

Ambassador John Bolton: Well thank you very much. Thanks to all of you for coming. I'm really deeply grateful for the tremendous honor of receiving the Guardian of Zion Award. I want to thank Bar-Ilan University and the Faculty of Jewish Studies. I want to thank the Ingeborg Rennert Center for Jerusalem Studies, and in particular I want to thank Inga and Ira. [clapping] It's a great honor to receive the award and it's an honor being their friends.

It's a particular special time obviously to be here, when relations between the two governments of the United States and Israel have returned to the level of trust and confidence we have historically known. It's an important day in America, you know, it's Memorial Day, where we honor those who have given their lives in the service of their country. So, it's a sobering occasion to remember what's at stake for free nations and in proximity to the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Jerusalem, it makes it an especially important moment.

I want to address tonight the continuing question of resolving Israel's status as a free and secure nation in its rightful homeland and its relations with its Arab neighbors, particularly the Palestinians.

I want to talk first about the amazing continuities and strength of the relationship between the Old Jerusalem here in Israel and the New Jerusalem that America's founders saw across the Atlantic. Ultimately, I believe that this Jerusalem where we meet today can best be secured by the closest possible alliance with the New Jerusalem. [clapping] Now, there are many characterizations of what the New Jerusalem, is not just the one the founders in America thought. I think looking at the direct historical relationship that America's founders made to Jerusalem in the land of Israel is important. I don't presume to lecture anybody here on Jewish or Israeli history. Let me just tell you a little American history from the perspective of those who built the country and brought it to the present day. There have been a lot of empires throughout history that have sought to conquer Jerusalem and destroy the Jewish people. There's really only been one empire that has not only sought to defend the Old Jerusalem, the geographical epicenter of Judeo-Christian thought, but to embody it in the secular world. That's the one that Thomas Jefferson described as "the Empire of Liberty." [clapping]

Now the Puritans had a real fixation on the Old Testament. They believed in many respects, as I say, they were building a New Jerusalem in the New World. I could give you countless examples of this but let me just give one quickly. The use of Old Testament names. One in particular that comes to mind is General Israel Putnam, or "Old Put" as they called him. He served with Rogers Rangers in the French and Indian War and then was one of the American Commanders at the Battle of Bunker Hill. He was born in Massachusetts in a little town called Salem, but he lived in Connecticut. When he heard about the Battles of Lexington and Concord, he rode a hundred miles in eight hours to get there, as one of the leaders on the American side, thus giving rise to a question in many parts of the Middle East outside of this country: "What is a guy named Israel doing at the Battle of Bunker Hill?" It's because of the Puritans' affinity for the Old Testament. Now obviously there is affinity for the New Testament in the Puritan cause as well, and that's one of the sources for one of the most famous quotes that you see in American politics all the time. From Governor John Winthrop in 1630, in a text derived in part from the "Sermon on The Mount" when Winthrop said -- speaking of the role of the Puritan settlements in New England around Plymouth: "for we must consider that we shall be as city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us. So, that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken and so cause Him to withdraw His present help from us, we shall

be made a story and a by-word through the world and we shall open the mouths of the enemies to speak evil of the ways of God and all professors for God sake.”

So, this metaphor of the city on the hill is one that has been very present in American political rhetoric. It was amended slightly by Ronald Reagan, when he talked about America being a “shining” city on the hill. I like to say that Ronald Reagan is the only politician I know who can amend scripture and get away with it. [clapping] In many respects the success of the American Revolution and the founding of the modern state of Israel really have many similarities. George Washington called victory in the Revolution, “little short of a standing miracle.” Many would say the same about the emergence of Israel.

America’s founders were not shy in designing the great seal of the United States. They took as one of our mottos, “Novus Ordo Seclorum,” which is Latin for “a new order for the ages.” As I say, they weren’t modest. ‘Seclorum’ doesn’t mean secular it means the ‘ages,’ but it’s close enough. For another motto, they chose the Latin phrase, “Annuit Coeptis,” thirteen letters to symbolize the thirteen colonies, which they translated as, “God has favored our undertakings.” Not modest.

Let me come back to George Washington because so much of what he did set the tone for subsequent American administrations. I have two little stories about Washington, one of which I think many of you have heard of, others perhaps not.

Almost exactly 230 years ago at the opening of the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia on May 27, 1787, the second Sunday the convention was open. Washington attended a Catholic mass at St. Mary’s chapel in Philadelphia. Washington had probably never been to a Catholic service before in his life. Indeed, at that time he didn’t regularly attend church and, according to the records we have during the Constitutional Convention, he only attended one other time. There were only roughly 35,000 Catholics in the colonies at the time of the convention, and they couldn’t vote in any state. Washington, writing later to the Marquis Lafayette, said, “being no bigot myself to any mode of worship, I am disposed to indulge the professors of Christianity in the church that road to heaven which to them seemed the most direct.” So, he was willing at a very early stage to show his views about openness in religion by attending a Catholic service.

I don’t think its coincidence that three years later in August of 1790 he sends the famous letter to the Hebrew congregations of Newport. I think some of you have heard one or two lines from that before. Let me just give you something in advance of what is generally known. Washington said, “it is now no more that toleration is spoken of as if were the indulgence of one class of people that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights. For happily, the government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens, in giving it on all occasion their affectual support.” Then he says, “may the children of the stock of Abraham who dwell in this land, continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other inhabitation, while everyone shall sit in safety, under his own vine and fig tree, and there shall be none to make him afraid.” So, this is really pretty remarkable. It shows Washington reaching out to Catholics, reaching out to Jews all at the beginning of the new system.

Now, Americans believe that, as I have said before, God favors their works. They looked at certain other things which we would probably call coincidences today. To prove that, on July 4, 1826, 50 years to the day after the promulgation of the Declaration of Independence, the second president John Adams and the third president Thomas Jefferson die on the same day.

Pretty phenomenal and then when you throw in the fifth president, James Monroe, who died five years later in 1831 on the Fourth of July. So, three out of the first five died on the Fourth. That's a pretty good coincidence. I think that this has come down in to contemporary times as well. We have seen it in the view of many people of the role of the United States in the world. I recall of course Winston Churchill, who once said of himself, much like George Washington: "I am a buttress of the Church of England rather than a pillar supporting it from the outside rather than the inside." He said that, as you doubtless remember, in his "we shall fight on the beaches" speech. He brought some other perspectives to it as well that are often not noticed. He said in that speech in June of 1940, "even if, which I do not for a moment believe, this island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British Fleet, would carry on the struggle until in God's good time the New World with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and the liberation of the Old." Indeed, that's what happened ultimately in World War II.

There's a story about that I have never forgotten, which may or may not be a true story, but it's a good one. After the surrender of Nazi Germany, Walter "Beetle" Smith who was Eisenhower's Chief of Staff, came across a big pile of sabres that German officers had to give up. Their custom was that the name of the officers was engraved on the scabbard of the sabre. So, the story goes, Smith just reached in and pulled out one at random. The engraving on the sword was this, "E-i-s-e-n-h-a-u-e-r," the German spelling as opposed to Eisenhower's spelling "h-o-w-e-r". Now what an amazing coincidence that the American Eisenhower as Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force had overcome his own heritage from Germany. I think it's no mistake that Eisenhower himself, famously toured the concentration camps, pleaded for delegations of members of Congress and news media to come, ordered American service members to go in to the camps and ordered German civilians to go in to the camps as well so that nobody could later say, "it didn't happen."

Now, this is near the end of this long story but at the end of the Cold War, in one of the run ups to the repeal to the "Zionism is racism" Resolution in 1991. In 1989, I spent a lot of time keeping the PLO from becoming a member state of various agencies of the UN system -- [clapping] -- that's not the punch line. One of the most amazing, took place in Paris in a little-known organization called, the Word Tourism Organization, where the PLO was trying to join.; "Come to The Territories" I guess - great slogan. This took place in August, 1989, just a few weeks after the beginning of the migration of East Germans through the hole in the barbed wire of the Iron Curtain that the Hungarian government had opened up. The head of the Hungarian delegation, a man named Istvan Nathon, came to me and said, "we want to help out on this effort to stop the PLO. Would you invite me to come to a meeting of the Western European Group?", which is where we plotted our strategy. So, I thought that was a good idea and I said, "yes, come on along." He came in to the room one day for the meeting and the chairman, a European from one country or another said, "who are you?"

He said, "I'm Istvan Nathon from Hungary and we want to join the Western European Group." I knew at that point that the Cold War was over. In fact, we did stop the PLO there although it was close. For Hungary's pains, one of the members and one of the other European delegations said to the Hungarian, "so what are you going to do next, become the 51st state?" Ultimately, we prevailed on that and on the repeal of "Zionism is racism," where the Soviet Union which had been instrumental in getting the resolution to be passed to begin with in December of 1991, voted to repeal it. One of the few redeeming acts of the Soviet Union before it went out of existence.

All of this I think is just a long introduction but to show these continuities in the strength of the relationship that I don't think is so often appreciated in Israel, where the ties of religion are obviously well understood. The broad feeling for Israel and Jerusalem across the American population is very real. [clapping] Nonetheless, despite the end of the Cold War, many other threats have persisted and new threats have emerged. We did not as some say, "reach the end of history." Jerusalem and Israel's security are threatened by Islamist terrorism and the Iranian nuclear weapons program among many others. So, is America's security. Yet, we hear once again the argument, that if only the Israel-Palestinian issue could be resolved, sweetness and light would break out in the Middle East. Not true before and not true now.

If we are going to have peace and security for Israel, it has to be approached realistically. So, here are my suggestions, and why I think the notion of the two-state solution has failed. We've been pursuing this for over 70 years in one form or another. Even before independence, through the British partition of the Palestinian Mandate to create Jordan. We saw it at the beginning of the UN's consideration of how to end the Palestinian Mandate, General Assembly Resolution 181, to partition what was left of the Mandate and to create a special international regime for the city of Jerusalem. Let's not forget that bad idea in the middle of a lot of other bad ideas.

Resolution 181 was rejected by the Palestinians and the Arab states, following which we had the war of 1948-49. Honestly, even after Resolution 181 had failed, had been rejected, the world has continued to pursue some version of the two-state answer without success. Despite the fact that many people of goodwill have tried to implement it, it hasn't worked for a variety of reasons. It hasn't worked because of the instability in the region, and globally. It didn't work because of the Cold War. It didn't work during the era of Pan-Arabism and it's not working during the era of Radical Islam.

There are some more specific factors why it has failed. Some people don't want to see any Jewish state, period. Some won't accept conditions that would permit a Jewish state however bounded, to be allowed to live in peace and security. Some still demand concessions no Israeli government will accept, such as the partition of Jerusalem to provide a capital for the new Palestinian state.

In my view, the final failure of the two-state solution was reflected this past December in Resolution 2334, adopted by the Security Council, sadly, because of an American abstention that allowed it to pass. I could read large chunks of this resolution to show how objectionable it is, as I'm sure many of have read it. It talks about Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, including east Jerusalem. It says, "Israeli settlements are a flagrant violation under international law, with no legal validity" and I'm just getting started. This resolution is a long catalog of everything that is wrong from an anti-Israel perspective, and the fact is, as long as Resolution 2334 exists there is no acceptable outcome for Israel. I don't see how we're going to get it repealed because of the vetoes, not just of Russia and China but because of the vetoes of Britain and France. So, that's where this has ended. It has ended on the basis of fundamental misunderstandings, as well, of the fundamental conditions from which Israel started. The whole idea that you can "legalize" this dispute and somehow take things that were purely ephemeral when they were created and turn them into international boundaries.

Just so nobody leaves without hearing it one more time: When the 1949 Armistice was undertaken, the agreements that were signed were purely for the purpose of the ceasefire. Listen to what the Egyptian-Israeli Agreement says: "The Armistice Demarcation Line is not to be construed in any sense as a political or territorial boundary, and is delineated without prejudice or rights, claims and positions of either party to the Armistice as regards ultimate

settlement of the Palestine in question.” That language in one form or another was also included in the Jordan and Syria Armistice disagreements, and with Lebanon the cease-fire line was simply taken as the international boundary between the French Mandate in Syria and the Palestinian Mandate.

So, in these circumstances the Fourth Geneva Convention, which the proponents of the two-state solution, particularly in the Arab world, rely on, is simply inapplicable. This whole legal discussion is utterly irrelevant to what’s happening and yet we all have fallen into this trap as if it’s basic foundation to the two-state outcome.

I come to the conclusion that the two-state solution, however well motivated, with whatever goodwill people have advocated it simply will not work. It won’t work because of these [clapping] circumstances. It won’t work because there’s no Palestinian entity that can make the agreements necessary for the two states to come in to existence and comply with them later. There’s nobody who would seriously advocate dealing with Hamas, okay? So, they’re out of the picture. The Palestinian Authority is a corrupt, powerless authority that has no democratic legitimacy and is not likely to acquire it. Even if it were able to overcome all of its difficulties and sign an agreement that Israel would find acceptable, the Palestinian Authority would be eliminated by the Palestinians’ themselves.

So, let’s get past this illusion and talk about what might actually be possible. Here I would remind you again of Dwight Eisenhower who used to say to his subordinates when they had a problem that was too hard to fix, Eisenhower would say, “if you can’t solve a problem, enlarge it.” Don’t focus on the details, make it bigger. So, let’s see what we need to answer the problem.

For Israel, we need to have borders that provide peace and security internally and externally. Israel has peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan, the countries most directly concerned with Palestinians.

Now for Palestinians, there has to be a solution that’s stable and with prospects for political participation and economic viability. They must no longer be pawns in somebody else’s war against Israel. The fact is, that political institutions through much of North Africa and the Middle East are disintegrating, collapsing, fragmenting before our eyes. Libya has dissolved as an effective state. Boko Haram has ripped Nigeria along the seam of Saharan and sub-Saharan Africa. Somalia has not had an effective government in 25 years. Yemen is hopelessly broken. Syria and Iraq have ceased to exist as functioning states. People are proposing to create a new state? One that’s not even territorially contiguous? Have they looked around recently at the region? There’s every [clapping] reason not to add to the instability by creating a new non-viable state, so what do we do?

My answer is what I call, “the three-state solution.” I understand it’s not wildly popular, you know life is hard – [laughing]. Here are the three states: Egypt, Israel and Jordan. [clapping]

So, with the Gaza Strip we give Egypt sovereignty over it. General El-Sisi can do what he likes in dealing with Hamas as far as I’m concerned. [clapping] Hamas is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Muslim Brotherhood. He’s trying to protect Egypt from their coming back to power under the “one person, one vote, one time” approach that the Muslim Brotherhood likes. He can deal with Hamas as well.

There's simply no other prospect for the residents of Gaza to have any chance of economic viability other than to be linked to Egypt, which itself desperately needs stability to overcome the effects of the so-called Arab Spring.

People say, "but the Egyptians don't want the Palestinians." The alternative is that there would be a separate Palestinian Gaza Strip that would be as much a terrorist threat to a stable government in Egypt as to Israel. This is a time to grit your teeth in Egypt. It's a time for the oil-producing monarchies on the Arabian Peninsula to open their check books a little bit further, and it's time for people to recognize that this is the only logical economic and political connection that will work for Gaza.

General El-Sisi himself has indicated in his proposal a few years ago, a willingness to opening parts of the Sinai contiguous to Gaza for settlement for Palestinians from the West Bank. I don't know whether there is any prospect for that, under my theory it really doesn't matter. I think General El-Sisi provides an opportunity for openness here that is worth taking.

As for the West Bank, my theory here is that Israel and Jordan negotiate an international boundary that's satisfactory for the two of them. Territory to the west of that boundary becomes a part of Israel and it would include all of Jerusalem, territory [clapping] or pieces of territory to the east of that would become sovereign Jordanian territories subject to appropriate security precautions along the Jordan River Valley and elsewhere for Israel. This is really even easier when dealing with Gaza pre-1967. Jordan was sovereign. On the West Bank, nobody called Jordan an occupying power, and they can get used to it again. It is a potential for the Palestinian people remaining on the West Bank to participate in a viable economic entity, assuming other aspects of the Middle East's many conflicts, now in Syria, can be resolved as well. It may not be perfect but it's certainly better for the Palestinians, let alone for Israel to be connected with a functioning government, rather than a pretend government.

Now, Jerusalem as I say, remains undivided. This is easy. One advantage of not having a new state is you don't need to find a capital for the new state. Amman is a fine capital for the residents for the West Bank who will come under Jordanian sovereignty. There would have to be a number of measures associated with the three-state solution. It would require ignoring or overcoming a number of long standing assumptions and obstacles. The first things to do is to ignore the Near East Bureau of the United States State Department. [clapping] You have also to eliminate some of the sources of this perpetual conflict, such as hereditary refugee status. Palestinians are the only people in the world who have that status, it's a mistake, it means when you have three states there's no need to worry about a right of return. I think UNRRA should be abolished. I think the [clapping] UNTSO, "the UN Truce Supervision Organization," one of the oldest UN peace keeping operations can be abolished. You [clapping] can abolish all of the UN Secretariat Offices dealing with Palestinian affairs, thus resulting in budget savings for every UN member. At least on the part of the United States, what we should do is immediately resign and then defund the UN Human Rights Council, [clapping] which is no such thing by the way.

Now as I say, lots of people will protest, "but there are so many objections to this. It's hard, it's hard, it's hard." Well what, as opposed to the two-state solution? People have been working at the two-state solution for 70 years. It's failed for 70 years. Is there anybody in this room that really thinks that in year 71 we're suddenly going to start making progress? When you fail for 70 years straight, learn something! Maybe you're trying to do something that's not doable. People say, "but in other parts of the region, the Arab street will explode." I have heard that line so many times, I don't really know how to respond to it other than to say, if you really care about the Palestinian people, if you really have their best interest at heart you have to look to their

economic well-being and to the possibility of participating in the political life of a viable state. That they will have the opportunity to do at least as much as Jordanians and Egyptians. That may not be what we would consider desirable, but what would it be in a Palestinian state ruled by an authoritarian structure or a terrorist organization?

There may be better answers than the three-state solution. I would be pleased to hear them. I came to this not because I think it's perfect but because I concluded the two-state solution has failed irrevocably. If you believe that, then it's incumbent on you and all of us to think what the alternatives are. There's mine, other suggestions gratefully received.

I think what absolutely is clear, is that an opportunity now exists in both the New Jerusalem and the Old Jerusalem in ways that hasn't existed for many years. Let's not miss the opportunity. Thank you very much. [clapping]