

Did Obama Edit History?

✖ Even four weeks later, President Barak Obama's Cairo speech is still reverberating in Washington, D.C. To his credit, the president used the speech to shatter an ugly myth when he confronted Holocaust denial.

But unfortunately, President Obama's speech actually reinforced other dangerous myths about Israel's history and the true obstacles to peace in the Middle East.

Last Sunday, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu stepped up to set the record straight. And last week, two Democratic senators—Sen. Harry Reid of Nevada and Sen. Robert Menendez of New Jersey—added their voices to the chorus of correction. Taking on a popular president from your own party is never easy. It is therefore of great significance that these two Democrats felt the need to clarify that when it comes to the specifics of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the president does not speak for the party.

Nearly two weeks ago, Democratic Majority Leader Sen. Reid, sent a letter to President Obama. Reid politely reminded the president of the real threats to peace in the Middle East. In Cairo, President Obama glossed over the long history of Palestinian rejection of Israel's right to exist. Sen. Reid wrote, "I believe that negotiations will be successful only with a renewed commitment from the Palestinians to be a true partner for peace."

In Cairo, President Obama largely ignored the leading role of Iran in fueling the conflict with Israel. Sen. Reid wrote that the peace process must not "take away from your commitment to deal with the ongoing threat from Iran. Iran has continued to call for Israel's destruction while repeatedly defying the international community with its nuclear program."

The following day, Sen. Menendez went to the floor of the

Senate to deliver a 13-minute speech on Israel. While not mentioning President Obama by name, he issued a powerful rebuttal of the myths that the president seemed to embrace. In Cairo, the president suggested that Israel's right to exist is based upon Jewish suffering in the Holocaust.

In response, Sen. Menendez walked through the over 3,500-year-old connection between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel. "Let's be very clear," Menendez stated, "the Holocaust is not the main justification for Israel's existence."

While in Cairo, President Obama stated that Palestinian "dislocation" was a result of "Israel's founding." Sen. Menendez noted that, "the more than 700,000 Palestinians who left Israel were refugees of a war instigated by Arab governments bent on seizing more land for themselves." Sen. Menendez also mentioned that 750,000 Jewish refugees from Arab countries were absorbed by Israel, a fact absent from the president's speech.

While the president downplayed the threat from Iran, Menendez highlighted it. Iran, he stressed, is not a just a "potential threat" to Israel's existence—it is a present threat to Israel's existence though its arming and funding of Hamas and Hezbollah. Sen. Menendez was clear that "under no circumstances whatsoever can we allow that conventional threat to become a nuclear one."

We live in a time when Israel's enemies are aggressively seeking to delegitimize her by rewriting both the history of the Jewish people and the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict. In such a climate, even people sympathetic to Israel are sometimes swayed. It is thus good indeed to see Israel's friends on both sides of the aisle step up and correct the record. Thank you, Sen. Reid and Sen. Menendez, for your leadership and your friendship on this issue. Your services to the truth and to Israel are deeply appreciated.

To watch the video of Sen. Menendez's compelling speech on Capitol Hill, click below.

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