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Talk to New York City
Executive Committee 2, December, 1970

UJA

RABBI HERBERT A. FRIEDMAN

VOICE: Ladies and gentlemen, it is my task, as I understand it..

to try to pinpoint as precisely as I can, where we stand at this moment...to define the problems at this moment...the next moves as they might occur, prophesy a little bit and draw conclusions for the action which is required of us.

There are only four or five major and basic points which everyone has to be very familiar with. Number one, you must understand the series of Russian moves which brought us to this point. The Russian moves started in January, 1970.

The Russians were not in the war of attrition which Nasser started in the spring of '69, when he decided to break the cease-fire and announced publicly to the world that the cease-fire of '67 war was no longer applicable. He intended to start a new war against Israel. He announced it. There's no question of the legality of who shot first. But in the '69 war of attrition, the Russians really weren't involved.

When Nasser went to Moscow in January of 1970, and spent three weeks there, that's when the whole mischief was organized. Russia, at that point, took over the air defense of Egypt. That's where the missiles come in.

The air defense of Egypt was organized on the basis of introducing the new radar, the new missiles in order to try to nullify the effect of the Israel Air Force. All through the first half of 1970, while the Russians were digging deeply into Egypt, some people here in the United States were trying to convince the President of the United States that this represented a serious danger, that these Russian moves had to be counteracted. As a matter of fact, Mrs. Meir started with that back in September of '69, when she visited Washington.

She left a shopping list with Nixon of material she'd like to buy. He said he would think about it. So all through the first half of 1970, he was thinking about whether the Russian moves represented serious danger. Israel was experiencing that danger. The Russian involvement in the air defense reached its maximum point about July when they effectively won control of the air over the canal...because the number of missiles that were installed and the types of missiles and the failure of any equipment, American or any other kind of equipment, to combat those missiles, resulted in Egyptian domination of the air.

This also gave them the opportunity to pour unbelievable fire on to the Suez Canal Israeli positions and in the month of June, by actual count of the Defense Department in Israel, thirteen and a half thousand shells were fired onto the handful of bunkers up and down the line of the canal. Thirteen thousand, five hundred shells in the thirty days of the month of June.

This meant hundreds and hundreds of shells every day were crashing into every one of those bunkers. By July, the meaning of all these Russian moves had become clear to the President of the United States. and by the end of July, American moves began to take place and that's the second main point you must understand.

American moves took place when the President, the fourth week in July, said...yes!...to the shopping list of equipment which Mrs. Meir had left with him back the previous September! At that point she said that the list was ten months old and out of date. New lists were submitted very quickly and the approvals began to come very quickly.

In other words, after almost ten months of analyzing the Russian moves, the United States government became convinced that Israel was in substantial danger. Russia was not in this game for any temporary profit. Her objectives are long range. They are serious. They are far-reaching, geographically and Israel plays

no consequence, whatsoever, in Russian calculation. Not that Russia is out to destroy Israel..but if Israel gets destroyed in the process of Russian penetration to Africa and Asia and the Indian Ocean, it doesn't matter a damn.

Well we don't really care much whether we're obliterated as a result of predetermined conscious act or whether we're knocked aside by the swat of a tail in an unconscious gesture. It doesn't much matter. If we suffer and are destroyed, whatever the motivation, the net result is the same.

The seriousness of the Russian moves which caused the American counter-moves has created a situation now where large quantities of arms are being bought. You have no idea..both in quality and in quantity, this is an absolutely new and unique situation. In the whole twenty-two years since the establishment of the State of Israel there has never been the opportunity for such a strengthening of Israel's posture. Never did this occur before in relations with any country.. France, England..even Czechoslovakia and Russia in the early days..because the first Israeli arms in 1948 were Russian..and never forget it! If one is of those funny paradoxes of history. The first Israeli aircraft were Messerschmidts bought in Czechoslovakia.

Never in Israel's entire history of attempting to arm and defend herself has she been in a situation where she has had such access in quantity and quality! As a matter of fact, it's weird..because when the Israeli military men sit with the Pentagon military men and they talk about the defense structure of Israel and the Pentagon men say..well if we were in your shoes we would want a larger air force.. Why don't you buy 250 Phantoms..and the Israeli fellows say..well you know.. yes, well it would be nice to have 250 Phantoms..wouldn't it? But we think we can afford 72..or 62..and that's why you read numbers of 18 or 36 or 75 or 50. You read small numbers, not because Israel doesn't need them and not because the United States isn't willing to sell them. Israel needs and America is willing to sell.

You read small numbers because of one reason...and one reason only..money!

As far as U.S. credits are concerned, the United States government has also made a decision which we hope will be implemented. The White House has asked the Congress to provide \$500 million in long term credits under the Military Assistance Act for the purchase of equipment in the United States. Congress hasn't yet acted on that. It doesn't bother us. This is a lame duck session. After the first of the year, when the new session comes in, they'll grapple with this seriously. We have every reason to believe they'll pass it. We've got a snag in the thing, because it is a package bill out of it and the Israeli request is tied in with Cambodia and other stuff that Congress is less willing to do; and, you know, there is some suggestion that that was deliberate because there's a completely pro-Israel attitude in the Congress and they would like to vote the \$500 million for Israel. They don't want to vote some of the other items and so the other countries will ride along on Israel's coattail and they'll get their's only because Congress wants to give Israel her's.

Peculiar, isn't it?

So that, we anticipate that there really won't be a problem and the \$500 million will be approved and we will have that much credit available as long term loans to buy things. Do you think that buys everything? Again you just have to understand the facts. About \$200 million of the \$500 million will be used retroactively to pay for things which Israel has already bought, purchased, received and used and some of which has already been destroyed. About \$300 million will apply ahead to new purchases. The Administration makes it perfectly clear that this \$500 million credit, if and when granted, is not intended to cover all of Israel's military purchases by any means whatsoever. She's on her own, whatever she chooses to buy above the \$500 million. She pays for herself and it's her decision.

Very clear. Sapir came back to Israel three days ago. He landed from doing some fund raising in Latin America and the press asked him for a comment.

What is the most important thing you'd like to say, they asked and he replied, the most important thing I'd like to say, is we're buying more than \$500 million worth of hardware. Let that be clear to everybody -- in case everybody thinks that we've gotten money from American Congress to finance our entire purchases.

The Administration in Washington has not announced the figure of the total purchases. What Israel is going to buy will amount to one and a half billion dollars worth. \$1.5 billion! And the credits for new purchases amount to about \$300 million..so there's a short fall of 1.2 billion. All kinds of Phantoms..Sky Hawks..M-60 tanks..175 millimeter guns..helicopters..Shrikes..electronics..bombs..you name.it.

Russian moves brought us up to this point. U.S. moves in response have placed us in this predicament where we have a crisis that stems from an opportunity. That's what our crisis is all about. Everybody says..what's all the sweat? What do you need such a big, huge campaign for in 1971? Well we wouldn't need such a big campaign if we didn't have this opportunity. Just as simple as that.

Now, as to point number three..peace moves. Peace moves. Dayan is coming in next week. We invited him to speak at a conference of the UJA and that set up a whole series of ripples inside the American government..the Israel government. Should he come just to speak to the UJA? Or should he come to negotiate in Washington? He will do both.

I used the word..peace moves.. Dayan has pulled the greatest switch of anybody. And yet if you know the man, you know that it's not really a switch at all. What he says is very simple..and consistent..in spite of seeming inconsistent.

He said a few months ago that we are reaching the end of the war. Somebody said, how can you mean that? He answered..well okay..five or ten years.. We have fought for thirty years. We won't have to fight another thirty years. We're getting closer to the end. The Arabs are going to have to learn to deal with us.

Three months ago, he said Israel should not join the Jarring talks unless Egypt pulled back the missiles. We know perfectly well now they're not going to pull back the missiles. So he says..fine..I'd like to talk peace..not Jarring temporary..arrangements. Can't we get to talk a real arrangement. I'm willing to talk peace. Yigal Allon makes speeches in which he says..our young people at the universities must know that if an opportunity comes along we won't reject it. We must never be in the position with our young people to have them say we didn't try hard for peace.

We're willing to try hard. Dayan, at the same time, warns the Arabs.. don't mistake our desire for peace as weakness. Don't fall into that error, gentlemen. And the cabinet has been going through a whole series of moves in which they now talk about an oral map, as distinct from a written map. They won't commit themselves to what they will agree to give up or not give up..by putting it down in writing. But the conversation is, we need this and we could afford to give that for this and the air is full of peace talks.

The cabinet had a meeting last Sunday..day before yesterday. Rabin was there. Dayan was there. Eban was there. Golda was there. It was the first time that they were all back from their various fund raising missions and they were all sitting down to take care of the store.

At the cabinet meeting Sunday morning, last..48 hours ago..they delineated the 4 basic operative principles under which Dayan was to conduct his Washington talks next week when he comes.

Number one..they want continued assurances from the U.S. of military and economic support beyond 1971.

Number two..they want a promise of a firm U.S. policy vis-a-vis Russia, up to and including the use of an American veto in the Security Council if Russia tries to condemn Israel any more from now on. That's asking a lot. No one knows if the United States will grant it. But this asking for firm deterrent policy on

the part of the American government vis-a-vis Russia is part of the Israeli strategy of how they can negotiate with Egypt. Because if Russia won't be faced down by America, Egypt won't talk peace.

Number three..they want an American agreement to leave the territorial issues open..not the Rogers plan involving withdrawal to pre-1967 borders.. They want an American reversal of position that the territorial issues are open as far as America is concerned and therefore, freely negotiable.

Number four..they want to explore the possibility of a new cease-fire arrangement with Egypt..not a renewal of the 90 days. Sadat says..he's not going to renew after Feb. 5. Won't do. Dayan says..fine..so we won't talk about a 90 day renewal. Let's talk about a permanent renewal of a cease-fire agreement which they broke in the spring of '69 and let's offer deescalation of armament including pull-back of artillery. Pull-back of artillery.

Everyone speaks about the missiles -- but the Egyptian artillery is crucial. What the missiles do is stop the Israel Air Force from functioning. Why must the Air Force function? In order to bomb out their artillery positions. Their artillery is what hits us and causes us the damage. We can't..hit the missiles head-on any more. So let's get the artillery pulled back and then the missiles can stay where they are. What's the difference? Dayan is willing to offer deescalation and pull-back of artillery on both sides as an effort to get a long range cease-fire.

The fourth main point that I'd like to talk to you about are the war moves. I think that the war moves are more realistic than the peace moves. You asked me my personal opinion. I'm not making any official statement on behalf of the UJA or the Israeli government or anything. If you ask me my personal prognosis of how events are going to move..I think they are moving with much greater possibility in the direction of the renewal of war than they are in terms of getting any kind of peace and I'll explain why.

I think Israel is eager..desperately eager for peace. What is most attractive to Israel is the fact that now more than 100 days have gone by..and no blood's been spilled. That is the most attractive thing in the world about cease-fire. Nobody gets killed. Political or military positions may deteriorate, but nobody's getting killed.

And one is willing to pay a hell of a price for that! This accounts for Israel's eagerness and willingness to go into peace talks. Now, it's a rule in psychology..everybody knows it perfectly well: frustration and rage occur in direct proportion to the degree of expectancy. You expect peace. You want peace. You try to get peace. You can't get it. You can't get it. The explosion is worse! A simple rule of human nature.

Within the next few weeks, I really truly believe we'll be talking. If we're not talking by Feb. 5, within 60 days..we're going to be in big war. Well let's assume we're talking and Feb. 6..and March 6..and April 6..and May 6..we're not getting anywhere and the talks aren't getting anywhere. And then the degree of frustration builds up and then degree of rage builds up and the degree of instability builds up and the degree of impatience builds up and by May..June.. if not long before that..we're back in the firing position again. Every responsible person in Israel is thinking along these lines.

Egypt can lose 300 missiles. On the ground there are 280,000 Egyptian troops facing us along the canal. These are exact figures. We don't have one tenth of that number along the canal. Amphibious equipment has been delivered to Egypt sufficient to float 100,000 men across the canal from their side. Also no guesswork. These are exact figures. Everything that lands in Egypt is seen by Israeli radar.

Egypt knows the Israelis know. So it is an open game. All of this I call the war moves. And they will blow up in direct ratio to the frustration of the peace moves.

The last point I'd like to talk about is the moves on the home front.

A successful defense of the border requires a home front being supported properly with all the things that we're concerned with..all the years..traditionally.. in all the fields of social welfare..and housing and health and education and the things you know so well..taking in of immigrants. If the home front breaks in these categories..the war capacity is jeopardized..endangered..is interfered with..to say the very least.

At the rate of escalation of the cost of the war, it's totally, utterly and thoroughly impossible for anybody in Israel to assume responsibility for those home front items. I don't have to recite the figures to you. You know them all. They've been printed in the fact sheets. You know that the war is taking nearly 100% of taxable revenue and it's taking a third of the GNP and it's risen to horrendous proportions.

I think the only thing that has to be understood is the use of a word that I kept employing throughout this analysis. It's a matter of grammar..some people think. I kept saying..we, we, we... It's not a matter of grammar at all. It's not a grammatical slip on my part when I say we have to do this or we have so many and so many missiles facing us. It's not a grammatical slip at all.

Look -- the deepest thing to understand is the concept of what we're involved in..and the word we is a description of the concept. It's not a grammatical oversight. This is our war! We are involved in this war. We win it or we lose it. And I'm just sorry if somebody in Westchester doesn't like it or if somebody in Dallas doesn't like it. There is no divisibility in Jewish fate! Yes, of course, individual Jews will be able to live with it, if Israel is defeated. Sure. Individual Jews were also able to escape from Hitler. Sure. But the fate of the Jewish people, as a whole, leaving out exceptions of individuals who might be able to cut and run, the fate of the Jewish people, as a whole, is a common fate.

And you want to know something? I think the Jews of this country are coming to feel that and understand that more and more and more and more with every single passing day..not even week or month. The heightening of the consciousness of the Jewish people in terms of its identification with Israel is superb. It's at a higher level of intensity each time one goes back to them with a new request. The UJA is going to the Jews of America with a new request in 1971, which is unbelievable...in terms of anything ever broached to them before.

My God, not in the days of Hitler, not in the days of 1948, of the establishment, not in the days of 1967, which was supposed to be the climactic explosion of Jewish free will identification - never has such a request been made.

And you know something -- this response today is unbelievable. It's electrifying. It's a gut reaction that's going on all over the country..chemical, in the viscera..and it's because of the we..the we...it's our fight. You've got to understand it.

It's our goal..if we decide that we are biting off too much, we'd better cut back. It's our decision. And this is no joke. And I'm not talking about the legalities of who controls the voting of the appropriating of money. I'm talking philosophically. If you, the contributors, think we shouldn't take in 50,000 immigrants -- we won't! So that the philosophical decisions about the way history is moving are now in the hands of all Jewish people, jointly.

It's not them in Israel and us here. Not at all. And as that we goes in deeper and deeper and deeper, then the net conclusion emerges. We have a right to ask of each other the maximum sacrifice in whatever field that's required. We have the right to ask ourselves..that is Jews..that is, Jews who happen to be living in Israel..die for it! And we have the right to ask Jews living in Minneapolis and Merriam .. give for it! And we collectively

can put into the problem. Contributions of all kinds..blood and money!

In Hebrew they go together. And if you don't know any Hebrew.. it's dom and domim..one means blood and one means money. It's one of those queer peculiar things where maybe our people seem by its very language to have an understanding of what the life and death problems are. Because these are the jugular vein problems. Blood and money. Live or die. War or peace.

So that as this we thing gets stronger and stronger and stronger, we keep demanding more of ourselves in all ways. And..and we keep giving more. The morale in Israel is beautiful. It's a beautiful people..beautiful people. The morale in America is beautiful. By straining and fighting and arguing with himself: shall I give \$10,000 - they are asking for \$40,000 , how in the hell can I give \$40,000? I can't give \$40,000. I ought to push myself to give \$40,000. The guy is..who's he fighting with? He's fighting with himself. Everybody is fighting with himself. That's beautiful!

That's the state of affairs at the moment. The Russian moves brought us to this point. The Russian moves may be expected to continue relentlessly. The American moves have countered that and have given Israel some measure of hope and support. We hope that that will continue. Dayan is coming here. Eban is coming here..to press for continuous American support. The peace moves will go on. I think they will lead to war. They may lead to peace.

Our moves..we..our moves have to go on in the direction in which we've set ourselves. We have no choice. We want no other choice. We want no other alternative. We've elected this path. We're on it..the path of mutual world-wide Jewish survival.

So then what it all boils down to is simply that we're in this kind of a crisis, trying to raise this kind of money, because we have an opportunity to buy planes and buy immigrants and we're buying both as you know perfectly well..and that's the only crisis we have..that the opportunity is too good.

Well that's easy to meet, it seems to me..even in the face of the market and even in the face of a soft economy and in the face of everything. None of that really makes any difference. We haven't begun to scratch capital in America. Sure individuals have given out of capital, I know it and you know it..but by God, we haven't even begun to scratch the capacity of giving out of income..let alone out of capital. So if our only problem is a little money and we have an opportunity to buy a lot..I think we'd better buy! I think we'd better buy. I think we'd better not be cautious. I think we'd better not hold back. I think that's the mood of the Jews of this country and I think that's how we're moving into '71.

The last thing I want to say is that you New Yorkers, of all the Jews in America, you have the most unbelievable burden on your shoulders. You've been asked for the most most amount of money...\$150 million. You are the most visible because everybody else in the country says..my God..the richness of Jewish life in America is in New York. What the hell do you want to squeeze Shreveport or Birmingham, when the real Jewish money is in New York? You are the most visible. You have the greatest accumulation of wealth and therefore that adds up to the greatest burden.

I look around. I think I probably know around 75% of you by name. You're the hard core people who are always here when it counts. You just have to take the \$60 million raised last year and push it to \$150 million. By such ingenuity..such devices..such methodology as are available in a city of this size and this potentiality. I don't think the will is lacking. I'm sure it isn't. And I don't think the comprehension is lacking. I'm sure it isn't. I think what's required is ingenuity and some new ways of doing things and a determination that..that this is a legitimate job..not too much is being asked.. that the Jewish people has this right. I believe that in spite of the fact

that I think we have another war or two on our hands, I think we're closer to peace than we were when we started this enterprise a half a century ago.. closer to peace.

A little bit more to go through yet..but not as much as we've been through by far.

APPLAUSE

