

**Pro-Israel Rally
College Park, Maryland
November 13, 2002**

Rabbi Stuart Weinblatt

We gather together today – students, faculty, alumnae, friends of the university, and friends of democracy to declare our unequivocal, unwavering support for the only democracy in the Middle East.

In a sea of despots and dictatorships, Israel stands alone. Besieged by those who seek her demise and destruction, we stand today with the people of Israel, America's best friend, and only true reliable ally in the Middle East.

We have witnessed over the past two years an unprecedented, well-orchestrated assault on Israel and its citizens. Who are the targets?

The innocent victims are children on their way to school, college students in a school cafeteria, young people trying to enjoy a night out, mothers and fathers on their way to work. These are the people the Palestinian terrorists target – innocent victims, people like you and me.

A particularly heinous assault occurred just this week. The Washington Post, certainly no friend of Israel, described the attack in these words:

“....in a 15 minute shooting spree (the Palestinian) gunned down a woman strolling on a sidewalk with her boyfriend....He then bashed through the front door of a nearby house, killed a 34 year old woman and shot dead her 5 year old and 4 year olds sons as they lay in their beds beneath an oversize stuffed Winnie the Pooh bear and a Bugs Bunny night light...”

A grieving father is left behind. Grandparents mourn. A world is torn asunder. And to think there are those who would justify this kind of barbarism!

We know how our community felt when people were picked off by snipers. Imagine how the people of Israel must feel having to live with this kind of terrorism on a daily basis.

And for every attack we hear about, there are dozens of others we do not hear about. And for every one we don't hear about, there are hundreds of others that are thwarted and prevented by the vigilance of Israel's defense forces. The very same army, which prior to destroying a building which is used to launch rockets against the citizens of Israel, announces its target in advance in order to spare lives.

I ask you – Is there any other nation in the world, faced with these kinds of unrelenting, constant attempts to murder its citizens that would take such precautions and act in such a humane manner?

But as terrible as these murderous acts are, they are not all that is done to tear away at the fiber of Israel. Israel is fighting a two-front war – against Palestinian terrorists sent by Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Yassir Arafat's Fatah. While condemning for the Western media, he dispatches and finances the very people he supposedly condemns. And there is Hezbollah on the north and other

potential threats from the 22 Arab nations surrounding Israel, who still do not yet recognize its right to exist and are still, after 53 years, intent upon seeing her destroyed.

But this is not the only threat Israel faces. Not content to attack Israeli people, there are also those who wish to destroy the ties that bind the United States and Israel, who seek to sever the close relationship between our two nations.

And we are here to say – this will not happen.

We are here to say, for all to hear – we will not abandon our friend and ally.

Each of us has a choice to make. And the choice is quite simple. Whose side are you on? Do you stand with the victims, the people of Israel who are fighting for their existence and struggling to survive, or do you stand with those who perpetrate such acts?

Do you stand with the tiny nation which has achieved so much and which shares our values, or do you stand with those who seek her destruction?

Do you stand with the people who shed tears with us on September 11th, or do you choose to stand with those who danced in the streets and passed out candies when America was attacked?

We are here today to say – It is Israel we choose to stand with.

We are here today to say – We will not tolerate any attempts to weaken or sever the ties between the United States of America and Israel. We will not turn our back on our friend.

We reject the distortions and the lies of those who attempt to portray Israel as an aggressor, for those of us here today know that a democracy has a basic right to defend its citizens and that Israel has exhibited unprecedented restraint in extraordinary circumstances.

To single Israel out for the kind of criticism it receives, is anti-Semitism. Israel's enemies get upset when we say this and try to hide behind the transparent cloak of respectable dissent. We say – it is time to make anti-Semitism politically incorrect again!

When there is no free press in any Arab nation, but only Israel is singled out for criticism, it is anti-Semitism.

When women in Arab nations do not enjoy rights, but only Israel is singled out for criticism, it is anti-Semitism.

When there is no religious freedom in any Arab nation, but only Israel is singled out for criticism, it is anti-Semitism.

When China occupies Tibet for 50 years, but only Israel is singled out for criticism, it is anti-Semitism.

When hatred, coupled with bigotry and lies which nourishes and encourages violence, exists in a society which praises murderers by naming streets and plazas in their honor, and incites and trains its young people to kill, and when this is the official dogma and policy of the Arab governments, imams and media and is ignored, while singling out Israel for criticism, it is anti-Semitism.

We denounce and deplore it in all forms.

Let the University, let this university be a beacon of light and tolerance, and let it lead the way for other campuses across the nation.

The Arab world has tried every way possible to defeat the indefatigable people of Israel. Military assaults have been accompanied by parallel attempts to cripple the economy of Israel. Ever since Israel has existed, they have attempted to institute a boycott of Israel, of its academics, its economy, and of companies doing business with Israel.

The Congress of the United States declared it immoral and illegal and said we will not tolerate such bigotry.

Well, once again, there are those who are attempting to put a noose around the economy of Israel. Welcome to The Arab Boycott – The Sequel.

And so, just as that effort to isolate Israel was rejected then, so too, now must any effort to economically isolate Israel be rejected.

Let the message go forth from this gathering today -- We will not abandon our friend and ally. We stand together on the side of the people of Israel in their eternal quest for peace.

Am Yisrael Hai – the people of Israel lives!
Artzot Habrit Haia – the people of America lives.

Together we stand == today and always!

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