

TR-3807 to TR-3808 Transcription

United Jewish Appeal Israel Emergency Fund dinner.

12 June 1967.

**Speaker:** [00:00] Ladies and gentlemen. In a moment marked by great joy and pride, we have come together in this National Big Gifts Meeting of the Israel Emergency Campaign. We shall begin by rising and joining in the singing of the "Hatikvah" and then the "Star Spangled Banner." I am certain there have never have these two anthems meant more to us. We'll be led in the singing by Cantor [Sol Zemel?] of New York City. And after the singing [01:00] I would ask that you remain standing for the invocation. It will be delivered by Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, Temple Emanu-El, Shulman of Englewood, New Jersey.

**Cantor:** [singing "Hatikvah"] [02:00] [singing "Star Spangled Banner"] [03:00]

**Speaker:** The invocation will be delivered by Rabbi Charles Shulman of the Riverdale Temple of New York City.

**Rabbi Shulman:** God of our fathers, in this hour [clears throat] of anxiety, [04:00] and exaltation, we give thanks unto thee for

the deliverance of our people in the land of Israel from the dangers that confronted them. We give thanks unto thee also for the strength and character of the Jews of the United States who rose so magnificently in these hours to respond. We give thanks here for the representatives from all over these great states of this nation who are here tonight to assume the tasks that befall them in resuscitating that which has been so badly wounded in the State of Israel. And above all we give thanks for the knowledge that we are a people, one people, a Jewish people and that the faith of one determines the faith of all and we will not let our people down anywhere in the world after the difficulties that we have endured in these past days of our years. Reverently in this hour we invoke they blessing upon the bread that we break. [05:00] *Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu, melek ha'olam, hamotzi lehem min ha'aretz.* Amen.

**Speaker**: Ladies and gentlemen, will you please take your seats? May I have your attention? Ladies and gentlemen, we have a most distinguished dais and I wish to introduce our guest to you. I shall omit the names of those who I'll introduce when they speak. Starting on my left, [06:00] Herbert Friedman, Executive Director of UJA. [applause] Please withhold your applause till after they're all done. Jack Weiler, National Chairman of UJA.

Jack, where are you? Jack's probably out soliciting gifts. Jack?  
Here he is. Jake, [inaudible]. [applause] Isadore Breslau.  
[Lorna Fox?] President of the Jewish Welfare Federation.  
[applause] Albert Parker, National Chairman of UJA. [applause]  
[Louis Proto?] Chairman of JDC. Louis. Alfred Morris, member of  
the UJA Executive Committee. [applause] Samuel Houseman,  
Honorary Chairman, the New York UJA. [applause] Joseph  
[Schoen?], National Chairman of UJA. [applause] Leonard Ratner,  
member of the UJA Executive Committee. [applause] Joseph  
[Mazur?], member of the UJA Executive Committee. [applause]  
[07:00] Larry [Schach?], member of the UJA Executive Committee.  
[applause] Paul Zuckerman, member of the UJA Executive  
Committee. [applause] Leonard [Straylitz?], the new UJA  
Executive Committee. [applause] [Alan Sagner?] also a member of  
the Executive Committee.

[Nacham Shamir?] Economic Minister of the State of Israel,  
the United States. [applause] Leonard Bell, Chairman of the  
Young Leaders Cabinet. And Phil [Zinman?], National Chairman.  
[applause] From my right, Eddie [Ginsberg?], Associate General  
Chairman. [applause] [Louie?] Stone, Chairman of the UJA.  
[applause] Charles [Vaseen?], Trustee of the New York UJA.  
[applause] Eddie Robert, President of the New York UJA and a  
former General Chairman. [applause] [Gil Meyerhoff?], Former

General Chairman of the UJA, Chairman of the Israel (inaudible) Fund. [applause] This is [Harry Jenny Jones?], Chairman of the UJA [08:00] National Women's Division. [applause] Melvin Dubinsky, member of the UJA Executive Committee. [applause] Roy [Hoffberger?], member of the UJA staff, Roy Hoffberger (inaudible). [applause] [Marilyn Hossenfeld?], member of the UJA Executive Committee. [applause] Israel Fink, UJA National Chairman. [applause] Joseph [Cantor?], member of the UJA Executive Committee, National Chairman. [applause] Bernard Barnett, member of the UJA Executive Committee. Barney. [applause] [Adolph Keesler?], member of the UJA Cabinet (inaudible), the grand old gentleman from [applause]. Abraham Goodman. Abraham Goodman. Albert Edelman, National Chairman of UJA. [applause] Ambassador Michael Arnon, Counsel General for Israel for New York City. [applause]

[09:00] My great and wonderful friends of the American Jewish community, we meet in the midst of history, to make more history. We are here from all of the corners of our great land, to show in the name of America Jews our love and our affection and our concern and our great pride in the people of Israel, in their finest hour. [applause]

Meanwhile, all over this country, similar emergency fund meetings are taking place. There are no words to express all

that is in our hearts tonight. One week ago, the two and a half million Jews of Israel seemed to stand on the very brink of annihilation. One week ago every Jew in the free world went about with a prayer in his heart for his people who were besieged [10:00] and beleaguered and threatened in their homeland. And now, just one week later we know, each of us, that we have seen a miracle of deliverance come to pass. [applause] How do we describe how great is our pride and our joy in the men and women of Israel, the soldiers and the civilians and the brave people who created this miracle? How does one say, how great is our thankfulness? Our sense of privilege, that in our time we have been permitted to witness and to participate in the birth and now the rebirth of Israel and the people of Israel. The people of Israel, by whom, with whom by common heritage and by shared experience and by faith and by choice, to whom we are forever united, it is not my purpose [11:00] tonight to speak long.

The speaking, the real voice and the great voice of the American Jewish community will be heard from you who are here tonight, just as the real voice and the great voice of Amer-, of Israel's people will be heard from, later our special guest of the evening. But I do wish to tell you about two of the proudest moments of my life. Both of them occurred within the last 18

days. Friday, May 26th. Together with Herb Friedman I stepped from a plane at Lydda into a besieged and mobilized Israel. We were there because Herb, with his special sixth sense, understood we were needed and said it was urgent that we come. For six hours we met with Israel's leaders, with Prime Minister Eshkol, Finance Minister Sapir. Louis Pincus, Chairman of the UJA, of the Jewish Agency [12:00] and many others.

And our urgent conclusion was there had to be the great emergency effort which brings you here tonight, but the moment I shall never forget, one I shall always treasure, is the moment we stepped from the plane when the people at the airport and the people we met everywhere saw us and said, "They are here. The American Jews are here. They have come," in a critical hour and in your name, I was able to bring a message of complete support and I was able to assure them that American Jews would give their full help and support. [applause] I was never more privileged and never more honored.

The second proud moment of which I speak is this. This one. Yes, this one. [13:00] We have come here tonight to show by our presence and our giving all we feel for Israel and its great people. But we do not come here tonight wondering what the response will be. We know what it has been and what it will be, how great it has been and how wonderful it will be. A week ago

the United Jewish Appeal, together with the Council of Jewish Federations and the Jewish communities of America called for a great Israel Emergency Fund. One week ago a spark was set and a great fire took hold throughout this land. A great Jewish community mobilized, took up its positions and began to do its duty, responding in a day and even in hours. Never, never in the history of this country has there been such initial response to a call for support. As your chairman and as one who is [14:00] privileged to be part of the wonders that you've created through the United Jewish Appeal and the Israel Emergency Fund, I can only tell you, I am very proud of what each one of you has done.

Meanwhile there are a million Jewish men and women and children across this land whom I wish I could thank by name tonight. I would like to thank the many persons who took their savings and turned them over to the emergency fund. I would like to thank the thousands of normally modest contributors who stood up and said, "Put me down for \$25,000 and \$50,000 or \$100,000," and I'd like to thank the larger contributors who in a flash became ultra larger contributors, who went from tens of thousands to the hundreds of thousands and even millions. I would like to thank all the members of the UJA's wonderful [15:00] executive committee and all of the UJA's wonderful leaders -- they are tremendous. [applause] They showed how they

felt when they immediately made their own gifts and then began manning the phones on a round the clock basis in our office and in their home communities. They get in the big gifts and get the campaign started.

I would like to thank as well all the presidents and leaders and the executive directors of the communities across the country. My thanks go to the Israel Bond Organization, to the presidents of all the many other cooperating organizations and last but not least, the wonderful UJA professional staff who turned in a sensational job, marked by organization and dedication. [applause] May I say simply, you are, you are truly a marvelous people, all of you. But there are some that I must mention by name. [16:00] I want to thank Finance Minister Sapir and Louis Pincus of the agency. We called and they came. They're not with us tonight because they're still in the field raising money. Let me thank [Haim Latskoff?], former chief of staff, who broke off his speaking tour to get back where he was needed even more.

And then let me thank especially Herb Friedman, who moved first and fast and hard to get the emergency fund launched. Our thanks to Herb Friedman. [applause] And then to Eddie Ginsberg, my associate general chairman who showed the great qualities of leadership that he has. [applause] Lou Fox, President of the

Council. [applause] And Phil Bernstein, its executive director, who moved so quickly and effectively, [applause] who understood and said, [17:00] "It's all out for Israel," our thanks to you, Phil.

[applause] In one sense, nothing we have done can be compared to the glory and the honor which the people of Israel and its defense forces have earned. What they did at the risk of their lives is incomparable. But let understand that in seven days of extraordinary campaigning, all of you and the American Jewish community as a whole have also brought honor and glory to the word "Jew." Your speed, your deeds, represent the greatest voluntary response ever in the history of this country or in the world. We tonight mean to keep up that advance. We mean to continue to act, to continue to demonstrate what Israel and our people mean to us. [18:00] We Jews have an obligation, put on us from ancient times, to ransom the captives. But tonight we do not give to buy out captives. Tonight we give as free men, to free brothers, to make certain that never again shall there be captives, only Jewish men and women living in freedom. Thank you. [applause] You'll excuse me while we bring in our guest of honor. [applause] [19:00]

(break) [applause]

**Speaker**: Will you turn down this light?

**Golda Meir**: Friends. Things have not happened [20:00] so quickly only in Israel, but it seems that every hour on the hour almost, we get news, more exciting, sometimes more shocking than what we knew before. In Israel we again, after 10 years of the Sinai Campaign, we're again faced with a danger to our security and our very existence in what NASA renowns that this time it was going to be a total war of annihilation of Israel. Only two or three days before the fighting started, [21:00] the chief of staff, speaking to his soldiers said, "This is the Holy War and Israel must be annihilated and the entire world is waiting for the success of this war." For over two weeks we lived with the large Israel army at our doorstep in the Sinai Campaign. For over two weeks we knew that more and more tanks were coming into the Sinai Desert. The very Sinai Desert that we were forced to evacuate 10 years ago. For you then the Gaza Strip, in the city of Gaza, again, the Egyptian army was massed, ready to attack. [22:00] The same Gaza that only 10 years ago we were forced to leave, being promised that Egyptians will not occupy Gaza, that Gaza will be occupied, would be under UN administration.

*Shelem Boushep*, we were forced to leave. But the free passage of Israel vessels will be guaranteed by having UN

observers there. And so in 1967, '57, to my sorrow, to my shame maybe, it was I that appeared at the United Nations as foreign minister, making the announcement on behalf of my government, that we accept these promises [23:00] and assumptions, but what is called a "family of nations" and the maritime powers and we are leaving all these places. What happened in 1967 you know, it was much the exit of the UN observers from the Sinai, from the Gaza Strip, from *Shelem Boushep*, was much quicker than their entrance.

And then the announcement came, no Israel shipping. The Sinai full of over 100,000 Egyptian soldiers, over a thousand tanks of the best -- when you have hundreds of planes that were in possession of Egypt itself, but in this war they're going to join also with Syria and Jordan and [24:00] Iraq. We knew the number of airfields that Egypt alone possessed, from which these hundreds of planes will take off, I am sure it was no military secret to Egypt nor to Syria, a very small number of airfields that Israel has, and we waited, knowing that if they come any day, hoping against hope that the Family of Nations will remember its little member of the family, a little country in the Middle East, the state of Israel, set up after the Family of Nations and the United Nations decided that after what happened, especially in the Second World War, there should be a Jewish

state and we thought we would be remembered and not forgotten.  
[25:00] This little country of two and a half million,  
surrounded by 40, 50 million armies very well equipped, ready to  
attack. We waited until the morning came and Israel started, and  
Egypt started to move.

We of course, are now the Imperialists. We are the  
aggressors. We are criminals, you're watching television, you  
listen to speeches of senior members of the Family of Nations,  
speaking only of course, of justice and the right of people.  
Giving advice in the Security Council. Evidently it wasn't only  
the Security Council where their advice was given, [26:00] I  
heard over the television the same as you did, that they were  
advisors from the same source somewhere else in Syria, who seem  
to be now in Israeli possession.

This is the world in which we live. Not hundreds of years  
after the Holocaust of Hitler. Only 25 years after that. We are  
a people, we do not want wars, we don't want victories in wars.  
We have a very small country. We don't ask for anymore  
territory. We have enough sand, enough rocks to do our job. We  
have even proven that in the last 20 years we can do something  
with these rocks [27:00] and sand. But in the last 20 years this  
was the third time when we had to send our sons to war. And I  
can almost point out families, who of the family fought in 1948?

And the younger brother in 1956 and a younger brother in 1967 and the question is, do we have to now begin to train the little ones of nine and 10 years old? Maybe we will be allowed to live in peace for another 10 years, but they must be prepared, definitely, that in 10 years from now, they, as their elder brothers must go to war. And even in the war of victory, not everybody comes back. Victory is not achieved without the loss of [28:00] lives. And so we don't want to be killed and we don't want to kill and we want to live in peace. But it depends entirely upon our neighbors. When there is war, whether we win or lose depends upon us.

Depends upon these funds. It depends upon their mothers. And their young wives. And I'm sorry that not every one of you was in Israel during these weeks. Before the fighting broke out and during those three wonderful days when we walked around and didn't know exactly how many hours since it started because it seemed impossible. Even miracles must take time to happen. The discipline. [29:00] The lack of any sign of panic or fear. The readiness of each one to do what he can. We were not always very complimentary about our youngsters. We always think they're not quite what they should be, until the day comes when they have to prove themselves and they have never failed. But those -- [applause] but those men and women that were left in the cities,

the mothers, the fathers, those that have just come in a few years ago, four years ago, five years ago, six months ago, a year ago into the country, some who have come to the country with their memories very fresh [30:00] of what war means. And we thought that maybe they'll be afraid. Maybe they'll be afraid to let their sons go.

But not one single case do we know of in the country where the reserve, those in the reserve army that were called up and did not come -- immediately, on the dot, there was trouble in one place. The commander of that spot had trouble, 110% came. And the up to 10% [applause] who weren't called up because of their physical condition demanded medical examinations there and then, to prove that they can do it. The first few hours, on Monday, when news came through of hundreds of Egyptian planes that came up towards Israel and of the Israeli pilots knocking out the planes in the air and those that have not yet taken off.

And it seemed really like a dream. Monday and Tuesday -- Monday night we went up to Jerusalem, to a meeting of the Knesset, to hear a statement from the prime minister and to have three new ministers sworn into government. We couldn't go up the regular road to Jerusalem because of the shelling from our Jordanian neighbor. He, too, wanted to come in and have a share [32:00] in the annihilation of Israel. And for days Jerusalem

was shelled. And I think that you will probably, we all will hear very soon, it will be said to us that Jerusalem is a holy city to three great religions in the world. But it was also last Monday and Tuesday. It was also in 1948 when it was shelled, but out of the three great religions, there were people only of one that defended Jerusalem in '48 and defended it now in '67.

[applause] And after the war in '48 and in agreement with Jordan, [33:00] it was agreed, the armistice agreement that we shall have free access to all religious places in the Old City, as well as to Mount Scopus. To the university. To the hospital. And there it was, signed voluntarily, by representatives of Jordan. So what? And for 20 years we had no access to our religious places. We had no access to Mount Scopus. No access to the Wailing Wall. Until two or three days ago. Until after the shelling of the New City from the walls of the Old City. And Friday morning, two or three hours before I left Israel to come here, [34:00] I thought I couldn't leave the country and here it was possible to go to the old city of Jerusalem and it was possible to go to the Hotel [Amar Avi?] and I shouldn't go, I just couldn't. I went to Jerusalem. I went to the Old City. I went to the Hotel Amar Avi.

One does not have to be especially religious in order to feel that he's standing in the face of a turning point in

history when he stands face-to-face with the Wailing Wall, that massive, great wall. The remains and reminder of what we once were and of our destruction and dispersion. [35:00] But there it stands, not everything was destroyed. We were not wiped out. There this wall remains, massive, strong, indestructible -- as it was to say to the Jewish people and to the world, they'll come back. This wall will not be only a remainder of what was, it will also be a sign of what will be. Into the Old City our boys also didn't come in just by marching in. Lives were lost. And the first to march in, to break through are always paratroopers. [36:00]

And I saw some of them. Early Friday morning, at the Wailing Wall. A service. These paratroopers, in their uniforms, their Sten guns on the table there, put away temporarily. This happened to be a group of [*Nachau?*], of religious youngsters, paratroopers. Their *tzitzits* were showing out from under their jackets. It was the morning prayer, with the *tefillin*, with the *tallisim* with the praying shawls. I was told beforehand by Brigadier Chaim Herzog how they fought. They didn't weep, they were not afraid. But when they stood in front of the Wailing Wall they wept. Wept for joy. [37:00] Maybe also a tear for their comrades that fell in battle. But the great joy that there

they are again. And one thing is certain. Never again will the road to the Wailing Wall be closed to Jews.

[applause] And never again will there be Jordanian soldiers or any other soldiers on the wall of the Old City, so that it shall be convenient for them to shoot and shell the New City.

[applause] And never again will the border between Gaza and Israel be such that it will be the source of [38:00] infiltrations and the constant danger to the villages on this side of the border. [applause] And on the Syrian border, I understand now why the representative of the Soviet Union is so angry with us. If it is true what it was reported and the report was not by Israelis, but the report was by your reporters here, that there are Russian advisors who are together with the Syrian army and are now in Israel, caught by Israeli during the battle. If that is true then I can understand and sympathize with him and I can understand his anger. Not only Soviet tanks were sent to Syria and to Egypt, for the humanitarian purpose of [39:00] killing off Israelis, not only MIGs, not only Tupelovs and Ilyushins, but men, advisors, how to kill, how to destroy, how to eliminate.

And great heroism, on top of the hills when [Tel Beit Zera?] and [Ein Gev?] and [Hibotabishan?] and Dan and [Godon?] are all down there in Valley, you can see them like in the palm

of your hand. Is it a wonder that in some of these villages there isn't one single building that wasn't shelled? It's a wonder that one or two of them are entirely without buildings. Thank God no casualties. But I ask you women that are sitting here, how long is it morally right to expect of mothers to raise their children in [40:00] air shelters? Because not only when there is a war are these villages being shelled, this happens several times a year. Sometimes for days, because these heroes are on top. Not one single child was evacuated from any one of these villages. Not one single mother asked for her child to be evacuated. And now that, those hills are in the possession of Israel. [applause] It may be, it's perfectly true, it's on the border of even a bit beyond the border.

The question was, either [41:00] to cross the border or to tell our people in the Valley that there is no border for them. That the shells from the Syrian guns can reach them without any obstruction whatsoever. That was the border, that was the limit. And if we can help it, if it's only within our physical power, and it is, unless, not only advisors come, but never are we going to allow that those children down in that valley, in the Hula, the Hula area, in Galilee, near the [Knevett?], never will we leave those hills and allow those [42:00] children to live in constant danger. [applause]

And so we've gone to war, not because we wanted to. It was a question, whose planes are knocked out first? And thank God, our pilots got there first. [applause] And we won the war. But we want peace. And there are two big problems that are facing us at this moment. Much has been destroyed, in the city of Jerusalem and in the villages. The villages in the Syrian border, some on the Jordanian border, [43:00] this has to be rebuilt. And rebuilt rapidly. We have one more problem. We have a good memory. We know what happened 10 years ago. I don't know when, today, tomorrow, three days from now, the pressure will begin. Despite our experience in the Family of Nations, we try to save ourselves from becoming cynical. And we still have faith in the decency of individuals and of heads of states. And we know that we have friends. We have enemies.

But we have friends. [44:00] And I want to believe that we can depend upon them. And I want to believe that they will realize, it is not decent, it is not moral to ask a people like us to be prepared at best for war only once in 10 years. And then from time to time, only mines, only shelling, only railroads blown up, water pipes, oh, it really doesn't amount to so much. For that you don't go to war. And war really, only once in 10 years, that's not so terrible. What do you do? You have 10 years of peace. I hope people will understand that they can't

expect that of us. But we know we have one great ally. [45:00] Don't have to ask. We don't have to speculate. He's there. I said last night at the Madison Square Garden, I'm convinced the paratroopers that broke their way through into the Old City of Jerusalem knew two things -- one, they weren't doing it only for themselves, not even only for the Israelis. They were breaking through a road for the Jewish people. [applause] And what power. They knew that they weren't there alone. That the Jewish people were with them. We felt that all these days. And we know it now.

I don't think that ever was there such enthusiasm, but not superficial enthusiasm -- never was enthusiasm an identification [46:00] so deep, so absolute, between Jewish people all over the world and Israel as it is at this present moment. [applause] And that's not only in the United States -- wherever there are Jews. On my way here I stopped for an hour in Paris and I met our ambassador there. He told me the most fantastic stories. I've been here only a few days. I've been to Los Angeles last, yesterday morning. I was in Madison Square Garden last night. I know of telephones, of people that come in, of letters that I receive. There is no more theorizing about the oneness. I think every Jew, every Jewish man and woman felt if Israel goes down, it affects him personally. [47:00] It's not merely a theoretical

belonging. There's something much more personal, much more close than that.

My friends, I think you would have been proud of us, had you seen us during those days. At any rate, we are proud of you. Of this communication, without words. Without telling you what is at stake. Without alerting you. This is something spontaneous, when something happens in the family you don't send cables to each other and you don't hold speeches for each other. You know what's happening. You know that first of all the family must get together. And this is what has happened [48:00] to the Jewish communities all over the world. To us there is no other source of strength than this. Look, a war has to be fought with planes and with tanks and with guns. A war is won at the cost of lives, of young men that should have lived. They had the world before them. It is so senseless. There's such, there's no excuse for it. Why? Here we are in our very small strip of sand, rocks, a little bit of decent soil -- working hard for those that are there, those that are coming and those many that will come. Why?

But here it is. I went down to see [49:00] my daughter's kibbutz in [*Regavim?*] two weeks ago Saturday. I didn't know when Nasser would start attacking and I thought that right close to the border, I should go down and say hello. And I saw the entire group, the hundreds of members of the -- the kibbutz, not a sign

of fear. Everyone knew exactly what he had to do. My granddaughter of 14 1/2 knew that for her there is no room in the air shelter. The air shelter's only for younger children. It is her duty to take the little ones into the air shelter, but she can't go in, because it would be too full. My grandson, yes, he's younger, but she's not, she's too old for that.

Everybody knows exactly what he has to do, what his assignment is. We met for about 10 minutes before I came back to Tel Aviv, but a woman walked over to me. [50:00] And she spoke in Yiddish, a newcomer. She came to me and she said, "Here I'm not afraid. I'm not afraid. Everybody cares for me. I'm assigned to a place where I will be safe. I'm not afraid. I was afraid. I knew what fear was during the war, when I was among strangers. But here I'm not afraid," for these that are there, that you forget fear, even in moments of danger. For those that will come, so that there will be home. For them we must assure peace and hope and freedom and life, for children in Israel, that they never know victories in war because may they never know war.

[applause]

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