Remarks by Ambassador Nikki Haley at the Christians United for Israel Annual Summit

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AS DELIVERED

Thank you so very much, Pastor Hagee, for that kind introduction. And thank you, Ambassador Dermer, for your partnership and friendship.

It’s great to be with you. It is my true honor to have been asked to speak with you today. Before I say anything about what I do, I want to say a few words about what all of you do.

It’s always a great thing when Americans use the power of their voice.

What’s amazing about Christians United for Israel is not just the power of your voice. It’s also the importance of the cause you have dedicated your voice to.

Israel needs friends.

We live in a world in which anti-Semitism is on the rise. In some parts of the world, Jewish communities are enduring hate speech, harassment, vandalism, and physical violence.

We live in a world in which terrorist groups and even some countries openly call for Israel’s destruction.

Many other countries encourage or turn a blind eye to blatant discrimination against Israel.

Even here at home, there are some troubling signs. On many college campuses, the anti-Semitic BDS movement has become a trendy cause for students and professors who should know better.

Standing up against this global pressure campaign on Israel and the Jewish people goes to the heart of our friendship and the heart of America. And the tip of the spear is Christians United for Israel. What you are doing is so important. And may God bless you for it.

The United Nations is an interesting place. There are times when it can be a force for good.

We saw that last year, when the international community united against the North Korean nuclear weapons program, by passing massive sanctions that strangled their economy bringing them to the negotiating table.

The UN can also be an enormously frustrating and bizarre place. Nowhere is that more pronounced than in the truly awful way the UN has treated Israel for decades.

Last September, when Prime Minister Netanyahu spoke at the UN, he said that for too long, the “epicenter of global anti-Semitism was the UN itself.” That’s an amazing statement. But unfortunately, it’s true.

The Prime Minister also said something else. After describing the revolution that is taking place in Israel’s ties with individual nations around the world, Prime Minister Netanyahu said, “There are signs of positive change, even at the United Nations.” He said, “That positive change is gathering force.”

That is also true.

I’d like to describe some of those positive changes, and why they are happening.

Plain and simple, change comes with leadership and clarity from the United States.

That leadership and clarity was on full display when President Trump made the bold and right decision to move the United States Embassy to Jerusalem.

Jerusalem has historically been – is now – and will always be the capital of Israel.

That is not something that was created by the location of an embassy. That is not something that was created by an American decision.

America did not make Jerusalem Israel’s capital. What President Trump did – to his great credit – was recognize a reality that American presidents had denied for too long.

Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. That’s a fact. And President Trump had the courage to recognize that fact when others would not.

Now, I have to say, our embassy decision caused a bit of a stir at the United Nations.

In the United Nations Security Council, countries wasted no time in condemning the United States. They showed no mercy, but that gave me the great honor of casting my first American veto.

The next week, the Jerusalem issue was brought before the United Nations General Assembly – all 193 countries – in a direct attack condemning the United States.

We lost that vote. But to many people’s surprise, 65 countries refused to go against us. In the long history of the UN’s mistreatment of Israel, that was a record.

And we will never forget that vote. Like I said at the time, we were taking names.

President Trump and I are pushing to draw a closer connection between U.S. foreign aid and whether countries support U.S. interests at the UN – not just on the embassy, but on all U.S. interests. UN votes should not be the only factor in our foreign aid decisions. We have many interests that go beyond the UN. But they should be one factor, and we are determined to make that connection.

My second Security Council veto came just last month. But this time things turned out differently.

You have all seen the recent violence at the Gaza border. The people of Gaza live in miserable conditions. They deserve a much better life than what is imposed on them by Hamas.

We respect everyone’s right to peacefully protest. But no one should be fooled about the role of Hamas. Many of the protesters in Gaza are anything but peaceful. If they were peaceful, there would be no burning tires, there would be no Molotov cocktails, there would be no flaming swastika kites flying into Israel burning thousands of acres of land.

And of course, if this was a peaceful movement, there would not be hundreds of rockets fired from Gaza into Israel.

Like any country would do, Israel has responded to the violence at its border. What is so stunning is the international reaction to all of this.

Think about it. If there were tens of thousands of people looking to attack your border fence, and you had a terrorist group providing guidance on how best to kill innocent civilians inside your country once the border fence was broken, what would you do? What would the United States do? What would any country do?

When I heard country after country in the UN Security Council hypocritically standing in judgment of Israel, I spoke out. What I said shocked the people at the UN; but I’ll say it again, because it’s the truth.

Israel has acted with more restraint than just about any other country would under those same conditions.

It’s true. And yet, Israel is still condemned at the UN.

In the Security Council, a shamefully one-sided resolution was put forth condemning Israel’s actions in Gaza and making absolutely no mention of Hamas. Not one mention of the terrorist group that uses the people of Gaza as human shields, and fires rockets into Israeli schools.

That was my second veto.

But when this nonsense was brought to the General Assembly, this time we had a different strategy. We went on the offensive and offered our own amendment that called out Hamas’s terrorism.

Now that might not sound revolutionary, but consider that in the history of the UN General Assembly there has been over 600 resolutions on the Israel-Palestinian issue alone – and not one of them has ever mentioned Hamas. Not one in 600.

It’s very important to me that we represent truths and reality at the UN, even if it makes other countries uncomfortable.

For the first time, we made each country say whether they thought Hamas had any responsibility for the violence.

For the first time, we named names and identified the real source of the conflict in Gaza. And to everyone’s surprise, more countries voted with us than against us.

That sent shock waves through the General Assembly. Everyone was shocked. Let me tell you, it’s a new day at the UN.

From now on, every country knows that the United States will not just block anti-Israel measures, we will shine a light on those who are responsible. There won’t be any more free passes for those who bully Israel at the UN.

As this example shows, sometimes we are winning at the UN through persuasion.

But there are other times when we just have to say enough is enough.

That happened last year with the UN agency known as UNESCO. Among many other ridiculous things, UNESCO has the outrageous distinction of attempting to change ancient history.

UNESCO declared one of Judaism’s holiest sites, The Tomb of the Patriarchs, as a Palestinian Heritage Site, in need of protection from Israel. That was enough. Ten months into this administration, the United States withdrew from UNESCO.

And then there’s even more of an outrageous example of the so-called Human Rights Council.

This UN agency is supposed to be the world’s foremost advocate of human rights. What it’s actually become is a protector of dictators and a cesspool of political bias.

The corruption of the Human Rights Council goes way beyond Israel. Its membership includes the murderous dictatorships of Cuba, Congo, and China.

Human Rights Council reports have described the brutal regimes in Syria, Sudan, and Russia as – get this – “victims of Western sanctions.”

Not only did the UN elect the regime of Venezuelan dictator Nicolas Maduro to the membership of the Human Rights Council, but the Council rolled out the red carpet for Maduro to address them in a special assembly. His propaganda speech was met with a standing ovation.

So we don’t even need to talk about Israel to conclude that the Human Rights Council is a sham.

But we should talk about Israel, because Israel is a special case that proves the moral bankruptcy of the organization.

There is only one country in the world that has its own permanent Agenda Item at the Human Rights Council. It’s not North Korea, Iran, or Syria – countries that enslave and torture their own people. It’s the free country of Israel.

But it’s even worse than that. Agenda Item Seven doesn’t just single out Israel for consideration. Agenda Item Seven prejudges Israel’s guilt.

It is a political weapon used against Israel regardless of the actions it takes. It is meant to condemn Israel’s very existence as a human rights abuser. It is a moral abomination.

A little more than a year ago, I went to Geneva and told the Human Rights Council that we expected changes in order to justify America’s continued participation.

We said we needed to change the makeup of the Council membership to keep the worst human rights abusers off, and we needed to not just reform, but fully eliminate Agenda Item Seven.

Dozens of countries told us they agreed with us. But they only told us that behind closed doors. They did not have the courage to call it out for what it was.

Well, we do have that courage. After more than a year of efforts to change the Human Rights Council, we saw the writing on the wall, and the United States withdrew.

Many friendly countries told us we should stay in the Human Rights Council because American participation was “the last shred of credibility the Council had.”

But that’s exactly why we should not be there. America will always be the world’s leader in advocating human rights. But we will not do that in a place that makes a mockery of the very human rights ideals it is supposed to uphold.

That brings me to a larger point.

The Nobel Peace Prize winner and leading documenter of the Holocaust, Elie Wiesel, said and wrote many profound things in his lifetime. One of those is the idea that “neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim.” And that “silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.”

I keep that in mind as I battle away at the United Nations.

At the UN, some well-meaning countries are constantly in search of consensus.

They frequently invoke the principle of neutrality. At times, there is virtue in working together with other countries to form consensus. But that principle can be taken too far, and it often is.

The United States has no moral duty to be neutral between right and wrong. On the contrary, we have a moral duty to take sides, even when that means standing alone.

Being silent has never been something I was good at.

You might have seen, and it was mentioned earlier, that the top Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat – bless his heart – recently had some advice for me. He told me I just needed to “shut up.”

I responded by saying, Mr. Erekat, I will always be respectful, but I will not shut up.

I often get asked how I came to this place and to this worldview. I just believe what I believe. I have always been a person of deep faith.

No, I am not Jewish – even though that surprises some people. I was not raised as a Christian either. Twenty years ago, my faith journey brought me to Christianity, where I have found strength in my faith and trust in my heart.

But I’m also a person who is humble in her faith. I don’t claim to have the wisdom to know what God has in store for me or for other people.

What I do know is that God has blessed America with greatness and with goodness.

And I know that in the dangerous world we live in, it is absolutely critical for America to stand up and have the backs of our friends, and to stand strong against those who would do us harm.

If the United Nations spent its time relentlessly and unfairly attacking Japan, or Australia, or the United Kingdom, I would stand up for them too. I would do that because they are America’s friends and it’s the right thing to do.

But that’s not what happened. Eighteen months ago, I was given the assignment to represent America in a place that relentlessly attacks Israel. And I was sent there at a time when America had turned its back on Israel.

So it was my duty to defend Israel in what is often a dark place for one of America’s best friends. I take that duty incredibly seriously and with great pride.

In one of my first meetings at the UN, I called on the Israeli Ambassador, Danny Danon. You can clap for Danny, he’s a good one.

Just about one month before I arrived, the previous American Administration allowed a terrible resolution to pass. That resolution condemned Israel in the most outrageous way. It was a shameful day for America.

So when I arrived, I assured the Israeli Ambassador that on my watch that would never happen again. And I’m proud to say the opposite has happened.

In all that we’re doing – whether it’s the embassy decision, or UNESCO, or the Human Rights Council, or pushing for votes against Hamas, our approach on Israel is tied together by one major idea. The idea that runs through all of it is the simple concept that Israel must be treated like any other normal country.

We demand that Israel not be treated like some sort of temporary provisional entity or pariah.

It cannot be the case that only one country in the world doesn’t get to choose its capital city.

It cannot be the case that the Human Rights Council has a standing agenda item for only one country.

It cannot be the case that only one set of refugees throughout the world is counted in a way that causes the number to grow literally forever.

It cannot be the case that in an organization with 193 countries, the United Nations spends half of its time attacking only one country.

We will not turn a blind eye to it.

Our demand for fairness for Israel is actually a demand for peace. The UN’s bias against Israel has long undermined peace, by encouraging an illusion that Israel will go away.

Israel is not going to go away. When the world recognizes that, then peace becomes possible. It becomes possible because all sides will be dealing with realities, not fantasies.

Fantasies encourage absolutist demands. When realities are accepted, then compromise becomes possible.

When the reality of Israel’s existence is accepted, both sides will become freed to achieve a durable peace.

With your help – and believe me, your help is critical – America will continue to stand with Israel. We will stand with Israel because Israel’s cause is our cause. Israel’s values are our values. Israel’s fight is our fight.

We stand with Israel because we believe in right over wrong. We believe in freedom over tyranny.

Thank you so much for taking the time, thank you for caring. There is nothing better than when Americans use the power of their voices on behalf of good causes.

That’s what Christians United for Israel is all about. I am so thankful for your fight. May God bless each and every one of you. Thank you.