of individual nations, there are those who seek to malign Israel among the nations, and especially in the United Nations. At the UN, Israel, the Middle East's only true democracy, is slandered like no other country on earth. At the UN, Israel is subjected to consistent, systematic discrimination. Only Israel is permanently scheduled for condemnation at the UN Human Rights Council – not Iran, not Syria, not North Korea. Only Israel is hounded by UN bodies expressly established to delegitimize its very existence. Only Israel is condemned every year by 20 hostile resolutions in the UN General Assembly. The UN, my friends, has a shameful record of singling out Israel for castigation and condemnation. So I have a question for you. Why would anyone think that the UN could decide on a fair and secure peace for Israel?

Yet, amazingly, there are some who believe exactly that. They seek to impose terms on Israel in the UN Security Council. And those terms would undoubtedly be stacked against us. They always are. So, such an effort in the UN would only convince the Palestinians that they can stab their way to a state. Mind you, not a state next to Israel, but a state instead of Israel. A Security Council resolution to pressure Israel would further harden Palestinian positions and, thereby, could actually kill the chances of peace for many, many years. And that is why I hope the United States will maintain its longstanding position to reject such a UN resolution.

I was glad to hear the presidential candidates from both parties reaffirm this basic principle. Peace won't come through UN Security Council resolutions, but through direct negotiations between the parties.

The best formula for achieving peace remains two states for two peoples, in which a demilitarized Palestinian state finally recognizes the Jewish state. Now, I know there's some skepticism about my views on this. So let me state unequivocally, and here's the acid test: I am ready to begin such negotiations immediately, without preconditions, any time, anywhere.

That's a fact. But President Abbas is not ready to do so. That's also a fact. There is political will here in Jerusalem. There's no political will there in Ramallah.

For the last five-and-a-half years, President Abbas has refused to sit down and talk with me even for a minute. But that doesn't mean he's been silent. He has helped inculcate a new generation of young Palestinians with murderous hatred for Israel. And, my friends, this incitement has deadly consequences. Palestinian children are taught to stab Jews. They are taught that the goal of the Palestinian people is not to establish a state on the West Bank, but in all of Israel – in Akko, Haifa, Nazareth, Jaffa.

Now, what I'm about to show you is deeply disturbing. I think you have to see for yourselves what the Palestinians are teaching their children. I want you to see the daily Pledge of Allegiance of Palestinian children. Take a look.

[Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j1leD-D2Dpc>]

This is sick. It's inexcusable. My friends, that little girl wasn't born hating. She was taught to hate, as were the Palestinians who murdered the American student Taylor Force, and other American citizens in recent months. You've already heard what an impressive young man Taylor was, but President Abbas's Fatah movement praised Taylor's killer – and I quote this – as "a hero and a martyr". Now, that's not from Hamas; that's coming from Abbas. And now the Palestinians will spur even more terrorism by rewarding the families of murderers – including those who murdered Americans – with a regular monthly payment.

So the message they send to Palestinians is clear: terrorism pays – literally.

If the international community really wants to advance peace, it must demand that the Palestinians stop poisoning the minds of their children. If the international community wants to advance peace, it must address the true core of the conflict: the persistent Palestinian refusal to accept a Jewish state in any borders.

So there's bad news, but there's also some good news. While the Palestinians are stuck in their refusal to make peace, others are moving forward. First, Israel's peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan have weathered many storms. Second, increasingly, our other neighbors recognize that we have common interests. They understand that we face the same threats from Iran and

from ISIS. Now, I can tell you from a perspective of my lifetime: This is a historic change. I believe it offers a unique opportunity to advance peace. And we are working every day to seize that opportunity.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am confident that over time the trend of embracing Israel will overcome the trend of maligning Israel, because, ultimately, freedom beats tyranny and, ultimately, when vigorously defended, truth beats lies. So I believe that Israel faces a future of promise. I believe that when we stand together, all of us, we can overcome all the challenges facing us.

And of these challenges, none is greater than Iran's unrelenting aggression. Iran remains fully committed to genocide – our genocide. Its leaders loudly, openly, even proudly, say and proclaim that their goal is to destroy Israel. Iran sends deadly weapons to Hezbollah in Lebanon against us. It bankrolls Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Gaza against us. It seeks to open a new terror front on the Golan against us. And it offers thousands of dollars for each Palestinian terror attack against us.

So here's what I believe: I believe that both those who supported the nuclear deal and those who opposed it can, at the very least, work together to stop Iran's aggression and terror and hold Iran accountable for its transgressions.

Since the nuclear deal, Iran has continued to conduct ballistic missile tests, in defiance of its international obligations. As you've heard, Iran recently fired a ballistic missile with a Hebrew inscription painted on it. It said, "Israel must be wiped out." So, ladies and gentlemen, the writing is not on the wall; it's on the missile.

Now, my friends, an arrow just like this was shot by a Roman soldier at Yodfat. He was fighting to end Jewish independence once and for all. But imperial Rome is long gone and I am speaking to you today from our capital, Jerusalem, as the Prime Minister of the reborn Jewish state. We have restored our independence. We have restored our capacity to defend ourselves. Iran should learn this history and it should have no illusions. Israel will defend itself mightily against all those who seek to destroy us. And Iran should remember that today it's not only the enemies of the Jewish people who have arrows. Today, the Jewish state can defend itself with powerful arrows of our own. Take a look.

[Video: <https://youtu.be/qqzqBxKW7HE>]

The Arrow missile defense system is the product of Americans and Israelis working together. So I want to say again to all of you: Thank you, America. Thank you, AIPAC. Thank you for helping secure our common future; and a happy Purim to all of you. Thank you.

**מדינת ישראל
משרד החוץ**

20 October 2015

PM Netanyahu's Speech at the 37th Zionist Congress
(Communicated by the Prime Minister's Office)

We've witnessed a lot of changes since the last Congress, great challenges and great opportunities for Israel and the Jewish people. We are now, despite our desires and our efforts for peace and for tranquility, we are now in the midst of a campaign, an assault, and not the first one, that seeks to murder Israelis wherever they are. And this campaign is incorporating medieval ideology with modern technology. It's a unique combination.

I am seeing it primarily on the social networks. I'll talk about it in a minute. And we know for example that the various attackers are using their Facebook pages to indicate what they are, to

absorb messages of incitement. I appreciate the fact that Facebook is trying to find the balance between free speech and the safety of the public. I think that warrants special attention in this case.

Now let me try to put in perspective what it is we're fighting: We're fighting not only a campaign of physical assaults on the Jewish state – the Jewish people have experienced that throughout the centuries - but as we've experienced in our history, the physical assaults on the Jews is always preceded and accompanied by an assault on the truth, campaign of defamation and slander. And what I would like to examine with you today are the ten big lies that are hurled at us. And the only way that you can fight lies, and especially big lies, is to puncture them with the simple truth.

So here's the first big lie: Israel is trying to change the status quo on the Temple Mount. No, we're not. We haven't changed the status quo on the Temple Mount in years. There's a simple arrangement: Muslims visit the Temple Mount and they pray there. Others, Jews, Christians and other denominations, secular people, they come – secular people pray too by the way - they visit the Temple Mount but they don't. Sunday to Thursday, 7:00 to 11:00, the non-Muslims visit. Muslims visit the rest of the time. How many Muslims have visited and prayed on the Temple Mount, on average, last year? Anybody know? No, not 300,000, three and a half million. Eighty thousand Christians and other denominations and 12,000 Jews. That hasn't changed.

Though the Temple Mount is our holiest site – it was built there by king Solomon 3,000 years ago, 1,500 years before the birth of Islam – though we've been attached to it for 3 millennia, we in no way deny the sacred sites or the rights or the free access for other denominations, and Israel has not and will not change the status quo. This is one huge lie.

The second is not only that we seek to change the prayer arrangements on the Temple Mount and the non-prayer arrangements on the Temple Mount, which we don't, is that we seek to destroy the al-Aqsa Mosque. Now this is particularly farcical. It would be farcical if it weren't tragic. My grandfather came to this land in 1920 and he landed in Jaffa, and very shortly after he landed he went to the immigration office in Jaffa. And a few months later it was burned down by marauders. These attackers, Arab attackers, murdered several Jews, including our celebrated writer Brenner.

And this attack and other attacks on the Jewish community in 1920, 1921, 1929, were instigated by a call of the Mufti of Jerusalem Haj Amin al-Husseini, who was later sought for war crimes in the Nuremberg trials because he had a central role in fomenting the final solution. He flew to Berlin. Hitler didn't want to exterminate the Jews at the time, he wanted to expel the Jews. And Haj Amin al-Husseini went to Hitler and said, "If you expel them, they'll all come here." "So what should I do with them?" he asked. He said, "Burn them." And he was sought in, during the Nuremberg trials for prosecution. He escaped it and later died of cancer, after the war, died of cancer in Cairo. But this is what Haj Amin al-Husseini said. He said, "The Jews seek to destroy the Temple Mount." My grandfather in 1920 seeks to destroy...? Sorry, the al-Aqsa Mosque.

So this lie is about a hundred years old. It fomented many, many attacks. The Temple Mount stands. The al-Aqsa Mosque stands. But the lie stands too, persists.

First lie: Israel seeks to change the status quo – false. Second lie: Israel seeks to destroy the

al-Aqsa Mosque – false. It's particularly onerous because Israel is the only country that protects the holy sites in the Middle East. You see Muslims, the militant Shi'ites and the militant Sunnis, blowing each other's mosques to smithereens across Iraq, Syria, you name it, churches – of course, synagogues – don't even talk about it. And ancient shrines of great world heritage – blown up. The only place where the holy shrines of all are absolutely guaranteed is in Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty and of course in the rest of Israel.

Here's lie number three – the reason you have this surge of violence is because there has been a surge in settlement construction. Did you hear this? Yeah, all the time. Well, here are the numbers – some of you are not going to like them. In my first term in office, we built an average of 3,000 units annually in Judea and Samaria. In Barak's single year, he built 5,000. In Sharon, it was down to 1,900. In Olmert, it was down to 1,700. And given the circumstances, in my successive terms it's down to 1,500.

There are reasons for that. We can discuss that some other time but facts are facts. These numbers are exact. So, far from seeing a settlement surge, there's actually been a decline in construction. I raise that because this is raised again and again and again. The Palestinians are protesting because of a surge in settlement activity. Sorry, not true. And I put the facts forward before the world. Some surge.

The fourth big lie is that we are executing Palestinians- executing Palestinians. When our people are fighting back against these knife-wielders, meat-cleaver-wielders, people who try hack to death our citizens and our soldiers and our policemen, they're executing people. And what was the example? Ahmed Mansara, this boy that Abu Mazen put forward. He held his picture and he said we're executing this innocent boy. He's not innocent, he nearly stabbed to death, he stabbed nearly to death a 13-year-old Israeli boy riding on a bicycle.

He's not dead. He's been released, I think he's about to be released, from the Hadassah Hospital where his victim is struggling for his life. This is a big lie that we punctured right on the spot. Because here's the thing about the lies that I'm describing: If left unchallenged, they continue to expand like a cloud and by dint of constant repetition, these lies assume the cache of self-evident truth. And I think it's vital to put the facts before the world.

The fifth point is that Israel uses excessive force in general. That's not true either. What do you think would happen on the streets of New York? Let's just imagine the NYPD and people are rushing in the streets trying to knife down their police or innocent passers-by. What would the police do in New York City or in Paris or in Moscow or anywhere else? You know exactly what they would do. And this is what our police force is doing. To those who question our use of force, I would ask: How would you respond to it? How would your police respond to it? And our instructions are very clear. If there's a threat to life, either to the police officer or to innocent civilians, take action to neutralize it. Half the terrorists are killed; half the terrorists are apprehended; one terrorist escaped.

The sixth lie is that the reason we have this increase is not only a surge in settlements, it's the stagnation in the peace process. Well, some of the worst terrorism that Israel has experienced in its history occurred when the peace process was at its peak. We've had terrorism when there was a peace process. We've had terrorism when there was no peace process. We've had terrorism when there was an Israel. We've had terrorism when there was no Israel. We've had terrorism when there were settlements. We've had terrorism when there were no settlements,

when we didn't even control Judea and Samaria.

The real reason we have this terrorism is not because the terrorists are frustrated in the peace process. They're frustrated because there's a State of Israel and that frustration will continue.

The seventh myth is that Abbas is a moderate. Abbas does not send his security forces to attack us, this is true. And there is ongoing cooperation; that is true too. So on one hand, Abbas does what I've just described, but on the other hand, he is a steady inciter. He incites all the time. He and his Fatah partners and the official websites of the Palestinian Authority incite day in and day out on those social networks. And to put a fine point on it, he said the other day, "I welcome every drop of blood spilled in Jerusalem." Are these the words of a moderate? He glorifies these killers.

He hasn't condemned a single one of the 30 terrorist attacks on Israelis over the last month. And I think that people who call public squares in the name of mass murderers should be condemned. I haven't heard a word of condemnation, practically not a syllable of condemnation for this irresponsible behavior of Abbas. And I think what we should tell Abu Mazen is: Stop lying, stop inciting.

The eighth big lie is that only international observers will restore calm on the Temple Mount. The last thing we have to do is to take the most explosive square kilometer on earth and put there the General Assembly of the United Nations. That is not a force for moderation. Israel enforces the status quo and we should tell the truth, affirm Israel's proven commitment to the status quo and hold President Abbas, Hamas and the Islamic Movement in Israel accountable for their lies and incitement. That is what is producing this violence.

The ninth lie is that the violence is erupted continually because there's no Palestinian state. Palestinians have repeatedly refused to accept a nation-state for themselves. They've repeatedly refused to accept it if it means accepting a nation-state for the Jewish people alongside it. That was and remains the core of the conflict – the persistent refusal to recognize Israel in any boundaries.

Now I spoke to you about my grandfather. After he came here in 1920, we had the surge of the attacks at that year. In 1921, the Jewish community in Hebron, who had been there for millennia, was massacred – no provocation, no reasons. In 1936 to 1939, massive attacks by Palestinians on the Jewish community here, throughout the coast – in Tel Aviv, Jaffa, elsewhere. There were no settlements there, no territories, no desire even for a Palestinian state. And this continued, of course, into 1947, '48, when the Palestinians rejected a partition for a Jewish state and a Palestinian state – no territories then, a state offered to them.

And then it continued in the attacks against us, terrorist attacks by the Fedayeen and others in 1956. And in 1967, those attacks, the desire to destroy Israel continued despite the fact that the West Bank, Judea and Samaria, and Gaza were firmly in Arab hands. So it couldn't have been the reason for our attacks. Now we're talking about a century, half a century – from 1920 to 1967, that's 47 years – where the attacks, the attacks are going against us one after the other. Half a century and it's clearly not the core of the conflict. The core of the conflict was the desire to destroy the Jews anywhere, without a state, and with a state without the territories and without settlements.

Now, when we came into possession of Judea, Samaria and Gaza, and when we came back to our ancestral homeland into these disputed lands and built some communities, some settlements, we uprooted them according to the book. They changed the narrative. After '67 what the Palestinians did is turn the result of their aggression – our presence in those territories – into its cause. And the Israeli government of Ariel Sharon made a decision with which I disagreed.

They uprooted all the Israelis from Gaza, disinterred the graves, gave the territory to Abu Mazen and he promptly handed it over to Hamas under the force of their guns. Well, we didn't get peace. We got thousands and thousands of rockets hurled into our cities. And when we asked Hamas, "Why are you firing these rockets on our cities? Is it to liberate the West Bank?" And they said, "Yeah, that too, but it's to liberate Palestine – Haifa, Akko, Jaffa, Jerusalem of course." That is what they said.

We turned to the others, to Abbas and the Palestinian Authority and I said, "What about you? Are you willing to recognize the Jewish state? You demand a nation-state for the Palestinian people. Assuming we solve the problem of the border, of the settlements and so on, would you then be prepared to recognize a Jewish state, a nation-state for the Jewish people?" They hem and haw and basically say no because they'd have to give up the fantasy of the so-called right of return because they have to end the conflict, because they don't want a state to end the conflict because they want a state to continue the conflict and eradicate the Jewish state. This is what this conflict has always been about. That's what it's about. You can't deny the facts. You can stick your head in the sand and be an ostrich, but we Jews do not stick our heads in the sand. We see the territory, we see reality as it is and we confront that reality.

And here's the tenth, final myth – and this is a doozier for some of you. This one shows how persistent and absurd these myths are and this was common parlance for our critics, for commentators, for political leaders, for the greatest news media in the world and this was uttered day in, day out, every hour by the hour, by the international community and even some here and even by our own people. And they said this as though it was self-evident truth and here's what it said: The core of the conflict in the Middle East – conflict always in the singular – the core of the conflict in the Middle East is the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Remember that one?

Now four years after the Arab Spring and the convulsions that take place, the disintegration of Syria, the disintegration of Iraq, the disintegration of Libya, the wars in Yemen, the chaos in the Sinai and everything else that convulses North Africa and the Middle East from India to the Atlantic, from the borders of India I'm happy to say to the Atlantic, there is great convulsion. What's that got to do with the Palestinian-Israeli conflict? And the answer is: Nothing. Yet this was repeated over and over and over again. There were two truths – this was one of them. The core of the conflict was the Palestinian-Israeli conflict; and the core of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict were the settlements. Neither one is true.

Now it's evident. The first one is, you know, there are still true believers – not many – walking about us, but they're fairly silent about the first one because when millions are displaced, when hundreds of thousands are butchered, when every week in Istanbul now they had... in Ankara they had 100 people die in one day and thousands die every month – thousands – in Iraq, in Saudi Arabia, in the Sinai, in Libya. It's patently absurd. And yet people believe this. They believe this with religious fervor, I would say. I'm talking about the

West. Now they believe the settlement myth even though they see it before their eyes. We left Gaza. We left every settlement – nothing. The conflict continues. We offer a deal and we say, "Okay, assuming we solve the settlement problem, what about the settlement called Tel Aviv? What about Jaffa? Give up the ghost." Nope.

The core of the conflicts in the Middle East is the battle between early medievalism, very primitive, very violent, the forces of militant Islam, and modernity. The core of the conflict, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, is the persistent refusal to recognize a Jewish state in any boundaries. There is no way to battle lies except to tell the truth. Any attempt to forge peace based on lies will crash against the realities of the Middle East, will crash against the rocks of reality. We look forward and we say we want a real peace, a lasting peace, a peace where our long-standing rights, the right of the Jewish people to live in their ancestral homeland as a free and secure people – those rights are guaranteed.

We have no preconditions for entering negotiations. We have foundations for a solution and we will be very firm and insistent on it. But there is no limitation on our side for entering negotiations. Yet that too is not being met by the other side. It has enjoyed a long pass, it has been given a pass by the international community, the Palestinian Authority. They are not held to their incitement. They're not held accountable for the violence that they foment all day, all night, every day, every month, on their Palestinian social networks and this has to end. My government has taken very strong steps to bolster our security, adding forces, giving them the means to do their job, punishing people who blow up houses or blow up people, murder innocent people. We do all that.

But I think the larger battle that we fight is the battle for the truth and I urge every one of you to be a soldier in that battle. We've withstood, in the last century, the many assaults on our people. We came back to our homeland. We built our state. We've overcome tremendous forces. Israel is a modern, democratic, progressive and powerful state. We've withstood the attacks of terror, Palestinian terror, over the decades and we'll overcome this one too. But I believe that the biggest battle we have to fight is the battle for the facts. The facts win over the fiction if they're repeated clearly, responsibly, firmly. This is what I ask all of you to do for the sake of the Jewish state and for the sake of the Jewish people.

Thank you

**מדינת ישראל
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14 October 2015

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Speech at the Special Knesset Session in Honor of President of India Pranab Mukherjee
(Communicated by the GPO – Government Press Office)

Welcome to Israel and to Jerusalem. This is an historic visit. For the very first time, an Indian President has come to Israel – the president of the largest democracy in the world coming to the only democracy in the Middle East. We are all impressed, Mr. President, by the changes India is undergoing in the last few years – its growing economy, hundreds of millions leaving the cycle of poverty, extraordinary development.

India is a vast country and Israel is a tiny country, but together we are doing very big things –

in science, technology, commerce, cyber, agriculture, energy, water and also in security.

The new world is changing at a speed unprecedented in human history and it presents us with huge potential and diverse partnerships. Mr. President, the future belongs to those who demonstrate their ability to invent and innovate, and both our peoples excel in that. We are working together to realize this innovative potential to improve well-being and bring prosperity to our countries – much more well-being, much more prosperity, because the potential is absolutely limitless.

The differences between India and Israel in size and population are enormous, but at the same time there are obvious similarities that bind us together. The first such connection is cultural. Our two cultures are among the most ancient cultures in the world, and that is the true foundation through which we embrace the future together. They are cultures built on philosophy, wisdom, literature, the pursuit of truth and the quest for the secret of life and the secret of the universe.

My late uncle Elisha Netanyahu, who was a mathematics professor at the Technion, used to talk admiringly about the genius of Indian mathematicians. We, the Jews, have Einstein. He was a physicist. You, the Indians, have Ramanujan and other mathematicians and physicists.

Long before our countries gained independence from British rule at more or less the same time, there were those among us who were fascinated by the other's culture and the other's efforts to gain independence, which you took part in, Mr. President. As early as 1930, our first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, spoke about the great desire of the peoples of India for independent national and political expression – and on the other side, the famous Indian poet Tagore, the 1913 Nobel Prize laureate for literature, declared that Zionism was one of the foundations of world peace and justice. Tagore saw our people as a bridge between East and West, concurring with the Father of Zionism, Herzl, who emphasized that the Jewish state would function as a bridge between Asia and Europe, which is actually happening today.

The second connection between us is our commitment to democracy. Democracy is not only a form of government; it is a way of life and expresses the deeply-held values of freedom and opposing tyranny. Indeed, even in the face of the great challenges of fanaticism and war and terrorism that have befallen both countries, Israel and India have maintained exemplary democracies for seven decades.

And Mr. President, you are very knowledgeable about the complications related to democracy. We had a chance to talk a little in the office of the Speaker. You also served as Minister of Finance, and certainly anyone in this house who has been a minister of finance is familiar with the difficulties and stumbling blocks in any democratic process. Democracy is sometimes frenetically dynamic and some say it is not effective. I say it is the most effective system of management for small nations and big nations alike, as it channels the creative agency in each and every citizen; and it allows for solving disputes through discussion and debate and ultimately at the ballot box.

This cultural democratic connection between us is a very powerful bond. But there is a third connection too, which you referred to, and that is the technological-scientific connection. When I was studying at MIT in the USA, I met many students from India and was impressed

by their talent and skill. Finance Minister Kachlon just told me that when he attended a course not far from there, at Harvard University, seven of every ten professors were Indian. I have heard that in certain areas of Silicon Valley one can hear two main languages – Hebrew and the various dialects of Hindi, and every once in a while one can hear some English too. This is of course hyperbole, but the point is that the time has come for our technologists and entrepreneurs, not only in academia, to meet each other much more often, not in California, but in our own countries, in our Silicon Wadi and in your Bangalore.

Mr. President, as you mentioned, we are promoting Israel as the leading country in cyber security. We are creating a very large center; it is already open and is still being built in Be'er Sheva, at Ben Gurion University, with an industrial park to which all the biggest companies in the world are coming. We would be very happy, Mr. President, if Indian mathematicians and entrepreneurs would come and collaborate with us in this Silicone Valley, and I promise to send reciprocal delegations to Bangalore. This is extremely important.

The Prime Minister of India, my friend Narendra Modi, and I have agreed on economic and technological cooperation between Israel and India on an unprecedented scale, and it is taking place already. First and foremost is implementing the Four-Colour Revolution which he has set as a national objective – the four colors of the Indian flag: orange for solar energy, green for agricultural development, white for the development of the dairy industry and blue for improving water quality.

Prime Minister Modi told me – we speak on the phone frequently and we met recently at the UN – he told me in our latest conversation: “We want Israel.” He said: “We cannot implement the Four-Colour Revolution without you.”

Mr. President, I take this as a huge compliment for our country. Israel is happy to get on board with this project. We have a sunny country and we are developing advanced solar systems. The invention of drip irrigation has enabled us to irrigate arid areas and successfully fight desertification. We have agricultural innovations that help us increase crop yields and improve their quality. The average yield of an Israeli dairy cow is the highest in the world – more than a Dutch cow, a French cow or any other cow. We have built huge desalination plants, which are dramatically improving our water economy in general and in arid areas in particular.

Mr. President, our output from rainwater is down by half; in our 67 years of independence, our population has grown tenfold; our GDP per capita is 40 times higher; but we do not have a water problem – we’ve solved it by recycling water and using other technologies in which we are leaders, and we will gladly give India these technologies to use.

Mr. President, there is a price Israel and India pay for being two pluralistic democracies with proud pasts who openly embrace the future. Our two countries are attacked by radical terrorists who think that our freedoms threaten them and their world views. The plague of terrorism is a challenge that your country and our country have been dealing with for many years. We face it alone and sadly together, like when the horrific terrorist attack took place in Mumbai seven years ago, and the Chabad House was one of its targets.

Murderous terrorism, which targets innocents, has no moral justification. It should be fought with all our might, and that is what we are doing now at a time when Israel’s citizens are

being attacked by incited rioters. While we strive for coexistence and peace, I would say that in order to achieve coexistence and peace, we must make it clear to our enemies that terrorism will not defeat us, it does not pay, not even suicide terrorism. Therefore, we decided at the Cabinet meeting yesterday that in addition to demolishing the homes of terrorists, we will not allow new houses to be built where houses were torn down. We will confiscate the property of terrorists who have carried out attacks. We will revoke permanent residency status from terrorists and we will use IDF soldiers to reinforce police forces in cities and along roads. This is our duty as a responsible leadership to stand strong when faced with terrorists who have no qualms about taking human life.

In addition, we will fight the inciters who spread blood libels to provoke murderous attacks against us. They are doing this increasingly over the internet. The massive wave of fundamentalism that is flooding the Middle East and the entire world is aggravated by the link between radical Islam and Facebook. Ignorance, the return to early Medievalism, meets technology and harnesses it for its needs. This is how hordes of youngsters are swept up in the murderous and distorted delusions of ISIS, and this is how hordes of Palestinian youngsters and children are swept up in the murderous and distorted delusions of the radical Islamists around us and unfortunately among us, who spread fabrications, like that we want to destroy the al-Aqsa Mosque or disturb the status quo on the Temple Mount. That is a lie, and a big one at that. We are the ones who faithfully protect the sacred sites of all religions, in Jerusalem and anywhere else in our country.

We respect all religious beliefs, just as in India people of many different beliefs coexist, and any effort you make to safeguard mutual respect is made by us as well. But when religious incitement ignites a religious conflagration, and the gospel of fundamentalism inspires horrible violence, we must say "no more." We will not allow the radicals to destroy what was built over generations through hard work. I can see the efforts by the heads of local councils, public leaders in the Israeli Arab population who are trying to restore coexistence. It is not quite enough yet, but they bravely stand up and they have started to say: "Don't destroy our country, don't ruin the coexistence".

I appreciate what I hear and I hope, for the good of everyone, that we will hear more of it because religious fanaticism has been eroding the entire Middle East over the last few years. It is pulling countries apart, triggering massacres of hundreds of thousands of people and the exile of millions, and it is important to fight against it in any way possible. Fanatics are destroying ancient cultural treasures and historical sites that have stood for decades and millennia. Imagine, Mr. President, that someone would maliciously ruin the famous temples of India or the Taj Mahal. This is what is actually happening all around us.

And in the face of this wave of mass murder that is washing over our region, Israel is an island of stability even during this time of turbulence. We are facing terrorism, we are facing ongoing threats to annihilate our country, and we will overcome. They will not accomplish what they seek. We are determined to respond.

Mr. President, the terrorists are trying to do all they can to thwart any effort to reach reconciliation and to restart the peace process. I am telling you: Israel wants peace. I want peace. I want renewed peace talks with our Palestinian neighbors immediately, with no preconditions. And it will be a difficult negotiation because in order for us to achieve peace, terrorism must stop and we must have real security arrangements on the ground. Above all, in

order for us to achieve peace, the Palestinians will finally have to recognize the right of the Jewish people to a nation state. They want us to recognize their nation state, they should be so kind as to recognize ours. The peace we wish for must be a real peace, a secure peace and an everlasting peace.

Mr. President, I know that you share our desire for peace and security, and I must tell you that we feel the great empathy and affection India has for the Jewish people. The wonderful Bnei Menashe people, whose members have come and are coming from India to Israel, serve as a living bridge between us, and with their love for Israel and their great humility and through impressive efforts, they are absorbed into Israeli society, but they also create that living bridge between our two peoples.

As you know, India is a favorite destination for Israeli backpackers. Tens of thousands of Israelis visit India every year, mostly newly discharged IDF soldiers, but also many adults and entire families. And there are entire villages in India where the signs are in Hebrew, helping these tourists feel more at home. They come home captivated by your country, which is characterized by cultural richness and infinite sights and colors.

But there is one event related to these tourists that symbolizes the special bond that is becoming ever stronger between India and Israel. During the recent earthquake that struck Nepal, it was India and Israel that sent the largest search-and-rescue delegations to help the Nepalese people during its time of need. Not only did we send search-and-rescue teams, but they worked in cooperation. I telephoned my friend Prime Minister Modi to thank him for his cooperation. He provided aircrafts and airports for our teams' use. And he told me something very important: "I see the cooperation between us, between India and Israel, for the benefit of the Nepalese people, as a shining example of friendship between nations."

Distinguished President, I see your visit to Israel as an historic milestone in the advancement of the friendship between our two nations. This is demonstrated in everything I have described; it finds expression in the shift in India's traditional voting pattern in international forums which conveys what is actually taking place between our peoples, between our governments, between our countries. This can be not only a shining example of friendship between nations, but also a sign for the future – what goodwill, human genius and the mobilization of nations can do for the benefit of all humanity.

Welcome to Israel,

Welcome to Jerusalem,

Welcome, our true friend.