

DIALOGUE

**Rabbi William
Berkowitz**



**Senator Hubert
H. Humphrey**

Rabbi Berkowitz: Because of our guest of tonight, the United States of today is more liberal in its foreign policy, as measured by the quantity and quality of aid to underdeveloped peoples and its encouragement of commitments to nations emerging into freedom than it was a generation ago. Our guest's espousal of Israel's cause has been part and parcel of this liberalism. Times without number we have sought his guidance, and he has never failed us. No American is more reliable, more consistent, or a more valiant spokesman for human freedom and humanitarianism than our guest, Senator Hubert Horatio Humphrey. Across the years our guest has been a most successful politician holding office from Mayor to Senator to Vice President and nearly President. And so, my first question, Senator, is this: Can a man or a woman be an active, successful politician and still be ethical? Or is it a case that once you come to office, the pressures are so great that in order either to stay in office or to win with your constituency, you have to resort to not just compromise but over-compromising? Hence, do ethics and politics go hand in hand?

Senator Humphrey: I think the answer is that it is up to the individual. You can, definitely, or you can fail, as many of us do in our lives. As has been said by Rabbi Berkowitz, we do make adjustments and compromises, and there is nothing wrong with that at all. Sometimes you have to yield a bit in order to accomplish a great deal. In my public life I have looked toward what we call forward movement. I have not sought to get everything at once. That goes for issues, for legislation, for everything in life. Yet, I do not believe that any time in my life have I compromised away the principles that I believe in, or that govern my daily life or my private life. I would be less than honest if I didn't say that at times I have to take into consideration the wishes of my constituency, the needs of my particular constituency in Minnesota, which may not always be identical to my personal beliefs. But on matters of high princi-



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ple, I have to vote my conscience and my convictions. Let me give you an example.

In my background there was no particular problem or issue as an individual in the community where I was reared, or in the family in which I grew up as a boy, with race relations, or religious bigotry or intolerance. It just didn't exist. I grew up in a small town, a rural community. We had in our community one Jewish family. But I remember my father and mother going to the Schraeder home during Chanukah and joining with the Schraeders on many a festive occasion. I learned about Chanukah when I was a very young man in a rural town in South Dakota. We had no black people, none at all. The first



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time I ever saw a black person, he was the driver of a dump wagon. We were driving mule teams, putting gravel on a country road, and rather than any prejudice, we just hadn't seen anybody like that. So when I grew up to go to university later on, I did not have to wrestle with this problem of bigotry, intolerance, and segregation. I had been brought up to believe that everybody was important. My family had a religious background, and I was brought up to believe in the preciousness of the human soul. Or to put it in simple religious terms, Rabbi, and I believe in this, in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. I was brought up to believe that there was, and is, a universality of humankind. And the

greatest teacher of this that I ever had in my life was my father, and the one that showed me the power of life more than anyone else was my mother. This has been the kind of wonderful heritage that I have lived with.

Now what I try to do is translate my ethical and religious convictions into my politics. But like most people, I stumble along the way. I would be the last person to tell you that I have come anywhere near living the perfect life. But my interest in people is an interest that comes really out of a very deep moral commitment. That's why I believe that there ought to be in government the same attitude about people that we have in our family. For example, if in the family there is one amongst you that is crippled, or retarded, or sick, you don't throw him out; you don't cast him aside. No. You shower more love on him than almost anybody else. Now, if it is good enough for an individual, or a family, to be concerned for the weak, the unfortunate, the sick, the disabled, it is good enough for the government of the people and by the people and for the people to have that same concern enunciated into public policy. I took my stand on the issue of human rights very early in my life, long before I got to Washington. I did it as the Mayor of my city. I did it at the university when I was a student. And when I became a politician in the sense of seeking public office, particularly for the Senate, I decided to try and correct some of the wrongs that I had witnessed in my life, some of the wrongs that I had read about. So I set out on a course of trying to do that.

To return to the question again: I do think it is possible for a man and a woman in public life to have high ethical standards. And quite honestly, having been in both private and public life, the standards of conduct in public life, in my judgment, are much higher than they are in private life. For one thing, when you are in public life, you are under constant observation. You don't need an FBI to investigate you because your opposition is investigating you all the time. There is nothing that makes news as much as to find something wrong about somebody who is in public life. I submit that if every

businessman and if every teacher, if every professional person had to be under the same kind of glaring light, the same kind of microscope that we are under in public life, I doubt many of us would have much respect for anybody, because all of us have limitations and weaknesses. But the news about public people frequently is the mistakes that they make, and understandably so. The news about a doctor, generally, is malpractice. Once in a while it is that he is an unusual surgeon, or something like that. That comes out, just as it does with a man in public life if he does something of significance; that comes out.

Let me say, again, that in Congress if I worked as hard for a private individual as I worked for my constituents, I would have to be out of my mind. I do not have the time for private life, and the demands upon people in public life today and in years past are tremendous. I started my day this morning at 6:30, and I start early every morning. I haven't had time for lunch. I grabbed a sandwich as I ran through the airport, put it in a bag and ate it in the car. This is not an unusual thing. And public life, as every wife of a public official knows, is a politician's mistress. You don't have much time at home. I have two beautiful homes, and I spend more time in a hotel room than I do in my homes. I spend more time eating in an airplane, or on the run, than I do at our table, and I am not particularly proud of it, but it is the way public life is; it is a demanding existence. So I want you to have a little charity. Mrs. Humphrey is very good at this. We've had 39 years of married life now, and brought up four children and have nine grandchildren, and I am here to tell you that public life is hard on family life, very hard. My esteemed colleague, Walter Mondale, thought he was going to run for President until he started the task, and, as he found out, you have no time for mother, wife, sister, brother, children, or grandchildren. You have time for one thing: your duty, your commitment, as a candidate; it is all-consuming.

When I was defeated for the presidency, I went back to teaching; it was marvelous. I couldn't believe how nice it was.

compared to the demands put upon you in public life. Having said all of that, I don't ask for your sympathy, but I want you to understand people in public life.

Number two, there is tremendous pressure brought to bear upon you. Tremendous pressure. I remember when I ran in 1968, I had some of the largest oil company people come to my home at Waverly, Minnesota, and they were nice people, big business, who represent billions of dollars, and they said: We want to ask you one question, Mr. Vice President, if you are elected President of the United States, what will be your views on the taxation of the oil companies? I told them. And I didn't get any money and quite honestly, when they heard what I said, they were right. So we had no money; whatever we had was borrowed. We have been paying it off ever since. I had no campaign, no television, no radio, nothing, until the first week of October, and that was while running for President. Imagine it, I couldn't keep my staff on. I had nothing, and the easiest thing in the world would have been to say, all right, you get me \$10 million, or \$2 million, and I'll see to it when I get to be President that you are not bothered with tax laws. Now I think that's a test because that was life or death for me, that was defeat or victory in my hands, one way or another. At least it looked like it. But I knew that if I were elected, even if I had told them then that I would be with them, I would have had to double-cross them, because I would have had to keep my own commitment to myself. And I'll tell you one thing, one thing you ought never to do in politics, don't double-cross anybody, because once you have done that, nobody will ever trust you again.

Rabbi Berkowitz: We who are in the electorate feel that there is a wide gap between pre-election and post-election promises. I want to give two examples. Specifically, former President Gerald Ford, before he was President, said: I am in favor of changing the capital of Israel from Tel Aviv to its rightful place, Jerusalem. He was then the Vice President of

the United States. Once he took office, he reversed himself. Example number two: A great American and a great statesman, Nelson Rockefeller, who was the first non-Jew to make contributions to the UJA and gather about him other members of the Christian community, on the verge of the vice-presidency, said that Israel took the Land from the Palestinians. What I am asking you, Senator, is how can individuals in public life be believed? And how can thinking, sensitive, concerned, committed Americans not be down on politics and politicians and avoid a feeling of cynicism and lack of faith and lack of hope?

Senator Humphrey: Rabbi, first of all, there are no saints among politicians. For that matter, very few even among the clergy, to be frank about it.

Rabbi Berkowitz: I couldn't agree with you more.

Senator Humphrey: We just don't have any saints around, and you are dealing with fallible human beings. You are dealing with very limited beings when you deal with people. Now, I can't speak for President Ford, but I can imagine what happened. Since he rose from the ranks of the House of Representatives, he was much more conditioned to his own limited constituency in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Hence, he spoke out of the training, the education that he received from his communications with people in the Jewish community, undoubtedly out of his constituency and those who come to the House of Representatives. Undoubtedly, this is a more limited perspective than when you become President of the U.S.; when he became President, I am confident that someone from the State Department walked over to him and said, "Now, Mr. President, you have some delicate matters to handle here, like in the Middle East, and Jerusalem is a highly contentious matter. And as President I would suggest you withhold

further comment about Jerusalem being the capital of Israel, because it is one of those matters that will have to be negotiated. It is part of the negotiations in the Middle East.” This is probably about what happened, plus the fact, may I say quite respectfully, that there has been over a long period of time within the State Department of our government, regretably, certain influences with whom I have not found myself in agreement—either as a Senator or as Vice President—as far as the Middle East is concerned, what I thought for years was an Arab bias. Let me put it this way. When President Truman received advice from the State Department in 1948, as to whether or not he should recognize the independence and sovereignty of Israel as a nation, the State Department said “No.” But Mr. Truman knew that he was President. And he was the Head of State, and the Department is just advisory. And Mr. Truman said, “Yes.” That’s the way decisions are made. And I believe that is the difference between great men and not so great men.

Lincoln said it best late in 1862 while discussing the Emancipation Proclamation at a cabinet meeting. He asked the cabinet, which then had eight members, "How do you feel about the Emancipation Proclamation freeing the Negro and declaring that slavery is at an end?" And the eight members said "No," while the President said "Yes," and so Lincoln said, "We have taken the vote, there are eight No's and one Aye, the Ayes have it." Now Abraham Lincoln did not start out being an Abolitionist. He did not start out saying that the reason he was going to stand up and save the Union was to free the slaves. He didn't do that at all. He was just interested in saving the Union. Freeing the slaves was not Lincoln's first objective, even though he abhorred slavery. I know that Lincoln made speeches in which he did not recommend freeing the slaves, but that did not make Mr. Lincoln a hypocrite. What happened to Mr. Lincoln was that, as he went along, he grew in his job.

Franklin Roosevelt said in 1932, when running for office, that if elected President of the U.S. he would cut the budget.

trim the employment in the government by some 20% or 25%. But when he became President, he found out after about two or three weeks that if he cut the budget, the Depression would be worse, that he couldn't afford to lay off anyone, that what he needed to do was to hire people instead of laying them off, and he made a 180° switch. Well, would you say he was a liar, he was a hypocrite? No. Let me say that the man got a different view of life, a different view of his problems, especially from the Oval Office, and I can assure you that once you are involved deeply in many matters, you'll change your mind, but it doesn't mean that you have lied first. It means most of the time that you grew up.

I imagine I could hear someone say, now, Mr. Humphrey, I have heard you say that you thought Jerusalem should be the capital of Israel. I *have* said it many, many times, and I do believe it, and I believe were I the President of the U.S.—I am not and don't expect to be—I can tell you that I would stand for making Jerusalem the capital of the State of Israel. That is what I do believe, and what I have always believed. Someone might convince me later on that in order to get a settlement that would preserve the State of Israel, the territorial integrity of Israel, to keep her from being constantly set upon by her enemies, that maybe my view should be changed. That does not make you a liar. It makes you one who has decided what is most important, a city or a nation. A place, or a whole people. I don't say that's the way it would be, but it could be the case.

Now as far as Mr. Rockefeller's statement is concerned, I think he made some explanation about that. I am not up here to defend Nelson Rockefeller, even though I voted for him for Vice President. Imagine that: I am a Democrat, and I have had to vote for two Republican Vice Presidents! Forgive me for bringing up that partisan matter, but I have done it. I think Nelson Rockefeller never should have said what he said. Number one, I don't think it is the truth, and certainly it was absolutely unnecessary to say it. Because, first of all, the Jewish National Fund did much to buy up land in what was called Palestine, which was a name attached to it after World

War I. The Jewish National Fund did a great deal to buy up huge tracts of land from the Arabs. Furthermore, in the war of freedom for Israel, the Israelis did not ask the Arabs who lived there to depart. The Arabs said to the other Arabs, look, leave your possessions, get out, we are going to defeat the Israelis, we'll drive them into the sea, we'll come back, and you can have it all when you return. Now that is a historical fact. And the fact of the matter is that those Arabs who lived in the area called Palestine were deceived by their leaders. Today there are Arabs living in Israel, as you and I know, and they live there in peace. They have representatives in the Knesset, and I think it was most unfortunate Mr. Rockefeller made that statement. But once again, you are under great pressure.

You sit there before an investigating committee, and you are answering questions left and right, they shoot them at you this way and that way, and sometimes things are taken out of context, sometimes regrettably you say things you ought not to say. I am a very forgiving man, and I guess the reason I am forgiving is that I know the tension and the pressure. You don't have time to sit down and prepare. You are lucky if you get your shirt on before you come in. And then there are ten, twelve, fifteen people who have spent weeks planning on how to get to you, asking you every conceivable question.

Finally, let me say what I said in the beginning, I wish we were better, but we're not better. I am a man in public life. Many times people have come to me and said, "Will you help me?" and I said, "Yes." Then I was not able to do it. And that person would say, "That Humphrey lied to me." Quite honestly, you don't have time to fulfill all your promises, and politicians *do* overpromise. So did you men overpromise when you asked that girl to marry you. And sometimes the women overpromised too; they were a little nicer when they were being courted than after they got married. There is a lot of overpromising that goes on in life. I don't say that you should—that this is the way it should be—all I am saying to you is that that is what the Old Testament talks about when it speaks of human frailties. By the way, some of the prophets had a few

frailties if you look at them. Candor again, Rabbi. I just simply say: Don't expect too much. Remember that going into public office does not make you a new person. Also remember this: In representative government, you have to look upon it as a well; what comes out of the well is dependent on what's in it. And people that come out of a society are not much better than the society whence they come. If, in our society, people are always making shortcuts, lying a little, cheating a little bit, playing it free and loose, just a little bit—remember that you *elect* people out of that same society. And remember you do not necessarily pick people who are the most skilled and competent, because a lot of them don't run for office. You pick what's available. It is like going into the orchard, you get what's on the tree, not what you wish was on the tree. So that's a little of my political lesson to you, and I know some people are going to say, well, that's an apology. I did not come here to tell you that I am a 100% pure man. I am not even close to Ivory Soap. I just do the best that I can do.

Rabbi Berkowitz: Just in commenting on your response I want to say that I think you hold the record of having appeared at more Jewish National Fund events than any other public servant.

Senator Humphrey: Can I just say this: You know one reason I have taken such a great interest in the Jewish National Fund? I have always said that any people that was interested in the land and the fruit of the land would be a people that was interested in other people. You can trace civilization—every civilization that has gone bad has first exploited its land, and then they exploit their people. And you remember, you surely remember, that the area now called the Middle East, particularly the area called Israel, was once a very beautiful area, with trees—well, you know, they talked of milk and honey, the forests and all—but what happened? The

people that occupied it after a while drove the Jews out, and occupied it, from different countries, Syria, Turkey, and so forth. They exploited it, they cut down all the trees, they did not take care of the land, they let the terraces go and fall apart and they exploited the people. This is a historical fact. When a society forgets God's given resources, the land, water, and vegetation, the next thing they forget are the people that live on the land and the water and the vegetation. When I see our country exploiting our land, not caring for it, exploiting our forests, and not caring for it, not regarding our parks and not caring for them—I say, aha, the people that do that will soon do the same thing to people. They will use people, consume them, just as they consume and use the land, let it erode and let the water supply get filled with dirt and filth. When you contaminate that which God Almighty gave us, the next thing you destroy is the human being himself. The JNF has taught us not only that you can reclaim Huleh lake, not only that you can plant the trees and change the climate, but what JNF taught us was that with a better land comes a better people. People that love the land love their children and children that love the land love their parents. Just a historical fact.

Rabbi Berkowitz: It has been said of you, in your biography and by others, that at the start you were a brash, fervent liberal. Then a pragmatic liberal, then left of center, then center, and so on. In recent years it has been said that younger people are not rallying to you as they once did. Do you think this is so? And if so, why? And are you, who have been the dynamic, the ebullient, the ever-young human being, are you disappointed by this manifestation?

Senator Humphrey: Let me deal with the first part of your question. Most young men are in a hurry, and in my early days I was filled—and still am—with bubbling idealism, but back then at that day and age of my life I did not realize that it could

not be achieved quite as early as I had hoped. In other words, I was a young man in a big hurry, believing very deeply. But I want to say something else: Many of the things that I have fought for all my life which seemed to be extremely radical or extremely liberal are now today the law of the land. As somebody said to me before, you've changed, and I said, I haven't changed, the country has changed, and you have changed.

I brought the first black man with me who ever sat down as a guest at a table in the U.S. Senate. He worked for me. And when that young man came in, the man at the door, Paul Johnson, who was black, came over and whispered to me: "Senator Humphrey, you know that I admire you greatly, but you have done something here that is going to cause you great embarrassment, and I want to help you. You have brought a young black man to sit with you at your table. That doesn't happen here, and I don't want you to get into trouble." I looked up at this dear man, and I said: "Paul, this young man has slept in my home, he has eaten at our table, he has been with my children, and he has traveled with Mrs. Humphrey and me, and if he is good enough to be in my home, then he is good enough to be in this Senate dining room that is supposed to belong to the American people. Forget it, I am not worried whether anyone likes me or not. It is unimportant. This young man is going to be here." That young man stayed and that young man today has just been elected Governor of the Virgin Islands.

What I am pointing out is that some of the things that a man stands for become fact. I stood for Medicare. I introduced the first bill on Medicare. I was called a Socialist, the medical profession was furious with me, but I stuck with it for fifteen years; every year I introduced it, and finally it became the law of the land. I introduced the first bill for student loans. I went to college, I was broke, I didn't have any money. I had to quit college, I couldn't get a job, I had to go home. I said that if I ever got into a position where I could do something about this, I was going to. So I helped author the National Defense Educa-

tion Act, and I put in student loans for young students. Today everyone says that's great, everyone is for that. Take another example: I introduced the first bill on National Health Insurance in 1949, with Claude Pepper of Florida and James Murray of Montana; today it is not a question whether you are going to have national health insurance, it is only a question of when and what kind. Let me tell you a funny story that proves my point. I spoke to the Petroleum Club in Houston, and the man who introduced me got up and said: "Hubert Humphrey has changed." So I said, when I got up, let me tell you, "You've changed because you have let me in here just to speak to you!"

I feel more dedicated to the concepts of progressive democracy today than I did at any time in my life. I know more. I know what happens to people more today. Before, much of my enthusiasm and idealism were based on ideas and theory; today they are based on some suffering. I am concerned, for example, for families with disabled children. We have a little mentally retarded granddaughter. Nobody needs to tell me what that means. No one. And when the President of the U.S. vetoed the Vocational Rehabilitation Act for the Disabled, the Mentally Retarded and the Mentally Ill, I said it was the cruelest, most immoral veto in the history of the American Republic, and I meant it, because I feel it. It isn't what's up here in your head, what counts is what is in your heart, what's in your glands, that's what counts. You can reason things away, but you can't feel things away.

Now about young people. I went through a period of trouble with young people because of the war in Vietnam. I was a member of the Administration that had the responsibility for that war. And I have to tell you that that was one of the saddest periods of my life, because I love young people, I truly do. I love children. I just get a kick out of them. It makes me feel young. I enjoy being with them. In 1964, your leading newspaper, *The New York Times*, had an article called "Hubert Humphrey, the Darling of the Campus." I was a very

popular man on the campus, and I was a popular man, I would say, until about 1966 and then with the bitterness that settled in on the war I was anything but popular with some people. Nevertheless, you could go to an auditorium of 5,000 students and get standing ovations, but regrettably—now you want candor—television cameras would focus on the hundred that were causing trouble, and *that* would be the news.

Now that isn't to say that I was the most popular person. But I had taken my stand and in 1969 I was rewarded by the students of three universities in Washington, D.C. when I received the Robert F. Kennedy Award for what we called "working relationships with students." Now, in recent years, I went back to teach. I had a great time in 1969 and 1970. I was teaching at Macalester College and at the University of Minnesota. I've gone to hundreds of colleges and schools across America; I love it. Every day of my public life, I would meet with young people, every day. And they come in by the hundreds. And you know what I've learned? That I don't want to be popular with young people, but I want to be worthy of their trust. I believe that I have been able to gain that kind of trust. Once in a while you get stigmatized, you know what I mean, like during those war years. People said, "Humphrey was not popular with young people," yet in 1968 I carried the campus of Princeton, Harvard, Yale, and Berkeley, every one of those college campuses, I carried with an overwhelming vote, despite the commentators and the editorial writers who said we weren't supposed to be popular with young people. I was popular enough to be the first Democrat since Woodrow Wilson to carry Princeton. Not bad.

Rabbi Berkowitz: Senator Humphrey, do you agree with former Foreign Minister Abba Eban who once said that in recent years the UN has died. Moreover, do you believe that the United States should depart from the UN before it also becomes isolated by virtue of its stands?

Senator Humphrey: I do not think that the UN died. What happened was that it became infected with the virus that killed the League of Nations of the 1930s. In other words, if it continues the path that it has been currently following, it will go down as an ineffective instrument, just as the League of Nations did in the Thirties. I do not proclaim it dead. I don't want it to die. I want it to survive.

As to the second part of the question, I've been a delegate to the UN. I was head man of my state for the UN Association, served as chairman of the UN subcommittee of the U.S. Senate. I have had a deep and abiding interest in the growth and the well-being of the United Nations. I have seen a change. It has changed dramatically with the number of new people and new nations that have come into its membership. However, what I want America to do in the UN is not just to be there, but to be a leader. Being a leader does not mean that you always get everyone to follow you. But it means you still lead. The time a leader is tested is when he *doesn't* have a majority. It isn't much to lead when you have a built-in majority; you always look good when you have a majority. What's important is to stand up for what you believe in when you *don't* have a majority, stand your ground, mobilize the forces you have and try to convince and persuade others to join you until you get that majority.

I happen to believe that the leading nations of the UN, the charter members, the U.S., France, and Great Britain, for example, have really neglected their responsibilities in the UN. We have been conducting a lot of diplomacy outside the UN and not put our emphasis into the UN. We have let other voices run the place. We have let other people have their way, and they have taken and seized the advantage, the initiative. That is to say, for instance, that the Soviet Union has aided and abetted all these other voices. We knew that was going to happen. You know what your opposition is; if you don't know it, you have to get out of the game. You know that the other side is going to try and score on you. You don't just play defense, you have to play offense, you have to try to make

some scores yourself. There has to be a change in the UN, in terms of more responsibility, and more fairness. For example, when the UN recently denied Israel the chance to reply, except for one reply, that was curbing free speech. That is a violation of the charter, and we should have called the whole world's attention and shown that the U.S. voice in this world is still loud and powerful. We don't have to whisper. We should have stood up and rebuked the UN at that particular moment. If we don't do things like that, don't stand our ground, and if we proceed as they did to recognize Mr. Arafat, let people come there with holsters on their body, and stand before an assembly like that, if that continues, the American people will be disgusted, and that disgust will be translated to the Congress and the Congress will then show much less interest in the UN.

Let me tell you what we just did with UNESCO in the Foreign Aid Bill. You remember what UNESCO has done. For all practical purposes, it has just about kicked Israel out of UNESCO, even though Israel only received \$28,000. Egypt received millions and Israel has been a big contributor to UNESCO. UNESCO is a cultural, educational, and scientific organization. It is not a political body. So when UNESCO acted to deny Israel any assistance, any funds, and chastised Israel because of what she was doing to historical sites, we passed an amendment in the Foreign Aid Bill—Senator Clifford Case of New Jersey, Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota, Jacob Javits of New York—the three of us put on an amendment and we took away the \$16 million the U.S. contributes to UNESCO and said there will be no money until you clean it up. Now that does not mean that we do not want UNESCO. We *want* a UNESCO, but we do not want it to become a political forum. We want UNESCO to be UNESCO, and we want the assembly of the UN to respect the charter of the UN, and we are not going to expect every country to agree with us.

We know that the People's Republic of China is not always going to agree with us. We know that other countries are not going to agree with us all the time. That is inconsequential.

The important thing is that the rules laid down in the charter are respected, and when those rules are violated, when the purpose of the charter is violated, then I think the U.S. has not only a duty but an obligation to stand up and say, this is wrong. And say it loud and clear.

Rabbi Berkowitz: What about the ongoing observations that there is a Jewish lobby in Washington “far too pressing” in behalf of the State of Israel?

Senator Humphrey: I am sure there are people in government, out of government, that have spoken, for example, as General Brown spoke some time ago, and I am sure that there are some who feel that way. But let me say this: Six Presidents of the U.S.—Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford—have had the same policy concerning the U.S.’ relationship with Israel. In other words, a commitment to Israel’s security, help and assistance. Six Presidents, three were Democrats, three Republicans. Every Congress of the U.S. since 1948 has responded to the needs of Israel as they have been interpreted to us, and as we have been asked by our government. And when Israel has asked, we have responded, Republican and Democrat alike. Now there are, undoubtedly, some Democrats and some Republicans who do not feel as interested in Israel as I am, but they are a very small minority. I am going to let you in on a secret—there aren’t that many Jews in Minnesota, really. If there is going to be a lobby out there, it is going to be from Sweden, not from Israel. I did not take an interest in Israel because I was asked to make a speech for Israel bonds; there were no Israel bonds when I started speaking for Israel. I was speaking in Temple Israel in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and I was speaking in Rabbi Aronson’s synagogue in Minneapolis, when Israel wasn’t even a state. My father before me was interested in what you could call Israel’s

rebirth. I suppose he would have been a kind of Protestant Zionist, in a sense. So I didn’t have to have a lobby—there was no Jewish lobby working me over in 1945, 1946, or 1947. I was in Temple Israel on the night Harry Truman recognized the State of Israel.

Now, when a General Brown says things like he did, he is ill-informed. First of all, as a General he ought not to be fussing around in matters of public policy. He has a job to do, and that is to take care of the Armed Forces of the U.S. Number two, he was misinformed when he said the Jews owned the big banks and this sort of thing. If there is any one profession that has tried to keep Jews out of key positions, it is the banking profession. That’s true. Now there are a few banks, here and there, where there is a Jew who is a board director, or a chairman, or a president, but they are very, very few. Now what should have been done? My immediate reaction was that the man should be removed. But I must say that after the President had called him in, I talked to a number of Jewish leaders who had come to me about it. And I said, look, all he did was hurt himself. He did not damage the case of Israel in the U.S. and he did not damage the feeling of friendship for the Jewish people as part of this great American community. So I suggested to my Jewish friends, through their leaders, just leave it alone. Just remind the public of what the position of this government has been: We are backing Israel, not just because we love the Israelis. In high international politics, love is not enough, I regret to say. We are backing Israel—in part, yes, for what Israel represents—because of her parliamentary democracy, because the Jewish people have suffered the Holocaust, because they are entitled to a homeland. All of that. But more significantly, we are backing Israel because it is in our national interest.

Rabbi Berkowitz: I will translate for you a little bit later, but the only comment that I can make is a Yiddish comment: “Gut gezugt.” “Nobly said.”

Senator, you've said the following: It is my judgment that peace can come only through direct negotiation between Israel and her neighbors. Did you object to Mr. Kissinger's role as mediator, where both sides deal indirectly with each other with him as the go-between? Moreover, what is your assessment of Henry Kissinger as Secretary of State vis-à-vis Israel?

Senator Humphrey: My original statement was that peace can come only when there is direct negotiation between Israel and her neighbors. It cannot be imposed. We cannot have the U.S. say, this is the way it is going to be, and we can't have the Russians say, this is the way it is going to be. The most that we can do, as I see it, is to help bring people together. What Mr. Kissinger did in the military disengagement in the Sinai was to bring the people together. He did not negotiate it out. He got them to sit down, and you saw the pictures of the negotiations that took place, and they worked out a disengagement of forces. He did exactly the same thing in Syria. He did not work out the arrangements; the arrangements were worked out between the respective generals in that area in the Golan Heights, the Israelis and the Syrians.

You see, what I am worried about is that I can see where the two superpowers may decide, well, we'll just have to tell them what to do. I think it is important for the American government and people to reassure Israel, we will not bargain away her national security. We do not want to bargain away her independence any more than we want anyone to bargain ours away. But what we ought to do is be a friend, be helpful in the negotiations and try to get the nation states in the area to settle these disputes among themselves, which is one of the reasons we have stayed away from Geneva as long as we have. The Russians have insisted on a big Middle East conference in Geneva. This may come in due time, but we believe, and Dr. Kissinger rightfully believes, that before that comes there ought to be basic understandings between Israel and her neighbors—so that when you come to Geneva it is primarily to

tidy up the agreement, to settle some of the things that are not settled as yet. That is the way I see it.

Dr. Kissinger is an able man, but like everyone else, you can overextend yourself, and he has been extremely busy. For a period of time he had to conduct negotiations for the government in power, that really wasn't in power, that didn't have the vestiges of power during the latter days of the Nixon administration. That was a very difficult assignment for Dr. Kissinger. He is extraordinarily able, he is a keen negotiator, and I have no reason to believe that he has done anything that has jeopardized the basic security and the basic needs of Israel. I have talked to him at length individually. I have known him for a long time.

I want to tell you something. I have been in the executive branch of the government. Secretaries of State do not make the law, and they are not the heads of state, they are the agents of the President. I have to believe that Dr. Kissinger had so many things going on, that it was very difficult for him to give all the attention he ought to have given to this particular area of the Middle East. That may have been a weakness of his, and I say that with great respect for him. He is not what I would call an institutional man; he does not utilize as fully as I would hope he would the State Department as an institution. He is an individualist. He was the personal adviser to President Nixon, he was the personal adviser to Nelson Rockefeller. And he was a very personal Secretary of State. But in the light of all the negotiations we have going all over the world, one man can't do it all. You have to have a team of capable people who know what their assignments are. And I think this has been one of the problems. Because this man, despite his fantastic ability, is limited in how much he can do. And once you are overextended, you are apt not to do anything as well as it ought to be done.

Rabbi Berkowitz: You went to Israel recently. When you were there, what did you find to be the mood of the people? And

did you come back with some kind of thought for the Jewish people, whom you love and respect and who at the same time love and respect you very dearly?

Senator Humphrey: I went to Israel because of my son. I have a young son who is a state senator in Minnesota, and I wanted him to be acquainted with some of the people his father has known, and I wanted him to get the feel of Israel. I wanted him to sense it, as I do. You can't get that by just reading. I am a person who believes you learn from doing. Learning is a part of the senses. It's feeling, touch, emotions. It isn't just looking and reading. My son is a well-read man, he is a lawyer, he is an intelligent, educated man. He is a good state senator, but he never really had a chance to feel the pulse, the human emotions that are so evident in a country like Israel.

So I took my son with me first to Rome to the World Food Conference. I wanted him to get the feel of what was going on at this great international meeting. We went to Vienna, to look into some matters there. He was at the reception center in Vienna, Austria. We saw twelve Soviet Jews come into the reception center and saw them leave to get on a train and then fly to Israel. We saw the whole process. I wanted him to see that, so that it was vivid in his mind.

When we went to Israel, the first day we were there, I went to see my good and dear friend Golda Meir. I have known her a long time and I went to her home. The first thing my son said to me, was, "Isn't it marvelous? Here is a woman who has been Prime Minister, look at this very humble, modest home." And everywhere you went in Israel, you saw that public officials lived modestly, not ostentatiously, no great fanfare and fluff. Most of them talked about their kibbutz. They had a neighborhood that they came from, a community, they were not just urbanists—they lived in the countryside. General Allon was telling me about his kibbutz, he wants me to visit with him there and tell me how great it is, and everybody's got great kibbutz that they want me to come and see.

Well, what did I find when I came there? I found not a people that were terrified. In fact, the first night I was in Jerusalem, I called Mrs. Humphrey and told her where we were, and she said: "Oh, Dad, be careful!" I said, "Well, I'm careful, what do you mean?" She said, "The papers out here are full of it, there is danger there. There is apt to be a war there, it is very serious." And I said, "My goodness, Mom. Look, I have been out all night long with Teddy Kollek, running around Jerusalem in his car, and he didn't even have a policeman with him. He was driving. The only danger that I've had is his driving, that's all." Then I said, "Muriel, let me tell you, the people here are strong-willed, they are confident"—and I said this to the press later on—they are not trigger happy. They are not jumpy. They are worried and concerned; they know they've got the fight of their life, there is no place for them to go, except to stay there. They have been told they are about to be pushed into the sea and they are not about to let that happen. There is a fierce determination on their part. They are willing to accept sacrifices that we Americans, I am afraid, would not quite accept. Unbelievable taxes. You talk about taxes, the new austerity program, the devaluation of their currency, no imports of many things. Workers paying tremendous taxes. These are the things that these people put up with. They are young people, so many of them mobilized.

I was there on a weekend when there was a partial mobilization, when things looked tough in the Golan Heights, when there were some twenty ships loaded with Soviet weapons coming into a port in Syria. So it was a difficult time. Also they had been shocked by what had happened in the UN. The Israelis were both hurt and infuriated by what happened at the UN and Arafat's speech. All of this you could feel. There was a strange mixture, on the one hand: "How come this happens to us?" Kind of quiet anger. And secondly, a quiet confidence that if we are asked to make more sacrifices, we'll make them. The young people know why they were on those battle stations. We went into the Sinai. We went to what they call "Budapest," at the tip, we could look right over to Port

Said, right across from there. We were in the Golan Heights—we went there with high officials and they took us every place. And what did I see? I saw young men—and my son said, “Dad, you realize that young man is 22 years old, he is younger than Doug [his youngest brother]. Here he is in charge of a battery of sixty men, responsible for protecting this sector. These are some people.”

So, Rabbi, let me tell you. I came back and I told people all over this country. I came back lifted. When I come back from Israel, I come back lifted, not depressed. I have been there half a dozen times, and I come back, and say “What a people!”

I keep asking myself, how do they do it? One reason they do it is that they have to do it. You know, they have to do it. And I wanted the young men on the front lines to know that a U.S. Senator cared. I didn’t just want to see the Prime Minister or all the different ministers, but I wanted the people that I talked to to know that we cared. And I wanted them to know they had a loyal friend. I wanted them to know that we were not going to walk out on them. That we were aware of what was going on—and I told them, “Don’t you worry, when I get back there, I am only one in many, but I will guarantee you that you’ll have the assistance that you need.” The weapons will come, the economic assistance will come, and when we came back we passed the Senate Foreign Aid Bill and the reason I was late getting here tonight is that I am in conference between the House and the Senate on the Foreign Assistance Bill, and in that Bill is \$350 million for military assistance for Israel, \$489 million for economic assistance for Israel. And that means something. And I wanted the people of Israel to know that it wasn’t just talk. We will deliver. When Israel needed help after the October War, I handled that bill in the Senate for 2 billion, 200 million dollars.

Let me tell you something. It was just a year ago this week that we did that and just a year ago this week I was under X-ray for a tumor, deep X-ray treatment, and I was very seriously ill. But I made up my mind that I was going to handle that bill because I knew all about it. We held the hearings, I knew what

was needed—and I knew that we would not only have 3 billion, 300 million dollars, but that a billion of that would be in the form of a gift. That’s what that little country wants the most. They are not asking for our sons, or our manpower. They are asking for one thing: steadfast friendship, be loyal. And number two, the supplies that we can share with them, to properly defend themselves. May I say that their having those supplies is important to us because if another war breaks out—no one knows what will happen. The only way I know to prevent another war is to keep a balance of power there. We have got to let the Russians know that they can’t put materials into Syria and overrun Israel. They have got to know that if they are going to keep putting it in, they are going to be matched. And finally, and I know that there is generally always someone in the audience who reports and that’s all right with me, because I have been around a long time, I want this to be known. I believe that we will have to have better working relationships with the Russians. I am not interested in wars and trying to stir up trouble. I want to say to my friends in the Soviet Union that the real test of whether you want a better working relationship with the U.S., the real test of what we call *détente* is not talk, but it is when the Russians decide that they are going to quit pouring arms into the Middle East so that that part of the world can live in peace and we can negotiate a settlement.

Rabbi Berkowitz: Chanukah, as we all know, is the holiday signifying the redemption of the Jews from their enemies. When we light the Menorah on the first night, we kindle, of course, one light. And if you look long enough at the candle, it resembles a finger—an accusing finger—as if it were pointing to Heaven, or for that matter to Earth, to God, or to Man, asking as it were: What has happened to us *now*, today? Why aren’t we redeemed from anti-Semitism or assimilation, or other enemies, today as our ancestors were in days gone by?

Continues this teaching: Who knows? Maybe the redemp-

tion will come tomorrow, wait and see. But then the next day comes—and still no redemption; another candle, another accusing finger.

And so it continues for the third night, the fourth night, the fifth night, and so on. On the eighth night, the final night, there still is no redemption, but this time if you look at the candles, with all of them burning, they no longer look like accusing fingers. Now they look like hands, outstretched hands, hands of thanks, to Heaven and to Earth.

And this, concludes the teaching, is the message. Despite the enemies, despite the lack of redemption, despite the rage—there is always gratitude. Beyond the despair, there is thanksgiving.

I think, Senator Humphrey, that this thought is most appropriate for tonight. Beyond any and all of our problems, whether as Jews or as Americans, there must always be gratitude. Gratitude that it is our good fortune to live in this land of America. Gratitude that it was our blessed lot to be born into our Jewish faith which has given so much to the world, and gratitude that today there is a State of Israel.

But finally, there is also gratitude to God and to mankind that have produced someone of your quality, your commitment, your outlook, your service—the beloved friend of humanity and the Jewish people the great, the one, the only Hubert Horatio Humphrey.

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