

*Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2009*

**Videotaped Remarks to the Israeli Presidential Conference: Facing Tomorrow 2009**

*October 21, 2009*

President Peres, Prime Minister Netanyahu, honored guests: I'm happy to send my warmest wishes to all of you who have gathered for this important conference on Facing Tomorrow. I'm sorry that I could not be there with you in person, but I'm so pleased that our extraordinary Ambassador to the United Nations, Susan Rice, will be participating with all of you.

I'm especially honored to send my greetings to a great statesman, the host of this conference, President Shimon Peres. His life stands as an extraordinary example of how courage and perseverance can help shape the future and turn harrowing challenges into historic opportunities. In his lifetime, he has helped to build and secure the State of Israel, he has faced grave threats and forged peace, and he has always challenged us to seek the promise of a better day.

Shimon has also contributed to the deep and much abiding friendship between the United States and Israel, a bond that is much more than a strategic alliance. The American people and the Israeli people share a faith in the future, a belief that democracies can shape their own destiny, and that opportunity should be available to all.

Through its own extraordinary history, Israel has given life to that promise. We see it in Israel's thriving democracy. We see it in the courage of citizens who go about their lives, even when faced with grave danger. We see it in the prosperity that has been forged and the innovation that has spread benefits well beyond Israel's borders, and we were reminded of that recently when Ada Yonath was chosen as the Nobel Laureate for Chemistry.

But we also see it in the optimism that has brought you together. Our moment in history is filled with challenges that test our will and invite pessimism, from a global economic crisis to a growing danger from climate change, from the spread of nuclear weapons to the obstacles that stand in the way of a secure and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians. Faced with these burdens, we can choose to defer action, to sustain a dangerous status quo, or we can meet the challenges of our time head on.

Like you, I believe that now's the time to act. By drawing upon such a wide range of expertise within Israel, President Peres is harnessing the talent and dynamism of the Israeli people in facing the future. And by bringing together such a broad and remarkable group of leaders from around the world, he is underscoring a fundamental truth: We cannot meet the tests of our time unless we meet them together. All of us must accept our share of responsibility for progress.

As we look to the future, consider what can be achieved if we move beyond our differences; if a secure Israel and an independent Palestine are at peace and Arab States commit to genuine reconciliation; if new partnerships were forged across the region to advance health and education, clean energy and innovation; if we overcome the threats posed by weapons of mass destruction; and if global cooperation were founded upon the basis of mutual interests and mutual respect, and we met our responsibility to leave our children a world that is more peaceful and prosperous.

It is easy to grow disheartened. But together, we must keep our eyes fixed on the future that we want to build. History shows us what is possible. Israel's story tells us that impossible odds can be overcome. And Shimon's leadership reminds us that dark moments cannot conceal a path to progress.

I wish you all a productive and successful conference.

NOTE: The President's remarks were videotaped on at 4:55 p.m. on October 19 in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast to the conference in Jerusalem, Israel. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 23.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Israel :: "Facing Tomorrow" conference in Jerusalem, videotaped remarks.

*Locations:* Washington, DC.

*Names:* Netanyahu, Benjamin; Peres, Shimon; Rice, Susan E.; Yonath, Ada E.

*Subjects:* Arms and munitions : Nuclear weapons and development :: Nonproliferation efforts; Arms and munitions : Weapons of mass destruction; Commerce, international : Global financial markets :: Unrest; Decorations, medals, and awards : Nobel Prize; Energy : Alternative and renewable sources and technologies; Environment : Climate change ; Israel : "Facing Tomorrow" conference in Jerusalem; Israel : President; Israel : Prime Minister; Israel : Relations with Arab States; Israel : Relations with U.S.; Middle East : Arab States, relations with Israel; Middle East : Peace and democracy efforts; United Nations : U.S. Permanent Representative.

*DCPD Number:* DCPD200900840.