

VT-983 Transcription

Herbert A. Friedman. Recorded message from Tel-Aviv, Israel.

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Herbert A. Friedman: Good evening gentlemen. I'm talking to you from the Tel Aviv Hilton Hotel in sunny Israel, and you're sitting there in the Brentwood Country Club in sunny California, and the fellow responsible for putting this together is Mike Hirsch -- if this turns out to be a good idea tonight, all the credit to him. He was here last November with a mission of country clubs -- half a dozen fellows from Brentwood -- he talked to Julie [Ratner?] about the presentation we made that night and suggested that if I couldn't come myself to the club tonight to talk to you at the dinner, at least we ought to make this telecast and get the message to you fresh from Israel.

There are three things I'd like to talk about: I want to talk to you about the problem of war and peace which hangs over our head constantly, whether there's fire on our borders or whether there isn't; I want to talk to you about a very happy and wonderful thing -- the new miracle [01:00] of the Russian immigration that's coming in; and I want to talk to you about a third thing which is a deep, festering social problem in our society here: a quarter of a million people -- 10% of our

population -- living in underprivileged conditions; we call it social welfare, or poverty problems. Number one is the war. I would like you to look at the map, and I would like you to take a look and see where we stand today. This map is color coded, and I don't know how it comes out on your black and white screen, but the very dark area here that I'm pointing to is old Israel before the six day war, only five short years ago. And, the new Israel is in the lighter green, encompasses all of this territory -- the Sinai Peninsula, this area here called the [02:00] West Bank, this area up here called the Golan, and this little finger of the Gaza Strip. We're sitting in these territories now five years after the war was over because no peace has been achieved, and no peace is going to be achieved insofar as we see the attitude of the Arab mentality right now. They still believe in war, they still prepare for it, they still talk about, they still threaten it, and if you look at where we're sitting and what's on our borders you'll understand that this is no idle threat -- this is a matter of life and death for us. The most important thing is the Suez Canal, right here. From the sea -- the Mediterranean -- down here to the gulf, it's 106 miles. On this 106 miles they've based an enormous attack as well as defensive posture. They've got 100,000 men in line here. [03:00] In a triangle that goes back to Cairo, they've got

another 400,000 men. There are half a million men in this small area in three lines of defense as the Russians have taught them. They've got more than 60 Russian missile sites on the line to prevent our overflying and to prevent our interdicting their artillery when they fire back at us. They've got 25 air fields dotted in this small triangle, they've got 1,200 artillery pieces on the line, they've got a quantity of material here which is larger than that which is defending the city of Moscow itself; it's kind of absurd isn't it? But, that's the situation. We, on our side of the line here, are not attempting to match them man for man, gun for gun, plane for plane -- that's not a possibility.

What we have to do [04:00] is pour in all of the strength of which we're capable in a proportionate ratio with a population of 3 million people. In the last few weeks there have been announcements here about new equipment -- Phantoms which have come in, M60 great big new patent tanks, 175mm large field guns -- Israel is not without means, but Israel can't hope to cope with the money and the equipment that Russia is pouring into Egypt. We have to attain some kind of a standoff balance so that they won't feel it's easy to attack us or to overrun us. So, that's going, again, to Moscow -- planning to go now -- we'll go shortly -- looking for another green light. Twice he

went, twice he didn't get it, twice they had the good sense to turn him down. One fine day he may convince Russia to let him try it again. For us to operate as though that's not a real possibility would be an illusion [05:00], would be foolish, would be suicidal. And so, on this border we defend as best we can. On all our other borders forces have been deployed, equipment is kept, money is spent -- the defense of Israel take 30% of the gross national product of the whole country. This is the border that's been inflamed lately. Up on the Lebanese there have been attacks, there have been killings -- we moved across the border twice in order to quiet it down here between Lebanon and Syria, an area called [Fa Tak Lan?]; it's quiet now along the Beit She'an Valley and the Jordan Valley -- it's quiet. Here along the West Bank 650,000 Arabs live -- they're quiet -- having elections this week.

We believe, very simply, that the best deterrent to an attack is a posture of strength. It's on this basis that the economy [06:00] of this country is geared -- the political strategy, the military strategy, and the country today rests with no shooting and yet no illusion that that means peace. We are in a state of war and will continue to be so until they sign peace treaties with us. When that occurs, we won't have to defend this Suez line; we'll maintain a position here down at

[Sharem?] in order to protect the entrance through the Straits of Tiran up to Eilat. We'll maintain some sort of a presence along the Jordan River to make sure they can't jump us again, we'll make sure there's nobody putting guns on the front part of the Golan Heights to shoot down into the Kibbutzim, but the back half of the Golan Heights we care less about. Peace will bring the border adjustments which everyone talks about -- those are not the preventatives to peace. Territory is not the preventative to peace, it's [07:00] psychological. When they want to make peace with us, they'll make peace with us and then the whole thing will change -- everything will change. Some of the money can then begin to be saved and diverted to other things. And, I'd like to change now and divert to another subject. I'd like to talk now about a second matter, and that's the matter of the Russian immigration. It's coming in in a beautiful, welcome, happy, large stream.

New Jews, young people who have found their identity, found the meaning of their Jewish life, found the meaning of their existence, making a voluntary effort to rejoin the Jewish people in the Jewish land in a manner which they never thought it would be possible before; in a manner in which 55 years ago their fathers [08:00] lived through the Russian Revolution and today their sons and their grandsons have re-caught the spirit of

Judaism in spite of every effort of the Russian government to stamp it out. When 20 and 25 year old people who don't know anything about Jewish history, don't know anything about the Jewish language, don't know anything about the Jewish religion because they had no chance to learn any of this, walk into a Russian police station and say to the KGB sergeant of the secret police, "I want to go to my homeland, Israel." And, the Russian sergeant looks at them and thinks they're crazy -- and, many Jews today, by the way are in insane asylums in Russia, put there because the Russian government would refuse to let them out, and yet won't shoot them. There are Jews in prison, there are Jews in institutions, but there are also Jews who are getting out, and they fight the bureaucracy, and they fight the man in their [09:00] factory to give them a character reference, and they demand that he give it to them, and they don't care what happens to their children in the schools when their kids are mocked and scorned because the teacher tells that these children are traitors to Russia and are going to leave Russia and want to go to Israel -- the man and his family take all of that. They take it because the desire to re-identify and re-link with the Jewish people is stronger than whatever scorn or danger the Russian establishment can heap upon them, so they're willing to risk it. When they come here, they bring with them education,

they bring talent, they bring knowledge, and they bring courage to start a new life, and they make a big contribution to this country.

At the beginning there are problems: there aren't enough houses, and there are no jobs where there are houses, and there are complaints, and all of those irritations of the beginning require a period of adjustment. We go through it with every new airplane that dumps 150 more people down at Lydda Airport every day. [10:00] 10,000 have come in already in the first four months of 1972 -- 13,000 all of last year -- already in the first third of the year we've gotten almost that many. The problems are hard in the beginning, but in the long run, it's worth a treasure because they bring assets of brain, and mind, and will, and determination, and they will help build Israel and make it strong. It costs over \$1,000 -- almost \$1,200 for every person to get out of Russia -- the fees for repudiating Russian citizenship and for getting an exit visa, and the engineer or the doctor earns \$150 a month. How can he save up \$1,200? Never. And, for four people in his family? How can he have \$4,000 or \$5,000? Never. That money's got to come in from the outside, clear? The outside is you. It comes, you give it, [11:00] it flows, the Jews flow, they come -- Moscow, Vienna, Vienna, Tel Aviv -- welcome.

Welcome brother. A new citizen, a new asset, a new source of strength. Peace is going to come when this country is strong enough, and large enough, and big enough, and heavy enough so that no Arab will ever dream that war is his solution any longer. Peace will come when war is impossible; war will be impossible when Arab leadership understands that Israel is indestructible. When? 5 million, 6 million, 7 million people. Remember Norway and the Nazis -- how big was Norway, 4 or 5 million? The Nazis came, occupied Norway -- four and a half years they sat in the country. They couldn't destroy the country. Nobody can destroy this country [12:00] when it's 5 or 6 or 7 million. And so the Russians bring important attributes of strength as well as their problems, but if we don't absorb them properly we'll cut the immigration -- you and I will be responsible for it, not the Russians. You yelled and you protested, "Let my people go, let my people go," well, they're going -- now who pays for it?

I said there was a third thing I wanted to talk to you about. There are many people in this country who live in an underprivileged condition; they've been here 10 or 15 or 20 years. They look at the Russians coming in and they say, "Why can't we get what the Russians are getting? Are you discriminating against us because we're so far in? Because we



came from Morocco, or Tunisia, or Algeria? We want what every citizen of this country gets. We want to have a new house -- we don't want to live in a slum. We want our kids to have good schools, we want to have enough money to earn our living and to eat our daily bread." And, I tell you this, [13:00] there are people in this country who are hungry and who don't have enough daily bread. Now, they're right, but there's no alternative because we don't have money to do everything. There's money for war -- that comes first -- there's money for immigration -- that comes second -- the money for the social welfare problems, frankly, comes third, and when there isn't enough of that, then they get the short end of the stick. That's not right, that's not fair, that shouldn't be done, but there's no alternative unless the Jews of the world come forth with a big new gush of support in much larger quantities than ever before to enable us to handle all three of the problems, not just one or two of them. OK, let's wrap it up -- you've got the whole thing straight. You know that this is a long range problem. You know that I have come to speak to you in Brentwood 10 years ago, and 5 years ago, and for all I know I'll come back and speak to you again 5 years from now.

You know we're not talking about something that can be solved overnight. [14:00] We need long range support at a very,

very high level -- much more than you thought of giving before. You are giving much more now than you gave before the six day war, you'll have to give much more this year and next year, and next year than ever before. You're capable of doing it if you want to, what's required is an act of will, an act of strength, an act of courage, an act of conviction. You have the determination to do something, and you can do anything you want -- you know that. What I'm asking for is an understanding that time is on our side, that we're winning, that we're making the country more beautiful, stronger, safer, bigger, more secure, and with your help -- the Jews living here can't do it alone. That's clear. It's no matter of shame, or dishonesty, or anything of the sort to say that with you, and us, the Jews in England, [15:00] and France, and all over the free world working together, Israel can be built to a point of absolute beauty and indestructibility. You've got to do your share, and you've got to do it in a manner in which you feel good about it because you have a sense of pride, and a sense of happiness, and a sense of participation. Do it right! History will repay you in the long run with a great reward that the Jewish people will survive and the state of Israel will survive, and you will have the additional feeling of knowing that you had a part in it. There's nothing greater that you could have -- there's no greater reward

you can have, there's no greater heritage you can pass on to your children. Do it right, and everyone will win. Thank you very much. [16:00]

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