

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2017

Remarks at an Arrival Ceremony With President Reuven Rivlin and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel in Tel Aviv, Israel

May 22, 2017

[At this point, after being introduced by the master of ceremonies, President Rivlin made opening remarks, concluding as follows.]

President Rivlin. Welcome to Israel. God bless you. God bless you, Mr. President. God bless you, First Lady. God bless America. God bless Israel.

[The master of ceremonies then introduced Prime Minister Netanyahu.]

Prime Minister Netanyahu. President Rivlin and his wife Nechama, President Trump, Madam First Lady, Donald, Melania: Welcome—a very warm welcome to Israel.

Your visit here, Mr. President, is truly historic. Never before has the first foreign trip of a President of the United States included a visit to Israel. Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you for this powerful expression of your friendship to Israel.

Mr. President, yesterday in Saudi Arabia, you delivered a forceful speech of clarity and conviction. You called on all nations to drive out terrorists and extremists. You called for the forces of civilization to confront the forces of barbarism. Mr. President, for 69 years, Israel has been doing precisely that. We've manned the front lines of civilizations, we've fought terrorism, and we've built a moderate, vibrant, democratic, Jewish state.

In doing so, Mr. President, we've protected all faiths: Muslims, Christians—everyone. Throughout the Middle East, Christian communities are decimated, minorities persecuted. But here in Israel, we are proud to have a growing and thriving Christian community, and we guarantee the rights of all.

Mr. President, Israel also shares the commitment to peace that you expressed yesterday. We've already made peace with Egypt and with Jordan. And Israel's hand is extended to peace—in peace to all our neighbors, including the Palestinians. The peace we seek is a genuine and durable one in which the Jewish state is recognized, security remains in Israel's hands, and the conflict ends once and for all.

Mr. President, you just flew from Riyadh to Tel Aviv. I hope that one day an Israeli Prime Minister will be able to fly from Tel Aviv to Riyadh. May your first trip to our region prove to be a historic milestone on the path towards reconciliation and peace. I look forward to working with you in the years ahead, Mr. President, to advance security, prosperity, and peace. I'm confident that, under your leadership, the remarkable alliance between Israel and the United States will become ever greater, ever stronger.

Donald and Melania, the entire U.S. delegation, on behalf of the Government and the people of Israel, we welcome you to the State of Israel. May God bless you, Mr. President, may God bless Israel, and may God bless the United States of America.

[The master of ceremonies spoke briefly in Hebrew and then continued in English as follows.]

Master of Ceremonies. Ladies and gentleman, the Honorable Donald J. Trump, President of the United States of America.

President Trump. Thank you, and *shalom*. It is wonderful to be here in Israel. President Rivlin, Mrs. Rivlin, Prime Minister Netanyahu, Mrs. Netanyahu: Thank you very much.

I am deeply grateful for your invitation and very, very honored to be with you. On my first trip overseas as President, I have come to this sacred and ancient land to reaffirm the unbreakable bond between the United States and the State of Israel.

In this land so rich in history, Israel has built one of the world's great civilizations: a strong, resilient, determined, and prosperous nation. It is also a nation forged in the commitment that we will never allow the horrors and atrocities of the last century to be repeated. Now we must work together to build a future where the nations of the region are at peace and all of our children can grow and grow up strong and grow up free from terrorism and violence.

During my travels in recent days, I have found new reasons for hope. I have just concluded a visit to Saudi Arabia, where yesterday I met with King Salman and with the leaders from across the Muslim and Arab world. In that visit, we reached historic agreements to pursue greater and greater cooperation in the fight against terrorism and its evil ideology. My future travels will take me to visit Pope Francis at the Vatican and then our NATO and European allies.

We have before us a rare opportunity to bring security and stability and peace to this region and to its people, defeating terrorism, and creating a future of harmony, prosperity, and peace. But we can only get there working together. There is no other way.

Mr. President, Mr. Prime Minister, I look forward to working closely with both of you during my stay. We love Israel, we respect Israel, and I send your people the warmest greetings from your friend and ally: all of the people in the United States of America. We are with you.

Thank you, and God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 1 p.m. at the Ben Gurion International Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Sara Netanyahu, wife of Prime Minister Netanyahu. The transcript, prepared for immediate release by the Office of the Press Secretary, was received by the Office of the Federal Register on July 27.

Categories: Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Israel, President Rivlin; Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Israel, Prime Minister Netanyahu.

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Subjects: Holy See (Vatican City) : Pope; Israel : President; Israel : President Trump's visit; Israel : Prime Minister; Israel : Relations with U.S.; Middle East : Arab-Israeli conflict, peace process; Middle East : Counterterrorism efforts; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Saudi Arabia : King.

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