

Here's How Vice President Pence Marked Israel's Independence Day

Vice President Mike Pence helped the Trump administration recognize Israel's independence day with a special celebration at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building adjacent to the White House.

In attendance were a wide array of pro-Israel leaders, both inside and outside of government. As the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization was adopting yet another anti-Semitic resolution declaring Israel had no legitimate claim to Jerusalem, the vice president made the following remarks:

Thank you all for being here. And on behalf of the First Family, welcome to the White House.

I bring greetings from the President of the United States of America, President Donald Trump. And on behalf of President Trump, just a few minutes ago, I had the distinct honor to wish a happy Independence Day to Prime Minister Netanyahu over the phone as we celebrate the 69th anniversary of the independence of America's most cherished ally, the Jewish state of Israel.

I want to thank all the distinguished guests who are here and members of Congress who made time to come to the White House this afternoon, and people representing a broad spectrum of Americans who all cherish the relationship that the American people have enjoyed throughout these 69 years with the people of Israel.

It's humbling to be here with you on this remarkable and even a hallowed day. From Secretary Steve Mnuchin to

Ambassador David Friedman—to Senator Orrin Hatch, who has been a great, great champion for Israel all these many years in the United States Senate.

Distinguished members of Congress, including Congressman Peter King, who's with us today. Republicans and Democrats who are gathered here, honored guests, my fellow friends of Israel, thank you, on behalf of the President of the United States. Just thank you for being here today at the White House to celebrate this day, the anniversary of a moment that will be remembered for eternity.

You're all here, all of you, regardless of your home, your creed, because on this day, the fifth day in the month of Iyar in the Hebrew calendar in 1948, nothing short of a miracle occurred. On that day, in the ancient and eternal homeland of the Jewish people, the state of Israel was reborn.

On that day, the Jewish people's 2000-year exile, the longest exile of any people anywhere, ended. And on that day, a prophecy literally came to pass. And I believe in my heart that God himself fulfilled his promise to his people. The Lord God tells us in the Old Book, "Behold, I will cause breath to enter into and ye shall live." And Israel lives today.

Today and every day, the state of Israel and her people bear witness to God's faithfulness as well as their own. How unlikely was Israel's birth? How much more unlikely has been her survival? And how confounding against all odds, both past and present, has been her thriving. Since the moment of their independence, the Israeli people have awed the world with their strength of will and their strength of character. They've turned the desert into a garden, scarcity into plenty. And people of Israel have turned hope into a future of security and prosperity.

And at all times, in war and in peace, the people of Israel and the Jewish people have held their heads high. Every day, Israel takes the curses and slanders of too much of the world and turns them into blessings. The dignity of the people of Israel rebukes all who condemn them, not for what they do wrong, but they condemn them for what they do right.

And under President Donald Trump, let me assure you of this—if the world knows nothing else, the world will know this: America stands with Israel. President Trump stands with Israel for the same reason that every freedom-loving American stands with Israel—because her cause is our cause. Her values are our values. And her fight is our fight.

And President Donald Trump is a lifelong friend and supporter of the state of Israel and its people. You know, I've seen firsthand the president's deep affection for Israel and all who cherish her, and so has the world. Just last week, President Trump stood with Holocaust survivors during the National Days of Remembrance. And he declared, "I will always stand with the Jewish people, and I will always stand with our great friend and partner, the state of Israel."

For my part, my Christian faith compels me to cherish Israel as well as our deep alliance and historical ties. The songs of the land of the people of Israel were the anthems of my youth when I was growing up. You know, my wife and I had the privilege of visiting Israel in 2004 and 2008, and we fulfilled a lifelong dream to bring all of our children to the Holy Land in December of 2014. It was a joy—inexpressible.

So let me say with confidence to all who are gathered here: President Trump stands without apology for Israel, and he always will.

Just look at the actions our president has taken since he

took office. The president named David Friedman to represent the United States of America in Israel. The president named Governor Nikki Haley to be America's ambassador to the United Nations. And the president of the United States, as we speak, is giving serious consideration into moving the American embassy in Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

To be clear, the president has also personally committed to resolving the Israeli and Palestinian conflict. Even now, we're making valuable progress toward the noble goal of peace. Thanks to the president's tireless leadership, momentum is building, and goodwill is growing. And that while there will undoubtedly have to be compromises, you can rest assured President Donald Trump will never compromise the safety and security of the Jewish State of Israel—not now, not ever.

President Trump has made it clear America stands alongside Israel, as friends and as allies, as together we confront those enemies who threaten our people and all that we hold dear. Since the moment of their nation's birth, there's hardly been a day when the people of Israel have not lived without war or the fear of war, or the grim reality of terror. Know today that our prayers for the safety of the people of Israel, each and every day, go from the hearts of the American people to heaven. And know that Israel does not stand alone.

Today, under President Donald Trump, America's support for Israel's security is at record levels. And in President Trump, America has a leader who will call our enemies by their name. I want to promise you, as the fight even goes on now in precincts around Mosul and Iraq, even in northern Syria and Afghanistan, this president is determined to keep his promise to the American people. ISIS is on the run, and we will hunt down and destroy ISIS and terrorist organizations at their source so they no longer threaten our people, our allies, and our most cherished ally, Israel.

And under President Donald Trump, America will stand strong in the face of the leading state sponsor of terrorism. This administration has put Iran on notice. America will no longer tolerate Iran's efforts to destabilize the region and jeopardize Israel's security. Under President Donald Trump, the United States of America will not allow Iran to develop a nuclear weapon. This is our solemn promise to you, to Israel, and to the world.

History attests that enmity toward the Jewish people often turns from evil thought to evil action. The state of Israel bears witness to this truth. On this day, so many years ago, only three years after the horrors of the Holocaust, Israel was given life by a people who had looked into the eye of the angel of death. The Jewish people have persevered through history's darkest hour, for in that darkness shine the light of faith, of hope, and of love.

It was faith that led the Jewish people to return to their ancient homeland. It was hope that spurred them to strive with all their strength for a brighter future. And it was love for each other, and a love for freedom, that has inspired the Jewish people to greatness at the hour of Israel's birth and every hour since.

And so today we celebrate and we marvel at all that Israel and her people have accomplished. We praise their vigilance and resolve in the face of crisis and condemnation, and for their enduring courage in this time of widening challenges and unknowable threats. And today we remember the sacrifice of those who gave so much for Israel's existence, and for those brave men and women who stand sentry at this very hour.

Israel is an eternal testament to the undying fortitude of the Jewish people, to the unfathomable power of human freedom, and to the unending faithfulness of God. Indeed, though Israel was built by human hands, it's impossible not

to sense that just beneath their history lies the hand of heaven. For as God tells us in his word, speaking to his people so long ago, "I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

I believe these words are as true today as they were in millennia past. And so I say with confidence, with your help, with God's help, through the strength and courage of the people of Israel and all who cherish her, and with President Donald Trump in the White House, the best days for Israel and America are yet to come.

Thank you very much. May God continue to bless and protect Israel and the people, and may God bless America.

Mat Staver, founder and Chairman of Liberty Counsel, President of Christians in Defense of Israel, and founder and President of Covenant Journey, was among those in attendance. He said he was moved by the support President Donald Trump and his administration has provided to the Jewish state, which is a sharp departure from the policies of his predecessor.

"I am honored to join Vice President Pence and other key pro-Israel leaders to celebrate Israel's Independence Day at the White House," he said. "I am encouraged that the Trump administration is sending a clear message to the U.N. to finally honor Israel's right to exist. It is past time we stopped imposing failed ideas on Israel. We must stand with Israel and against anti-Semitism." {eo}