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## AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee) Lunch

Max S. Baucus

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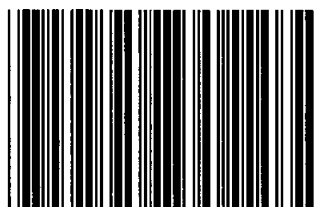
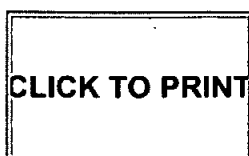
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BAUCUS

Senator Max Baucus  
AIPAC Lunch  
March 30, 2007

**Thank you for the invitation to join you today for lunch. You all are great friends of mine. Our relationship reflects the solid friendship that the United States shares with Israel. These are such important times in the world, and the situation in the Middle East is so critical, that a friendship like ours is more valuable than ever.**

**I would like to address the issues that are of greatest concern to me and offer some more ways that we can work together.**

**As you know, I signed the letter sent to Secretary Rice last week regarding peace in the Middle East. Seventy-nine Senators signed that letter because we believe that Israel's relationship with her neighbors in the region is critical to peace and security in the world.**

**The new Palestinian unity government simply must recognize the state of Israel and renounce violence. The Quartet of the United States, the European Union, Russia, and the United Nations has insisted on this as a condition for lifting the prohibition on direct aid to the Palestinian Authority.**

**Last Congress, I cosponsored legislation to cut aid to the Palestinian Authority so long as it does not meet the Quartet's conditions. I believe aid delivering human needs assistance should continue, but cutting security and infrastructure assistance is a key to deflating Hamas. I support sanctions until it is clear that Hamas realizes we won't accept anything less.**

**Additionally, the situation with Iran is really reaching a crisis point. The Bush administration must show some muscle with Russia and China so that we can use their leverage for full- scale sanctions against Iran.**

**Russia and China's involvement is crucial since Iran relies on those countries economically.**

**Intelligence from the United States and other governments suggests that Iran could have nuclear weapons within the next ten years. Iran continues to be defiant and this nuclear face-off with them must stop. We are going to have to really build the multilateral support it will take to make Teheran think twice.**

**There are positive ways, however, that we can move forward. Israel is an important trading partner for the United States. I am a strong believer that where good economics go, good politics can follow.**

**That is why I have been a strong supporter of Qualified Industrial Zones, or QIZs. These zones require Egyptian and Jordanian manufacturers to use a certain amount of Israeli-made inputs in order to get duty-free entry into the United States. That is a powerful incentive to team up with Israel if those countries want to remain competitive.**

**And when the President sought trade agreements with Bahrain and Oman, I pushed hard to get those countries to lift their economic boycott against Israel.**

**I'm also doing what I can to reduce our dependence on energy from dangerous places like Central Asia, Venezuela and West Africa. From the perspectives of cost, climate and security, the issue of energy grows more important every day.**



**Exactly what are we going to do about it? I don't have a simple answer. You know as well as I that there's no such thing. But I am looking to make progress in this area, by providing tax incentives that bring us a cleaner – and more secure – energy supply.**

**Yesterday my committee held its second energy-tax hearing of the year, this one focused on renewable energy. Despite all of the potential for wind power in the U.S., we still only get 1% of our electricity from this source, compared to Denmark's 20% and Spain's 10%. And we only get 3% of our power from renewable sources overall.**

**Much of this owes to the stop-and-start nature of the chief support for renewable power in the U.S. – the Section 45 tax credit – and I think we can find ways to make that credit both more sustainable and cheaper.**

**In the coming months I'll be holding more hearings. We'll consider issues like oil and gas subsidies, vehicles and, possibly next month, support for biofuels like cellulosic ethanol.**

**Bottom line, we're in an energy box, and we need to get out of it.**

**Ultimately we're going to need a cap-and-trade system, and I support that in principle.**

**Meantime, we should promote the tax incentives that will get us ready for large scale cap-and-trade, such as incentives for renewable electricity, biofuels, building efficiency, and so on.**

**Weaning our country off of Middle East oil makes America and Israel safer from the threat of political instability in the region by taking a powerful economic weapon from the arsenal of hostile regimes like Iran.**

**I look forward to hearing your ideas as we proceed in Finance Committee and my door is always open. Please continue to stop by my office and to continue your great relationships with my staff. Our task ahead is not easy but if we work together we can accomplish much this year toward peace in the Middle East.**