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United Jewish Appeal Women's Division Board speech.
December 1968.

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APPENDIX A

AMERICAN JEWISH
ADDRESS OF RABBI HERBERT A. FRIEDMAN
EXECUTIVE VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE
UNITED JEWISH APPEAL

to the Women's Division Board
December 12, 1968

זכר אלה יעקב וישראל

Our responsibilities are twice as large as they have been before. Or if you want to be exact and not simply rhetorical, our responsibilities are two and a half times what they were two years ago. If I explain that, I will say everything that I want to say here this morning.

The cost of the defense budget in 1969 is two and a half times what it was in 1967, and that is the whole story in one nutshell. In 1967, in the year in which Israel fought the war, it cost X dollars. Everybody thought that was the height of everything. And now in 1969 we know that the defense budget is going to be two and a half times larger than it was in 1967, the year of the war. Theoretically, what we ought to do is two and a half times what we did then.

What we are trying to do is to get the American Jewish community to raise at least as much or more, possibly, than was done in 1967. Not two and a half times as much, no. But because the problem is two and a half times larger, we have a right at least to ask for a performance in 1969 equivalent to 1967. That is not being ridiculous. That is not being visionary. That is not over-stretching or over-demanding.

So, while there is not going to be any goal figure set for the 1969 campaign, no goal figure in dollars, what we are talking about as a theme is that we must go back to the standards of 1967.

Everybody knows what was done in 1967. The Emergency Fund in 1967 raised \$175 million above the regular campaign. If we are talking about repeating that or doing more than that, then we are talking about \$175 million or \$200 million in the 1969 Emergency Fund.

It is going to be a very hard campaign in one sense because of the amount of money we are talking about. It is going to be a very easy campaign in another sense, namely the public relations sense. We will not be fighting in 1969 what we were fighting in 1968, namely, lack of understanding of what was going on. We fought a terrible uphill fight in 1968 because we were saying things to people which they did not want to accept and believe. I know because I am the one who started saying it first and earliest, and I got the most resistance for saying it, and everybody said I was crazy, and everybody said I was exaggerating, and everybody said I was being sensational, and everybody said I was being melodramatic.

Therefore, from bitter personal experience, I can tell you that we were fighting an uphill fight. I kept saying, "We are in a war. We are not getting peace. We are not going to get it. We are going into deeper war." The more I said that the more people said, "Oh, well, that is cheap sensationalism. He is trying to get an extra dollar into the campaign."

Nobody wanted to listen. Now the climate is completely different for 1969. You are not fighting that uphill fight. Nobody can argue with you when on the front cover of LIFE magazine you see all the business of the Russian fleet and on the front cover of TIME magazine you see the business of the Arab guerilla fighters.

Now you are not arguing alone. You are not a voice in the wilderness. A year ago anybody who was talking like I talked was a voice in the wilderness.

By the way, let me say that I can understand it. The war finished in June. We came out of the shock. When I started saying in August that this war is not finished, everybody said to me, "You are a hawk. You are a madman." When the Arabs said in September at their meeting in Khartoum, no peace, no negotiation, no recognition, no nothing, everybody said: "Oh, well, that's just words. That is face-saving. They will get around to it." When I said at the General Assembly in Cleveland in November that there is going to be war before 1968 is over, everybody said to me, "Warmonger."

But when you talk that way now, people are more sober. Now people have finally awakened. Somehow or other it takes a long time for people to understand something. But they do now.

It is a year and a half after the war and the casualty figures since the war are 259 dead and 1005 wounded. That is what you have had during 18 months of so-called peace: 259 dead, 1005 wounded! Nobody can call that peace. Therefore, the whole beginning of our argument is, Israel is still in a war and these figures are here to document it. The whole public press of the world knows it and the President-elect is very concerned about it and sends over fact-finders, and the Italian Government just sent over a fact-finding mission, and DeGaulle is all up in a flap because he wants the four big powers to come together, and Russia is sending notes to the United States about "Keep your fleet out of the Bosphorus," and America says to Russia, "Keep your fleet out of the Mediterranean."

You must understand we are on the brink of what could escalate into larger global confrontations. There just is not any sense in being sentimental about it. There is not any sense in anybody wringing his hands in despair and saying, "My God, what are we going to do? They have got missiles, they have got rockets." You take the situation as you find it.

When you are in a struggle, you have two choices: You can surrender or you can fight. Just don't look for other alternatives. They don't exist. You can pray and hope and wish maybe Nasser will die tomorrow, maybe there will be a new leader, and maybe there will be new chances, and maybe Hussein will change his mind tomorrow.

You know, you can just go through all the wishful thinking in the world. Don't bother. You will have to be just as hard-boiled as though you were making command decisions in a political sense or an economic sense or a military sense, and don't look for the miracle. Just do the hard work that you have to do to win the fight that's got to be won, and calculate on the worst, not on the best, and then you will win.

That is the attitude of the people in Israel. They are devoting the entire financial capacity of the country to fight this war. They are taking all the money which they will get in from internal tax revenue of their citizens and they are devoting it to the war. Everything else is getting second best or third best or not at all.

They say very simply in a very coldblooded way, "Look, you fellows are in this with us. You Jews in the world say you are just as proud of this as we are. We are going to go on taking the immigrants and you must pay for it, because you undertook the obligation in the first place. We have to go on building the houses, and you have to pay for it. We are going to go on taking care of their health, and you pay for it."

They are not begging. They are not even asking. They are telling. And that is all there is to it.

You and I have a choice. As they have a choice of surrender or fight, we have a choice. Our choice is stay with it or withdraw. I am not making polemics here. I am not making fancy demagogic phrases. You can withdraw. You are not under any obligation except one, and that is the obligation of being a Jew. You can withdraw from that, too, if you want to.

I am trying to talk to you in the most hardboiled terms I know because that is exactly what we are up against. The fighting on the borders is going to increase, I can promise it to you. Every new step opens up another one. The Iraqi battalion with its 122 mm guns opened up last week for the first time, when I was there. They have been sitting in Jordan for a year and a half. They have been quiet. They opened up last week for the first time. Do you think it is going to be the last time?

There are 700 Russian guns along the 100 miles of the Suez. They have opened up twice in full-scale barrages, once in September, once in October. Do you think those two times were the only times?

They may be preparing and practicing for a cross-canal landing. It is not a question of whether they will succeed or whether they won't succeed. It is not a question of figuring out, can they be thrown back, can they be held off. None of us here is the chief of staff. None of us here can make military estimates, and there is no sense in it. Don't waste time guessing. Just understand what they are going to try, and figure out how hard you have to fight back.

On every front the fight is escalating, and all the borders of Israel are aflame now, even the border with Lebanon, which has been quiet for a year and a half. In the last couple of months there have been ten episodes on the Lebanese border.

Internally, inside the country of Israel, you can count on it: urban terrorism is growing and growing and growing, and there is no way whatsoever to stop it. It can be a small thing like one bomb planted in a movie house. So in front of every movie house when you walk in and you give your ticket to the ticket collector, anybody carrying a bag, any lady carrying a large handbag, they open the handbag to see what is in it. There are two civil defense officers in green berets standing at the entrance of every movie house. So, you will try to catch somebody carrying a small bomb into a cinema. But somebody might get through with one, and a lot of people will be killed in the panic of a crowd.

You can't stop it unless everybody stays home and doesn't go to the movies. And that paralyzes the life of the country, which is exactly the purpose of the terrorist. What are they hitting at? Cinemas, bus stations, schoolyards where the kids are playing, the marketplace where the women go for shopping. They are not doing it haphazardly. They know exactly what they are doing. Wouldn't you if you were the commander of an enemy army trying to terrorize the civilian population?

If you can get all the women frightened so they don't go to the market, if you can get all the kids scared so the mothers don't send them to school, if you can get all the commuters scared so they won't go to the bus stations to go to work every day, what have you done? You have paralyzed the country.

So, what the Israelis do, very simply, they go on doing their business every day and therefore they will go on taking their casualties every day. It is a statistical fact. If there are 60 women in this room, I could show you statistically what day of what month two of you would be killed by a bomb in a market, because enough of you keep going to the market, enough number of days of the week, and enough terrorists strike to plant enough bombs, and the statistics simply are going to catch you, and you, one Tuesday morning, 46 days from now, or 122 days from now, or whatever. It is inevitable.

The country lives in a state of a war of nerves, and their nerves are like steel. Saturday nights the movie houses are full and Friday mornings the markets are full, and the kids go to school every day, and the traffic goes, and life goes on, and nothing is paralyzed.

The mood of the people is absolutely glorious: solid, firm, happy in a way. Nervous, tense -- tense as hell. Everybody is in a state of tension and everybody is overworked, and everybody is trying to do fifty things at one time. The men are away in the Army longer, the Reserves take more months of a man's time. The managerial problems are tough. They are fighting to rearm, the armaments factories are expanding. You need more labor, you need more number of hours a day to work. Everybody is tense and everybody is nervous, but the mood is good and the conviction is strong, and they are absolutely convinced that they simply better not surrender, because the minute that there is any crack in the morale, the minute there is any crack in the political front, they know that they are inviting slaughter.

You see, they put it in a very simple way. They say, "Look, we have won three wars. If we have to fight a fourth, we fight a fourth. If we have to fight a fifth, we fight a fifth. We have to win them all. The Arabs only have to win one. The Arabs only have to win once and then we have had it. Then we are in the ocean."

So that the determination is there. They are convinced that if they give up any territory unconditionally without getting a peace treaty for it, they are being stupid because they are inviting their own disaster. They say, "If we pull back the way the Arabs want, the way the Russians want, if we pull back, all we are doing is inviting them to put their troops in and then they will be that much closer to Tel Aviv. Right now we have them 25 minutes away by air. If we pull out of the Sinai, then they are 25 minutes closer by air."

There are 26 kibbutzim up in the Beth Shean and Jordan Valley. Every kibbutz now is having its air raid shelters dug much deeper, built permanently. I saw the first half dozen last week that are going in that are now gas proof because they have every reason to believe that Egypt would use gas. She did in Yemen, do why shouldn't she against Israel?

I saw in the kibbutz called "Moaz Chiam" the perfect model of the perfect shelter: very deep, very thick concrete walls, gasproof doors on both sides, and enough bunks in there -- actual bunks hanging from iron chains like you have on a boat -- for 60 people. That is fine. That little deal cost 150,000 pounds. That gives sleeping space to 60 people. Now, you have in Moaz Chiam 600 human beings, men, women and children. Then you have to build ten of those shelters, and only then will you take care of every person in the kibbutz. So you will spend 1.5 million pounds on one kibbutz and you have 26 kibbutzim. Nice? You will drop 50 million pounds before you are through building the shelters. Simple. One little item.

The children now are sleeping underground every night and they don't wait -- the policy now is you don't wait for an alarm to go off, you don't wait for the shooting to start. Why disturb the kids at two o'clock in the morning or ten o'clock at night? Put the children to sleep in the shelters five o'clock, six o'clock, seven o'clock, and let them sleep through the whole night uninterrupted. It is safer that way. Better, easier, simpler, safer.

It is not melodramatic any more. There are no alarm bells ringing at one o'clock in the morning. All the mothers take the children by the hand, six o'clock, down into the shelter, put them in, close the door, finished. Then they divide up, and some of the mothers sleep down there. They take turns. That is all.

Normal life? This is Israel at peace? When you tell stories like this, do you think you are going to have any argument from people? Let me put it this way. If you do have an argument from anybody after this kind of explanation is made to them, then I have one suggestion to make. Stop wasting your time, because there are too many other good people to see. We have only got 365 days in one year, that is all.

The other half of the story you also have to know exactly what is going on, on the human, the home front. On the home front, paradoxically enough, the immigration is going up fast, and this is this crazy, cockeyed Jewish faith and optimism, in which apparently Jews are blind and oblivious to the shot and shell of the enemy, and they want to come home to Israel, and they come home to Israel in the middle of all of this absolutely bizarre war.

The people who are in Morocco and France and Poland and elsewhere in Eastern Europe and elsewhere in Moslem countries, the people who are coming out now, they are not living on the moon, they are not living in blindness. They know the conditions in Israel perfectly well. It is not as though they don't know what they are coming into, and yet they come, day after day, and week after week, and the figures are going up.

If the immigration figures were to be cut down to zero now, you could say, "Well, you understand. A Jew has been sitting in Morocco so many years, he hasn't had a chance to get out, he couldn't get a paper, or he couldn't sell his goods that he has got in his store, or whatever reason he didn't come out up to now. Why come out now? Wait six more months and see if it quiets down." Nothing doing. They come. They come. Two thousand. It began to go up to 2500. It got up to 3000. It went up to 3500 a month. We are talking now, unbelievably, about a possible figure for 1969 of 35,000, some people say 40,000.

And this is one of those absolutely ironic and yet typically Jewish historic gestures in which we thumb our noses at fate and whatever is happening around us. It is unbelievable.

I said Moroccans. You know the story there. They can get out. We are getting them out. They are coming, and we will work that thing down to the end. Morocco has something under 50,000 Jews. She will work her way down to 20,000 Jews in the next few years. That will be, then, the hard core that will remain. Every year you have coming out of Morocco possibly five to ten thousand Jews.

I mentioned Poland. You know that story. In Poland, the old, old anti-semitic poison surfaced again on March 19th, nine months ago, and even from the enlightened Social Democratic government of Mr. Gomulka, the filth came out all over again. The thousand-year-old anti-Jewish hatred just vomited out. Jews who thought that they could make an adjustment to Poland, who could accommodate, good, loyal Communists, suddenly found out that they were being called "filthy Jews" and being thrown out.

So they are coming. They are shocked. I have seen them now over the past nine months. They can't believe that this has happened to them. Thirty-year-old teachers and 23-year-old students from the university say, "We were Poles. We were members of a party. We gave up Jewish connections and affiliations years ago. Now they are throwing us out."

This is a personal shock and trauma that they are going through. When they make their adjustment, suddenly they return to the fold of the Jewish people, and they say, "By God, we should never have left it in the first place. This is where we belong. This is where we are at home."

So you have hundred of Poles coming in every month now. You have the Czechs, who were dispossessed in August and September, several thousands. About 4000 out of a total of 19,000 Jews in that country have already left. No one can foretell the future.

The second fact -- and you can't blame anybody for this -- is that a year and a half ago the housing planners fell behind. They never dreamed, they never thought that Jews in this next difficult period were going to keep coming in these numbers, and they said, "Well, we have a reserve of empty houses for immigrants. We don't have to worry about building."

What has happened now is that the pace at which this immigration has come in in the last few months, the planners have been caught with their plans down, and there is very little reserve of empty housing. Now everybody is running around crazy, desperate -- you know, just getting all excited. "What are we going to do for housing? What are we going to do for housing?"

There is building at a frantic pace going on now, but you are going to have people again in a period of trouble for the next twelve months until housing can catch up again.

We never seem to do things smoothly. We will catch up with it again. By twelve months from now it will all be back in order again. Right now we are in a crunch.

You try to get building workers now for residential building when you are also trying to build shelters and big ammunition plants and big industries for the war. So all of a sudden, from a condition a year and a half ago where you had unemployment in the country, now suddenly everybody is screaming that there is a shortage of labor again.

So, on the home front, what you have is immigrants coming, housing being built fast, absorption taking place fast, jobs for anybody now, anybody can go to work the next day, skilled labor, unskilled labor.

In most of these development towns, these twenty-one towns that we have been struggling with, things are beginning to look better now. There are more skills developing. There are more cooperative little committees being formed. There are more trained personnel suddenly showing up on the scene. There is an amelioration of the social problems, an easing, an easing finally. It means that all the work and the money and the ideas that we have poured in in the last few years are beginning to bear fruit now. That is the double side of the coin, ladies.

You've got a country at war, going deeper and deeper into war. That is an irreversible trend, as I see it, with a population prepared to accept it. And at the same time, you have a country which is not letting the war stop her development. That is the beauty of it. Their attitude is: "We fight the war, and we develop the country. We do both things simultaneously. We don't stop one to do the other."

That is what should give you this absolutely unbelievable feeling of pride, and I am sure it does. You are dealing with people who are bright, devoted, capable, people who are working eighteen hours a day and are tired, people who have a vision, people whose eyes are on the future, just as they are on the present. They say: "Somebody is trying to shoot me today, and I will defend myself today. But meanwhile I've got to think also about ten years from now."

There is not a people on the face of this earth that has the perspective to do two things at a time on two absolutely different planes and levels and not be schizophrenic. Maybe we can do it because we are schizophrenic to begin with. I don't know. But we are succeeding in doing it, and this is the pure magic. This is the pure drama. This is the beauty of it.

The bill has to be paid, and we know what the bill is. It has all been laid out in fact sheets that I have written down and sent out in this last long personal letter that I wrote. There was a long column in there setting forth what the facts and figures are. There is no point in going through that again. The bottom-line is about \$350,000,000 or \$360,000,000 of free philanthropic money that has to come in from the Jews all over the world.

Two of the great Jewries of the world are starting tonight. Tonight, in the Hilton Hotel in New York City and in Claridge's in London -- the latter a bit more elegant than the former -- the two most fateful meetings of the year are about to take place. They are opening there with Mr. Eban, who is flying over from Israel. He is in the air right now. And we are opening here tonight with our meeting of the \$10,000-and-over contributors.

I am sure you are all aware that at lunch today, right now at the Pavilion, we are having a lunch for \$50,000 contributors.

I want to say this because it is relevant to what any good fundraiser does. You use the weapons you have, if you want to use that word, the boldness, because you have every right in the world to demand, and therefore the only question is with what methods will you demand, and boldness is a method.

When I suggested that we should put on the invitation cards today in black and white "\$50,000 minimum", nobody in the world had ever done anything like that. There were a few gasps and doubts and hesitations for a moment. But that's the way the cards of invitation went out. Then the speculations began as to how many people would come, and one cynic said to me, "Well, what would you be satisfied with?" I said, "Fifty men. Put fifty men in a room where the lowest gift in the room is fifty thousand dollars, and let's see what happens." Do you know how many people we have for lunch in the Pavilion now, a half hour from now? One hundred! We don't know what will happen. We will see.

The meeting tonight has become "normal". Many years ago when we set the \$10,000 minimum, there was the same shock then. That's not a shock anymore. Now what has happened is that we are going to use two ballrooms tonight to accommodate the crowd.

We have a problem on our hands at the moment because neither General Rabin nor Mr. Arthur Goldberg is aware of the fact that they are going to have to make their speeches twice. In Ballroom "A" Mr. Rabin will start to talk, and in Ballroom "B" Mr. Goldberg will start to talk. When they are finished, they will switch.

Have faith, absolute conviction that you are right about what you are trying to do, utmost firmness in going about doing it. You are not begging anybody for it. Nobody is doing you a favor by contributing a nickel. This is the historic demand of the Jewish people on itself. You are simply the chief spokesmen. You fifty women are simply the chiefs of the tens and the chieftains of the hundreds and the chieftains of the thousands, the way it says in the Bible. You are not begging and you are not pleading. You are the voice of history speaking at a moment where certain demands can legitimately be made, and you are the ones to make them.

Now, God help you if you don't do it right, because then, at that moment of truth, you have failed in your duty.

I think we are going to come through this thing fine. I think that no matter how hard the fighting is ahead, the big powers know that there are limits, and they know that neither by verbal bludgeoning or by physical bludgeoning -- neither way -- are they going to cause Israel to surrender or withdraw or be defeated. This is not braggadocio; it is not idle boasting

for us to say that we have no alternative. That is a fact. It is just a fact. When you have no alternative, you act in a certain way.

The Jews of this country have the money. If \$350,000,000 is the price for the world, and we are counting on \$100,000,000 from all the Englands and Frances and Canadas, then you need \$250,000,000 from the Jews of America, and \$250,000,000 from the Jews of America to accomplish in both the regular campaign and the emergency fund campaign is simply not an impossible or exceptional amount of money.

Failure will come if you don't believe or if you don't know how to do it. But if you believe, and if you sit down and if you organize it right -- and that's the whole clue -- then that money can come in.

I think that the Women's Division share of it -- and this is the last word I would like to say -- is not just a dollar share, ladies. You raise five million or ten million more, yes. That's dollars. But it's not just the dollar share at all. You have to be what women always have been at certain times of family crisis or marital crisis or children's crisis. When the life and death of the family was at stake at some critical moment, it has always been the woman who has found the strength to encourage the man, hold the family together, put the smile on the face, work through the periods of difficulty and keep everybody's head above water.

That's woman's traditional role. You have to do it again. It isn't just what you can do in the Women's Division in your city. It's what you can do in the whole campaign in your city, and if you see that that's not going well, if you see that that is floundering, if you see that the men's leadership is floundering, you have that additional capacity, and therefore you have that additional responsibility.

There are certain things about which a person like myself worries, and there are certain things about which he feels at ease. I worry very much about what is going to happen in Chicago. I worry very much about what is going to happen in Los Angeles. There are lots of things about which I worry. I know where there are problems, I know where there are weak spots. I know things that keep me up at night.

But there are other things about which I have no worry, about which I know in the back of my mind I rest easy, and one of them is this Women's Division. I know that to the absolute best of your ability you are going to do the job.

Therefore, I want you to have from me the feeling that you do not represent to me a source of fear. On the contrary: you represent to me a source of very great strength.

Bless you and go into the year ahead and just do it with everything that you've got.