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CONGRESS, FOREIGN POLICY

Brown launches defense of Israel

Posted by Matt Viser, reporter June 6, 2010 08:55 PM

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WASHINGTON – Senator Scott Brown tonight launched into a strong defense of Israel, saying critics of the recent flotilla incident were downplaying the security threats against the country.

Brown, addressing a pro-Israel group in Boston, tied Israel and the United States together in fighting against terrorism. He also called for further sanctions on Iran, saying “there is no greater strategic threat facing the world than a nuclear-armed Iran.”

“I don’t need polling or political strategists to help define a nuanced stance on Israel,” Brown said, according to a copy of his prepared remarks. “We are engaged in a worldwide struggle against radical, violent jihad. It is the defining issue of our time. Our best friends and the strongest allies in this fight are in the State of Israel.”

“Let’s remember – Israel is our ally. Israel is a democracy,” Brown added. “Hamas is a terrorist group with clear and genuine intentions of destroying Israel’s way of life.”

Brown made the remarks at a leadership dinner sponsored by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. The event was closed to the press, but Brown’s staff released a copy of his prepared remarks.

Israel has received widespread criticism for raiding one of six ships that were bound for Gaza, filled with supplies, and attempting to break an Israeli blockade. Nine were killed after Israel commandos stormed aboard.

Tonight marked Brown's first comments on the incident, which occurred last week.

Brown, saying that “the story of Israel made a distinct impression on me at a young age,” also said he would travel to Israel to further examine issues facing the country and attempt to strengthen ties between the two countries.

“Their ability to maintain their identity and culture against enormous obstacles mirrors America’s own struggle for independence,” he said.

“Now I know I am still the new guy on the block, with a little more than 100 days in the Senate under my belt, but I have placed U.S. – Israeli security as one of the most significant and highest priorities on my agenda,” he added.

Brown also said that one of his first acts in the senate was to tell Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid that “the senate could not take its eye off the ball in regards to the threat of Iran.”

“A safe, secure Israel, standing shoulder-to-shoulder with the United States and its allies is

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essential to the continued liberty of our nations,” Brown said. “Our fates have never been more intertwined. May God continue to bless Israel and the United States of America.”

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Here is a complete copy of the text:

Thank you, Howard. And on behalf of everyone in this room, thank you for your exceptional work in promoting and maintaining a strong U.S – Israel partnership.

Thank you for the warm welcome. I couldn't be more honored to have this opportunity to address the AIPAC leadership dinner. I see a lot of familiar faces in the crowd, and I gotta tell you, it's nice to be amongst friends again.

2010 promises to be a very busy political year. There are many candidates here tonight – Republicans, Democrats, independents – and while there may be stark differences in our political philosophies, we have shared beliefs in the fundamentals of freedom and a free society.

These are difficult times for our friends in Israel. Its enemies are emboldened by recent events, and the usual critics have been quick to condemn Israel's right to defend itself.

I want you to know where I stand – I stand with the mothers, fathers, grandparents, brothers, sisters and the children of Israel.

I don't need polling or political strategists to help define a nuanced stance on Israel. We are engaged in a worldwide struggle against radical, violent jihad. It is the defining issue of our time. Our best friends and the strongest allies in this fight are in the State of Israel.

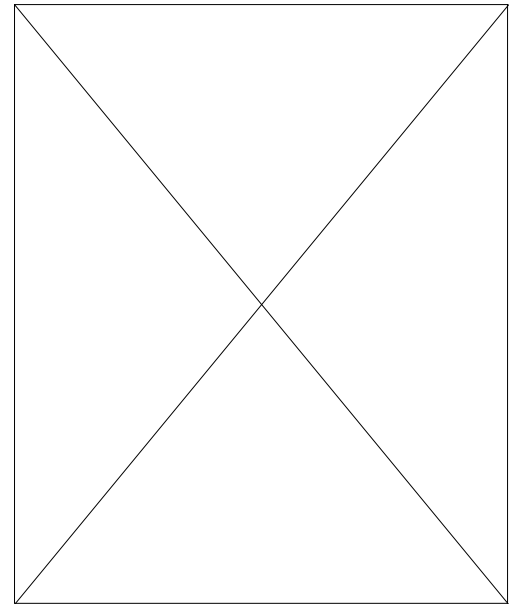
The story of Israel made a distinct impression on me at a young age due to the unyielding faith and perseverance of the Jewish people. Their ability to maintain their identity and culture against enormous obstacles mirrors America's own struggle for independence. It is something that we -- as citizens of this great nation – can all relate to. Regardless of political party or affiliation, Americans should always stand together in our unwavering commitment to Israel's security because of who we are, what our two nations stand for, and what we stand against.

I was disappointed that, after the unfortunate loss of life on the sea outside Gaza, many rushed to condemn Israel before the facts of this situation became clear. Many conveniently ignored the fact that Israel is at war. Each and every day thousands of its innocent men, women and children face the threat of lethal rocket attacks out of Gaza. Some of the usual critics of Israel have used recent events to question the strong relationship between our countries. They clearly do not understand what makes these two countries special and unique sources of hope to the world.

I cannot emphasize this point enough: Israel is not a liability to the United States. Israel is unquestionably a strategic asset to America. Indeed, there is no greater U.S. ally in the critical area of the Middle East and perhaps no better strategic partnership in the world.

Let's remember – Israel is our ally. Israel is a democracy. Hamas is a terrorist group with clear and genuine intentions of destroying Israel's way of life.

Make no mistake – a strong and secure Israel is important to our own national security. Israel's role as a friend of the United States goes far beyond geopolitical and military matters. Both of our



News From The Washington Bureau

Neal seeks top job on Ways and Means

On a Cape Cod bluff, amid cabanas that overlook the swimming pool and ocean beyond, a group of major campaign contributors this weekend will join US Representative Richard E. Neal at the Chatham Bars Inn, far from his Springfield district. (Globe Staff, 6/3/10)

Knowing the enemy, one avatar at a time

It's a familiar scene in Afghanistan: Donkey carts and hawkers fill the market square. Bearded men in traditional garb drink tea and search for work. A US visitor scans their faces, trying to distinguish friend from foe. (Globe Staff, 5/29/10)

Tea Party's rise could undercut mainstream GOP

The Tea Party movement is energizing elements of the Republican Party and fanning an anti-Washington fervor, but the biggest beneficiaries in the midterm elections, pollsters and political analysts say, could be the main target of their anger: Democrats. (Globe Staff, 5/29/10)

House votes to extend unemployment benefits

The House voted yesterday to extend unemployment benefits and fund more summer jobs, while raising taxes on hedge fund managers and venture capitalists. (Globe Staff, 5/29/10)

Kerry pushes for tougher controls on aid to Pakistan

Senator John F. Kerry is urging the State Department to tighten controls over \$1.45 billion in aid to Pakistan this year, warning that if the money is squandered or stolen, a massive five-year effort to help Pakistanis could collapse. (Globe Staff, 5/27/10)

Air Force attempts to enlist alternative fuel partners

WASHINGTON — The Air Force, the single-largest user of fossil fuels in the federal government, will convene leading scientists, researchers, and energy specialists today to explore ways to wean fighter jets, cargo planes, and a host of day-to-day operations off oil, a major step officials maintain would make the service less vulnerable to shortages and encourage wider commercial use of ... (Globe Staff, 5/26/10)

Kerry backs president on handling of Gulf spill

WASHINGTON — Senator John Kerry yesterday aggressively defended President Obama's handling of the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, arguing that criticism of the president is "ridiculous" and adding that the environmental disaster illustrated the need to act on the Massachusetts Democrat's comprehensive climate change bill. (Globe Staff, 5/26/10)

Former allies tee off on Brown

Senator Scott Brown yesterday drew scorn from former

nations benefit greatly from economic interdependence – a shared entrepreneurial spirit. When the United States sought a partner for its first bilateral free trade agreement it looked to its friend, Israel. Today, the United States and Israel enjoy vibrant free trade, with Israeli exports to the United States having grown 200% since the agreement went into force

admired who had hailed the Massachusetts Republican as a new voice for the conservative cause but now say he has

However, with these shared values also come shared enemies. The violent, radical extremists who perpetrated the September 11 attacks, bombed our embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, and who continue to kill and injure US soldiers in the mountains of Afghanistan are examples of the radical ideologies that Israel has struggled against for decades. Hezbollah terrorists were the first to use suicide attacks in 1983, when they destroyed US Marine barracks in Beirut and killed 241 American soldiers. It took these unfortunate attacks for many US policymakers to comprehend these threats that were long ago contemplated by Israel. Americans are currently getting a better understanding of the challenges that Israel has faced for many years, namely terrorism that threatens our way of life.

While we must continue to hunt down and punish the terrorists at every turn. The real struggle is not only between America and al Qaeda it is also a struggle between radical Islamists on one side and moderate Muslims on the other side -- each battling for the future of Islam in a conflict where free societies, such as the United States and Israel, and our innocent citizens may be targeted for destruction. Indeed Israel, who has long been at the center of this scourge of terrorism and Islamic extremism, continues to be our greatest ally in this fight.

I have said this many times, but it bears repeating: There is no greater strategic threat facing the world than a nuclear-armed Iran. Elements of the Iranian government threaten both their own citizens and people in the region and throughout the world. With nuclear weapons, the power of those dangerous elements within the Iranian regime would grow immensely. The potential of Iran exporting terrorism throughout the region and the world is unacceptable. As a result, the remaining moderate countries and leaders in the Middle East would be severely weakened while the extremists are strengthened. As we have seen throughout history, other countries in the region would have no choice but to join the race for nuclear weapons, which is clearly a destabilizing factor for all.

Today, Iran's uranium enrichment and ballistic missile programs continue to develop. Also, Iran continues to sponsor global terrorism, undermine U.S. and coalition efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan and continues to transfer advanced weapons to its proxies in Syria and Lebanon.

However, I believe there is still hope to stop Iran's march toward nuclear weapons.

If Iran's nuclear ambitions are thwarted, peaceful and moderate states in the Middle East will be emboldened. If Iran obtains nuclear weapons, we would instead see extremist groups like Hezbollah and Hamas emboldened to wreak havoc on Israel AND THE REGION ALL WHILE knowing the Iranian regime would have the power it had long sought—to threaten the existence of Israel, which Iran's President Ahmadinejad openly suggested should be "wiped off the map."

Let me be clear, a unified and collective effort to counter this threat is the most important issue of our time. The fate of Iran's nuclear program will dramatically alter the fate of peace in the Middle East. Make no mistake about it.

Now I know I am still the new guy on the block, with a little more than 100 days in the Senate under my belt, but I have placed U.S. –

Israeli security as one of the most significant and highest priorities on my agenda.

One my first acts in the Senate was to personally reach out to the Senate Majority Leader to express my unwavering commitment to ensuring that the Senate could not take its eye off the ball in regards to the threat of Iran, even as we tackled other pressing national concerns. Crippling and draconian sanctions represent the best alternative to military action. We must follow the money and insist that other countries and their companies that are doing business in Iran – think twice about it. If we do not get the support of France, Russia and other UN and EU partners then we will one day wake up and it will be too late. As we all know, the ambitions of the mullahs and Iranian leadership stand in stark contrast to the goals of the United States and the rest of the world.

Further, a nuclear armed Iran will create an arms race in one of the most unstable regions of the world. We must renew our political will to implement severe sanctions because the cost of inaction is that this state sponsor of terror would be armed with weapons that, for the first time, could make its president’s statement about “wiping Israel off the map” a realistic threat. Because of the deadly serious threat that Iran poses to Israel and all who seek peace in the region, I joined some of my Senate colleagues in signing a letter to the President—circulated by Senator Schumer and Graham-- that explains my view that time is not on our side, and that we must take bold action now by imposing crippling sanctions on Iran.

And when it comes to Iran sanctions, there is no doubt the Senate should get a powerful sanctions package to the President without further delay. And I am currently working across the aisle to add more powerful and targeted tools to this urgent effort to stop a terrorist state from gaining nuclear weapons. A key effort I have been exploring would deny visas to the worst of the worst offenders facilitating Iran’s nuclear and missile programs or enriching the regime through investments that violate existing sanctions. There is no way we should be welcoming the individuals who are enabling Iran’s nuclear and terrorist ambitions to be spread throughout the region and the world.

Simply put, the United States has long possessed the ability to apply tough sanctions against Iran, but we have not had the political will to use them. We must—as a nation—build a new seriousness of purpose that has as its mission nothing short of stopping one of the most dangerous regime on the planet from having the most dangerous weapons on the planet.

We cannot bring about real change with only force and sanctions. We must also encourage peace through economic means. The spread of trade ties, such as through U.S. Free Trade Agreements with Oman and Bahrain have been powerful tools, resulting in these nations dismantling all aspects of the Arab League Boycott of Israel in their countries.

Trade programs have brought together Israeli entrepreneurship with workers in cooperating nations such as Jordan and Egypt to create jobs in an initiative known as the Qualified Industrial Zone program. It is time for us to look to expand these efforts to promote peace through trade and I am exploring an initiative that would help companies in Israel—the most entrepreneurial country in the world—launch joint ventures with Arab partners to get free trade access to the United States and the world’s leading economies in the G8. While we take actions against our shared enemies we must also help plant seeds of peace with those across the region who are willing to reject radical propoganda and work with Israel to build a better future.

Finally, I want to show my personal commitment to these issues by

President Obama’s plan to overhaul the financial system.



Senate approves financial overhaul

...st from Senator Scott Brown, the Senate approved sweeping legislation last night that financial industry, adding new safeguards and consumer protections in an effort to prevent another economic catastrophe (Globe Staff, 5/20/10)

Scenes of fallen trees blocked roads, and smashed cars

WASHINGTON — Pentagon officials studying ways to permit gays and lesbians to serve openly in the military are in a quandary. The plan to gather the unique insights and attitudes of non-exotic uniforms, but to identify and interview gay troops would be under the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy, meant that disciplinary action would have to be sought against them (Globe Staff, 5/19/10)

Leonardo DiCaprio and Kevin Connolly were among the stars

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travelling to Israel to explore with our Israeli allies these and other ways to deepen our strategic partnership and highlight the strategic asset Israel is to America.

It is up to us in this room, and the Obama administration, to ensure that our support for Israel is steadfast and unwavering – and never tepid.

Israel is the shining democracy in the Middle East and we must work together, across the political aisle, and without a political agenda, to ensure the security of Israel. A safe, secure Israel, standing shoulder-to-shoulder with the United States and its allies is essential to the continued liberty of our nations. Our fates have never been more intertwined.

May God continue to bless Israel and the United States of America.

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