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## AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee) Board

Max S. Baucus

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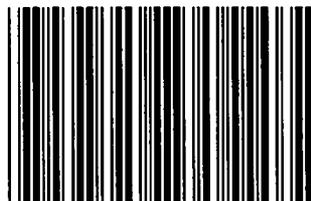
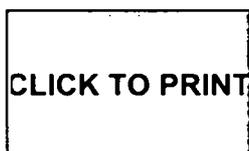
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BAUCUS

**Senator Max Baucus  
Speech to the AIPAC Board**

**Thanks Howard, I appreciate the kind introduction. I am honored to be able to speak on behalf of the causes and concerns that we share.**

**I understand that you have flown from around the country to come together in Washington. You have left your busy lives. Your time is valuable, and you decide to use it to work on the issues you care about. You come to discuss. You come to learn. And you come to let your representatives know what you think. This is democracy at its best. I commend you for your dedication.**

**I want to begin today by telling you a story from my home state of Montana.**

**It is the story of a woman named Pearl Robertson. In 1910 she moved from New York to Montana's Judith Basin with her husband and three children. Though the move out west was tough, their family managed to scratch out a living from farming. Times were good for Pearl's family until drought and an infestation of grasshoppers forced the family out in 1922.**

**Pearl and her family did not give up, though. They got back on their feet at another farm in Ronan, Montana.**

**We are lucky enough to be able to read her memoirs, which she sent to *Frontier Magazine*. She wrote, “I loved the prairie, even while I feared it. God’s country, the old-timers called it...I feared its relentlessness, its silence, and its sameness, even as I love the tawny spread of its sun-drenched ridges, its shimmering waves of desert air ... our dreams of long ago are slowly taking on life.”**

**Pearl’s story is a story that could be told thousands and thousands of times over. It is a story known well to Americans and Israelis alike. Sixty years ago, the courageous holocaust survivors who built Israel shared Pearl’s spirit. Their dreams of long ago slowly took on life, and that dream is now alive and well.**

**The atrocities of World War II forged a special bond between Israel and the United States. We are partners in peace. And we stand together in the face of evil.**

**The United States and Israel share a common spirit. A spirit of the frontier. Of independence. Of self reliance. We understand what it is to stand alone in a world that is skeptical of our intentions. And we understand the importance of strength—and will.**

## **HISTORICAL EXAMPLES**

**I have been a committed friend to Israel through my 30 years here in Washington. In 1983, I supported an agreement between Lebanon, Israel, and the United States that arranged an Israeli withdrawal conditional on the departure of Syrian troops. In 1991, I voted in favor of a resolution condemning Iraq's attacks on Israel and praising Israel's restraint. In 1998, I was on-board with the Iran Missile Sanctions Bill and in 2006 I supported the Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act.**

**This year, I supported the foreign aid bill which includes \$2.4 billion in military aid to Israel and \$40 million in refugee assistance.**

## **Challenges in the Middle East**

**Though I've been around for all those years, I can't remember a time when we've faced a wider array of challenges in the middle-east. These challenges make our partnership with Israel all the more important.**

**Among our many concerns, Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons and support for terrorists in Iraq ranks number one. Iran's President Ahmadinejad (Ah-mah-din-ah-jad) has led Iran down a path of confrontation with the international community—not cooperation.**

**The activities of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps are unacceptable. They operate separate from the rest of the army. And are equipped with their own ground forces, navy, air force, intelligence, and special forces.**

**The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps controls billions of dollars in businesses such as defense production, construction, and the oil industry. The Iranian Guard also possesses ballistic missiles that could be modified to deliver weapons of mass destruction. In 2006, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps attempted to procure equipment that could be used to support Iran's nuclear programs.**

**The Qods (kuds) force --a branch of the Islamic revolutionary Guard Corps-- provides support to the Taliban, Lebanese Hizballah and Hamas. Most importantly, the Pentagon believes the Qods (kuds) Force provides weapons, training, funding and guidance to Iraqi Shi'a militants who target American troops in Iraq. The Iranian Guard must stop these terrorist activities.**

### **Recent Actions in the Senate**

**I was proud to support the Kyl-Lieberman measure passed by the Senate last month. This legislation called on the State Department to designate the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organization.**

**The State Department quickly followed through with this designation. I am also happy to see the State Department designated three of Iran's largest banks as sponsors of terrorism.**

**As a result of these actions, transactions involving the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and US entities will be outlawed. And any assets the Iranian Guard has under US jurisdiction will be frozen.**

**We must do more in the Senate to encourage Iran to return to the path of cooperation. The Smith/Durbin Iran Counter-Proliferation bill is a good start. The legislation will create new penalties against Russia for supporting any further Iranian nuclear development or advanced war material assistance.**

**The Smith/Durbin bill is now before the Finance Committee and I am ready to support it fully.**

**United International Front against terrorism and Proliferation**

**We need to continue building a united international front against terrorism and nuclear proliferation in the middle-east. All free nations of the world have a stake in keeping the world's most dangerous weapons out of the hands of the world's most dangerous regimes. And all nations share a common interest in eliminating terrorism wherever it may be.**

**I am encouraged by recent commitments made by French President Sarkozy, who said that a nuclear-armed Iran would be unacceptable. He called upon the world's major powers to continue increasing sanctions against Tehran.**

**However, the world should remain open to talks if Iran suspends their nuclear activities. Just as we stand ready for war, we must also be ready to take advantage of an opportunity for peace.**

**There is great opportunity, but also great danger during the upcoming peace talks in Annapolis. I commend Secretary Rice for her efforts to forge a peace agreement.**

**It is important, however, to avoid a last minute rush into an agreement in the final months of the Bush Administration. We must not force Israel into an agreement that threatens its security.**

**It is also critically important to avoid building unrealistic expectations. Clearly, the United States needs to help forge consensus on the core issues that stand in the way of lasting peace: the borders of a Palestinian state and Jerusalem.**

**These final issues have not been dealt with in a serious way since the Clinton administration. It is time to begin moving forward again towards a peace agreement, but in a cautious way that is not rushed by the American election cycle.**

## **National Security and Energy Independence.**

**I'd like to finish today with a message on energy independence. The United States and Israel need an energy policy that can free us from dependence upon mid-east oil. Our dependence on oil is bankrolling governments that openly threaten international security.**

**I am working hard in the Senate to pull the rug out from under those who believe they can use their oil reserves to threaten their neighbors. I sponsored the first ever tax credit for cellulosic ethanol –at \$1.10/gallon. This provision was included in the energy tax package and will mean the U.S. can get more of its fuel from America's farmers.**

**Another source of fuel right here at home is our nation's coal reserves. Montana alone has 120 billion tons of coal. This is 1/10th of the world's total reserves. Montana has more energy stored in Coal than Saudi Arabia has in oil. Certainly we can make better use of this great resource using technology that sequesters the CO2 underground.**

**Moving towards energy independence is not simply a domestic issue. We need to cooperate with our allies to improve our energy technology. The Senate is working to boost these efforts.**

**I support the United States-Israel Energy Cooperation Act which would authorize \$20 million in grants for U.S. and Israeli researchers to develop alternative energy sources together.**

**Peace with security. That is the Israeli and the American people's overriding wish. And energy independence can bring both us a long way toward that goal.**

**Thank you again for having me as your guest today and I welcome any questions that you may have.**

