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FYI – Bibi's speech yesterday.

## **PM Netanyahu's address at the opening of the Knesset summer session**

16 May 2011

Two days ago, on the Tenth of Iyar, it was the 107th anniversary of Theodore Herzl's death. It is no coincidence that his is the only portrait hanging on these walls. Herzl was the greatest leader the Jewish people has had in modern times. He was well aware of the condition of the Jewish people. He recognized the transformations that were taking place everywhere; and he clearly saw that a Jewish state was required in order for the Jewish people to survive, and that having an army was a necessity for the survival of this state. And not just an army, but a strong, modern army, equipped with advanced technology.

Here's what he wrote in 1896: "The [army of the] Jewish State... equipped, of course, with every requisite of modern warfare, to preserve order internally and externally." Herzl understood that nobody would protect us, and that we alone would have to safeguard our state. He wrote: "I only want this settlement, so that we can protect it with a Jewish army." Herzl was a man of vision, but at the same time he was also a realist. He understood that even after obtaining a state of their own, the Jewish people would still have to protect itself. People thought he was crazy for having thought up the idea of establishing a Jewish state, but he was scorned and ridiculed even more when he spoke of his vision for a Jewish army. Although Herzl had managed to recruit some of the leading Jewish intellectuals of his time: Nordau, Zangwill and others, it is interesting to point out that the richer and more intellectual Jews in the West were the least tolerant of his ideas. The more common Jews in the villages and towns of Eastern Europe - Poland, Russia and the Ukraine - were willing to accept Herzl's vision and unite around his ideas.

Today, members of Knesset, we appreciate what many of our people ridiculed back then. Today we know that Herzl's most remarkable ability was to be aware of the changing reality and to come up with a solution, even if this solution was not accepted among the Jewish leaders of the time. Herzl had a capability that very few have, to see the hatred towards the Jews for what it was at its very beginning, and, no less acutely, to realize where it was going. Herzl did not succeed in sweeping all the Jews with his proposed solution, but he did manage to unite the Zionist factions around his central ideas. I believe that without this seed of firm agreement within the Zionist Movement, the movement would never been able to overcome the powers that opposed it around the world.

What can we learn today from Herzl's work? What is relevant to us today? The first lesson is that we must recognize changing reality. The Middle East is changing rapidly and drastically. Hundreds of millions of people around us yearn for political and financial freedom and are fighting to obtain these freedoms. These are inevitable changes. It is very possible that in the long term, these changes will be for the best, and I hope they will, for the good of these people and because at the end of the day, if this struggle is successful, it will promote the chance for peace and the peace's resilience. But in the short term, in the interim, our situation could possibly worsen, be more problematic and more challenging. We can see what is happening in Egypt, in Syria and in Lebanon. Lebanon is now controlled by Hezbollah, under the sponsorship of Iran, when only five years ago there was such great hope for freedom and progress. We saw what happened along the borders of Israel yesterday. Thousands thronged against our fences in an attempt to invade our territory and challenge our sovereignty. I must say that from the point of view of yesterday's rioters, 63 years of Israeli independence have changed nothing.

What were they yelling in Gaza yesterday? They were shouting that they want to return to Jaffa.  
 What were they crying in Syria yesterday? They were chanting that they want to return to the Galilee.  
 What did the leader of Hamas say yesterday? "We want to see the end of the Zionist agenda," the very same words used by his patrons in Iran, but, my friends, this was not only said there.

I said that we hear what is being said around us, but the most interesting thing is what happened in Bil'in. And this does not only happen there, but it was interesting, because two days ago at the demonstration in Bil'in, the cat was let out of the bag - more precisely,

the key was let out of the bag. At the procession in Bil'in, a young girl was walking along holding a large symbolic key. Every Palestinian knows what that key symbolizes. This is not a key to their homes in Bil'in, Ramallah or Nablus. It is the key to our homes in Jaffa, Acre, Haifa and Ramle. My friends, the root of this conflict never was a Palestinian state, or lack thereof. The root of the conflict is, and always has been, their refusal to recognize the Jewish state. It is not a conflict over 1967, but over 1948, over the very existence of the State of Israel. You must have noticed that yesterday's events did not occur on June 5, the anniversary of the Six Day War. They occurred on May 15, the day the State of Israel was established. The Palestinians regard this day, the foundation of the State of Israel, their nakba, their catastrophe. But their catastrophe was that they did not have a leadership that was willing to reach a true historic compromise between the Palestinian people and the Jewish people.

Regrettably, since then until this day, they have not had a leadership that is prepared to recognize the State of Israel as the national homeland of the Jewish people. That has not happened yet.

My friends, we must not bury our heads in the sand. We must face reality, as it is, with our eyes wide open. We must stop self-flagellating and blaming ourselves. We must call a spade a spade: the true reason the Palestinians refuse to recognize the State of Israel as the national homeland of the Jewish people. I must say that I think that most people are beginning to understand this in face of the reality that is unfolding before us in our region and along our borders in particular. And I believe that most people are united regarding the positions that I will present here.

First, the people is united in our need to defend the country and its borders. Second, it is united in our need to maintain peace with Egypt and Jordan. Third, it is united faced with the threat of a nuclear Iran.

I also believe that most people are united in regard to my viewpoints on the issue that seems to be in dispute, the political process with the Palestinians. The citizens of Israel are much more united than is commonly believed, and much more united than the political parties that are supposed to represent them here in this house. There is consensus regarding the basic issues:

First, about my demand that the Palestinians recognize the State of Israel as the national homeland of the Jewish people.

Second, about my view, which is shared by many here, that the agreement between us must end the conflict and end the demands on the State of Israel.

Third, that the problem of the Palestinian refugees will be resolved outside of Israel and not within its borders.

Fourth, that a Palestinian state only be established under a peace treaty that will not compromise the safety of Israel. I believe there is agreement on this, and I stress that this state must be demilitarized, with practical security arrangements, including long-term IDF presence along the Jordan River.

Fifth, we agree that we must maintain the settlement blocs. There is widespread agreement that the settlement blocs must remain within the State of Israel.

Sixth, that Jerusalem remain the united and sovereign capital of the State of Israel.

These are the principles that guide my path, our path.

I know that a huge majority of people understands that we can only make peace with those who want to make peace with us. Those who wish to obliterate us are no partners for peace. A Palestinian government with half its members declaring daily that they plan to annihilate the Jewish state is not a partner for peace. Those who say, and I am familiar with the saying, that "peace is made with enemies" must add a small but important qualifier: peace is made with an enemy, but with an enemy who has decided to make peace.

That is the major lesson from the 20th century, and I think probably from the 21st century too. Some of our neighbors and closest friends now understand that idea in relation to their own unrelenting enemies. I want to make peace with a Palestinian state that would end the conflict, I am not willing to accept a Palestinian state that continues it. I am prepared to accept a Palestinian state beside the State of Israel, but I will not accept a Palestinian state *instead* of the State of Israel. I know there are people who do not agree with some of the things I said here. But the large majority does agree.

Mr. Speaker and members of the Knesset, if [the Palestinians] choose to recognize the State of Israel and abandon terrorism, they will find a unified people that is willing to make peace and is prepared for peace with concessions, but it must be real peace. That is what we want.

These compromises, by the way, will be hard to make because, no matter what, they involve parts of our homeland. It is not a strange land, it is the land of our forefathers, to which we have historic rights as well as security interests.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished Members of Knesset,

Over 100 years ago, Herzl saw many factions in the Zionist Congress, with many different opinions. But he understood that there was agreement on the fundamental issues. He realized that the various sections of the Zionist Movement did see eye to eye on regarding the basics. He called upon the factions of the Zionist Congress to rise above factional and personal considerations. He called upon them to unite around the great ideas that served as the basis of the Zionist Movement.

This is what we must do today. Just as in the past the main Zionist powers were required to come together in order to establish the State, today we need the major Zionist powers to come together to preserve the State and to ensure its future.

Therefore, at this historic moment, with our region in turmoil, with our very existence challenged, with the majority of us agreeing to the standpoints I outlined here, this is the moment to come together for our country.

I call upon you, Zionist members of the opposition, to rise above party considerations, to set aside your personal interests. Join us based on the principles that I have outlined, and let us present a united front for security, for peace, for the State.