

Foundation for Defense of Democracies

**Washington Forum:
Presentation of the Jeane J. Kirkpatrick Statesmanship Award**

**Moderator:
Toby Dershowitz,
Vice President for Government Relations and Strategy,
Foundation for Defense of Democracies**

**Speakers:
Representative Eliot Engel (D-NY)**

Senator Mark Kirk (R-IL)

Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ)

Representative Ed Royce (R-CA)

Location: Mandarin Oriental Hotel, Washington, D.C.

**Time: 1:30 p.m. EDT
Date: Thursday, May 1, 2014**

*Transcript by
Federal News Service
Washington, D.C.*

MARK DUBOWITZ: All right, folks, we're going to get started. If everybody could take their seats.

TOBY DERSHOWITZ: Ladies and gentlemen, we are so privileged to have with us incredible leaders from both the House and the Senate. We are going to flip things around just a - - just a little bit as we await for the arrival of Senator Menendez.

I'm going to get started with the -- interrogating our colleagues, as we've joked around a little bit earlier. But in all seriousness, our distinguished speakers play an incredibly important role from their perch in Congress. And frankly speaking, I'm just going to jump right into some questions, if I -- if I could.

Chairman Royce, let's get started with you. The clock is ticking away; July 20th is quickly approaching. You have focused on the Iran deal for a long time. Our administration is, as we speak, inking what we are told is a final deal. What are the must-haves, in your view, in a final deal?

REPRESENTATIVE ED ROYCE (R-CA): Well, I think the easiest thing to define is what would be failure. And in my view, failure is anything short of having a verifiable way to dismantle the nuclear weapons program which Iran has its disposal, or will have. Failure, for example, would be allowing Iran to proceed with an ICBM program, yet we know we intend to turn a blind eye to that. I'd say that's failure. Failure would be not closing -- not getting an agreement that closed the plutonium program at Arak, and yet that, it looks to me like, is being acquiesced to.

Failure would be to allow -- to allow Iran to continue to enrich and to continue to miniaturize a nuclear weapon, continue to do the R&D on faster and faster centrifuges, which recently they announced they would have the right to do. All of this I would define as failure.

I think success would have been doing exactly what the Foundation for Defense of Democracy (sic/Democracies) originally suggested we do, and that was give the ayatollah a choice between the collapse of his economy or compromise on his nuclear weapons program and giving up that program. Now, the legislation that FDD helped Eliot Engel and myself write we passed out of our committee unanimously. We passed it off of the floor 400 to 20. It sits in the Senate with 66 speakers -- supporters, but with it blocked by the leadership in the Senate. And I would say success would have been to pass that legislation and give that very real choice to the ayatollah in terms of the compromise that we wanted to see made. (Applause.)

MS. DERSHOWITZ: Earlier in our conversation today, somebody talked about how we might be looking for a technical algorithm to essentially solve what is essentially a strategic problem. Do you think Iran is capable of actually changing its calculus?

REP. ROYCE: Well, a system like that, a theocracy like that, would only change its calculus under the conditions under which it knew that its very survival of the regime itself was imperiled. At that point, yes, a regime would change its calculus. And the one thing we had going for us for a while was that the sanctions, which Bob Menendez and Mark Kirk had put in

force and which Eliot Engel and I had supported, were taking hold, and you saw what was happening. I mean, that's why Iran came to the table. You could actually see visibly what was happening to the economy, to their stock market, to the valuation of their currency, to the unemployment. And yet we've now given them a respite, in my view, by what we have done. And you pick up the newspaper and it says Iran is open for business on the business page of The Wall Street Journal. That is not the message we want to send.

MS. DERSHOWITZ: And I'd be remiss if I didn't use this opportunity to pivot just a little bit to North Korea, because despite signing multiple nuclear deals, North Korea has tested three nuclear devices and, if reports are to be believed, is poised to test yet another nuclear device. And we know, of course, it has restarted its nuclear reactor that had prior to this been mothballed, and engaged in a whole series of illicit activities. What lessons should we be learning from the Pyongyang chapter when it comes to Iran?

REP. ROYCE: The lesson is to do the exact opposite of everything we did with North Korea. Let's look at that situation.

When we found that North Korea was going down this road and the Treasury Department -- and by the way, let me -- let me just say FDD works very closely with Treasury, and we've always noticed that Treasury is usually an ally in this because they often have the facts. In this particular case, Treasury had picked up on the fact that hundred-dollar bills were being counterfeited by North Korea, and they also knew that North Korea was trying to develop a weapons program. So Treasury moved decisively and froze the accounts at Banco Delta Asia and 10 other banks, all the banks doing business with North Korea. Obviously, if you're a bank in Asia and you have a decision to make between doing business with North Korea or the United States, you fall in line with Treasury's diktat here. And the consequences were internal implosion.

I mean, we talked -- I spoke specifically to the former chief propagandist who made his way through China and then into South Korea from North Korea, as well as one of the defectors who worked on the missile production line. They told me everything came to a screeching halt in North Korea. The dictator couldn't even pay his generals -- and as one of them said, that's not a good position for a dictator to be in.

And so we had a situation there where all the pressure was on the regime. They couldn't get the hard currency to continue their ICBM program or continue their nuclear program, and yet the State Department managed to convince then the Bush administration to lift those sanctions.

Now, we did that without verification. We did that, you know, without the kind of on-the-ground inspections we needed, and certainly we were played. My concern is that that playbook used by the Kim family in North Korea is now in the hands of the ayatollah. He seems to be following -- and you know his agents were always on the ground there watching their tests and so forth.

And so we should do the opposite of what we did with North Korea. We should put the sanctions on, keep them on until they allow the verification that they have rolled back their

system. We're not talking about containment. Our goal isn't containment. Our goal should be to roll back a nuclear weapons program in Iran.

MS. DERSHOWITZ: And I'm going to -- (applause). Thank you for that. I'm going to ask you one other question. I'm sure you could spend hours on this, but again, I think I'd be remiss if I didn't address some of the reports recently about Turkey's role in the illicit finance network.

Now, as you know, Mr. Chairman, this conference is about allies and enemies, and sometimes "frenemies." What happens when allies become enemies and vice versa? What's your sense of Turkey's role in the Middle East and vis-a-vis, and have they been acting like an ally?

REP. ROYCE: Well, I think that in Turkey obviously you have an element of the government right now that's investigating this. You know, we should acknowledge that the chief prosecutor's office is looking at the ways in which the head of state tried to circumvent the law, the rule of law -- international law, Turkish law. We know that at least 12 billion (dollars), you know, was moved in terms of gold reserves. And the reason it was transferred to Iran was to try to prop up the currency in Iran. It was done at a time when they were really -- when the regime was really on the ropes. And obviously, from what we at least read from Turkish officials themselves, including Prime Minister Erdogan, benefited from this transfer.

And so, yes, we have got a bone to pick here with the head of state about the way he circumvented international law and undermined sanctions. And so, yes, we want to not only encourage the investigation by Turkish authorities on this but we want to also encourage our administration to lean in here and help investigate the ways in which the Turkish officials were involved in sanctions-busting activities as it relates to Iran.

MS. DERSHOWITZ: A lot more to be said about that, and perhaps we'll revisit that.

I want to move over to Representative Engel. Thank you so much for joining us. Yesterday Hamas' Khaled Meshaal reiterated that Hamas continues to feel strongly about jihad. They have not moved away from it. They continue to support it. You have said recently about a potential Hamas-Fatah deal that this -- should that move forward, that this could completely derail the peace process. And you expressed deep concerns about it. What are your concerns about it?

REPRESENTATIVE ELIOT ENGEL (D-NY): Well, plain --

MS. DERSHOWITZ: And what do you think Congress should do?

REP. ENGEL: Well, plain and simple, Hamas is a terrorist group, not just a terrorist group vis-a-vis Israel but actually a terrorist group. They, as you know, have entered all kinds -- they have done all kinds of mischief. And I think the U.S. Congress is under no obligation to continue to fund the Palestinian Authority if it indeed makes an alliance, or has an amalgamation with Hamas. (Applause.)

Now, we know that in the past they have expressed desire to unite and that's always fallen through. So that may very well fall through again, but I think it's important that the Palestinians understand that there will be severe consequences from the point of view of the U.S. Congress if indeed this goes together. I think that Prime mMinister Netanyahu is right when he says that the Palestinian Authority can make peace with Israel or make peace with Hamas.

It really cannot make peace with both at the same time, and so I think it's clear that they understand that this is not something that we will allow them to sort of play little games -- you know, you start to see, in the press, well, what if the coalition government did recognize Israel's right to exist and Hamas didn't, but Hamas ministers in the coalition government, it would sort of imply that they did -- no time for game-playing.

We all know what the Quartet has said, and we know what they've said. They've got to renounce terrorism, recognize Israel's right to exist and agree to abide by previous agreements. It's plain and simple, they don't do it, no money. (Applause.)

MS. DERSHOWITZ: This conference, as I said, is about allies and enemies and adversaries. What does it say about our peace partner, Abbas, that he would move forward with such a -- with such a -- what does it say about Abbas himself as an ally -- (inaudible) --

REP. ENGEL: Well, you know, it always reminds me, when I was much younger, and Abba Eban was the minister, he used to say, the Palestinians never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity, and it's sad that so many decades later, that still seems to be the case.

You know, it's just a matter of -- and there are a lot of other things as well. You know, there's this whole discussion about Israel being recognized as a Jewish state. When you look back at Security Council Resolution 181 back in 1947, that was the division of historic Palestine into what it said was an Arab State and a Jewish State. From 1948, when Israel was proclaimed as a state, through 1967, there were no settlements, there was no, quote, unquote, "occupation." There was none of these things that the Palestinians like to use as a reason why there's not peace.

For me, it's plain and simple. There's no peace because 66 years after the founding of the Jewish state, the Palestinians and most of the Arabs don't recognize the right of a Jewish state in the region. They don't recognize the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish state. And it seems to me that if they are not going to recognize that right, then inherently, there really cannot be peace. If you're going to support a two-state solution, which I do, it's two states for two peoples. It's -- the Palestinian state is the national homeland for the Palestinian people, and Israel is the national homeland for the Jewish people.

And it doesn't mean that minorities in Israel won't have full rights as citizens, though there are plenty of -- you know, doing a lot of work in the -- I've done a lot of work in the Balkans. There are plenty of instances all over the world where there are large minorities in states, and they have full rights or should have full rights as citizens. That would be the case with Israel as well.

MS. DERSHOWITZ: And I see Senator Menendez -- I'm going to invite you to join us right on stage. Thank you so much for joining us. (Applause.) (Off-mic exchange.)

And I'm getting the signal from Jamie (sp) that this is the time when we're going to award you the Jeanne (Patrick ?) award, and I call on my colleague, Mark Dubowitz, to do that.

MARK DUBOWITZ: Well, great. Thank you very much, Toby. Can everybody hear me?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: No.

MR. DUBOWITZ: No? OK. Now you can. Good.

So, my name is Mark Dubowitz. I'm the executive director of FDD, and it's a real honor to be able to award the Jeane J. Kirkpatrick statesmanship award. It honors ambassador Kirkpatrick's legacy and those public servants who are her heirs.

As you all know, she was one of our finest diplomats. She was influenced by the Great Depression, by World War II. And she believed that there was no substitute for the power of the American people and no substitute for the importance of American leadership.

In 1979, she penned a very famous article called "Dictatorships and Double Standards." It was a bold call for American leadership, and America need not apologize for who we are, need not apologize for our power, and that liberal idealism need not be incompatible with the unrelenting defense of freedom and the vigorous pursuit of freedom. It was this -- it was actually this piece that caught Ronald Reagan's attention, and Reagan's national security adviser, Richard Allen -- he recounts how Reagan immediately wanted to meet "this guy" Jeane Kirkpatrick. (Laughter.)

Kirkpatrick herself, I recall reading, expressed a fair amount of skepticism about meeting the Republican nominee for president. She called herself an AFL-CIO Democrat. So it was sort of a strange meeting between the two.

But that first meeting inspired a relationship that during Kirkpatrick's service in the Reagan administration underscored something that FDD believes very profoundly in, which is the importance of a bipartisan approach to foreign policy.

Now, five years after that meeting, and four years after she became the U.N. ambassador, she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom. And she spent her entire life fighting totalitarianism. She understood that the Soviet Union did not mean the end of the struggle between freedom and tyranny.

And in the aftermath of 9/11, Ambassador Kirkpatrick was instrumental in the founding of FDD, and it's something for which we are -- we are very grateful -- eternally grateful. And she understood that there needed to be a policy institute like FDD that was committed to pluralism, defending democratic values and fighting the ideologies that drive terrorism. We are committed

to her legacy, to her values and to advancing freedom. She shaped a generation of leaders. She shapes us. And she shapes the people that live after her.

With the presentation of the annual Kirkpatrick Award, we're very proud to honor four lawmakers; two Democrats and two Republicans. And these are people who have committed themselves relentlessly and passionately to many foreign policy challenges, but particularly to stopping Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. Now, they've defied the skeptics, and they've been unwilling to back down in the face of political pressure. They developed many of the toughest sanctions against Iran. They've built overwhelming bipartisan support that led to the passage of critical sanctions legislation. They provide the administration with the key leverage the administration has to negotiate a deal with Iran. But they've urged the administration to maintain that pressure in order to get Iran to verifiably dismantle its military nuclear program and come clean on decades of nuclear mendacity. They've also underscored that the Iranian threat is not just a nuclear threat, but it's also based on the regime's status as the leading state sponsor of terrorism, as a repressor of human rights and a developer of ballistic missiles.

Today we express our deep gratitude to each of you for your work across the political aisle to ensure that the Iranian regime is countered in all its many dimensions. You have understood better, perhaps, than anybody else in this town that there's no technical algorithm that can solve a strategic problem -- and that strategic problem is the very nature of this Iranian regime. So please join me in expressing our deep gratitude to these four gentlemen. Senator Mark Kirk can't be with us today. We're going to have a private ceremony with him in his office, but I'd like to, obviously, introduce you to the other three recipients: Senator Bob Menendez, Representative Eliot Engel, and Representative Ed Royce. And they are worthy -- (inaudible). (Applause.)

(Off-side conversation.)

SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ (D-NJ): Well, good afternoon. And first of all, let me -- let me say, I have a vote going on now, but I have such an appreciation for the Foundation for the Defense of Democracy, for their work, for their advocacy, for their insights, that even though we have votes going on right now, I wanted to make sure I got here, because what this foundation does is extraordinarily important to the national interest and security of the United States. And for those of you who are supportive of the foundation, I want you to know that.

I also very much appreciate the recognition of the Jeane Kirkpatrick Statesmanship Award. She is an extraordinary part of American history and someone who we admire across the political spectrum for the tenacity, the courageousness and the intellectual promise that she brought to American foreign policy advocacy.

I'm thrilled to be in the company of Chairman Royce and Ranking Member Engel, both who I had the privilege of serving with in the House of Representatives before I came to the Senate and continue to work with. And I find ourselves very often in common cause on a whole range of issues -- certainly with Iran, our ally the state of Israel, but even beyond that. And so I want to salute them as well for their incredible leadership.

Let me just take one brief moment and I'll excuse myself. I was looking forward to this panel, actually, to get a few things off my chest, but since I -- (laughter) -- I'm not going to be able to stay because I can't miss these votes, I do want to say one or two things about -- particularly about Iran.

I have been following Iran for over 20 years. When I was a member of the House of Representatives' International Relations Committee and found out that Iran was receiving voluntary contributions from the United States through the International Atomic Energy Administration -- whose voluntary contributions above and beyond our membership dues were going for what? To create operational capacity at the Bushehr nuclear facility in Iran, not in the national interests and security of the United States.

And I led a successful drive at that time to stop those voluntary contributions from going over, but I said to many of my friends at the time, why are you not paying attention to Iran? And today we see the consequences of that lack both of attention and particularly of action. The legislation that I have sponsored with Senator Kirk -- who also I know he couldn't come today because the votes are going on, and the missed and mobility questions -- but let me just say you couldn't have a better ally than Mark Kirk in this. He is committed with full passion -- (applause) -- (inaudible) -- your appreciation of his work.

But for me, you know, I know that there are some who believe that somehow we're going to change our whole dynamism with Iran. I don't believe that that is true. Iran is a major state sponsor of terrorism. It continues to send major assistance on a virtual daily basis into Syria, one of the most incredible humanitarian tragedies that is taking place today, and it has been on a march towards nuclear weapons for some time. When Rouhani says in his book that, I negotiated as the Iranian nuclear negotiator and I succeeded on getting the West not to pursue sanctions against Iran and was able to advance our nuclear program, it tells you the real mindset of the individual. And I am of the belief that the only reason that the Iranians are even negotiating on the table is because of the over- arching sanctions and the multilateral efforts on those sanctions that have brought them into severe economic consequences at home, not sufficient to topple the regime but certainly sufficient to bring them to a negotiating table.

No one wants a diplomatic solution more than I do, but it cannot be a deal for a deal's sake. (Applause.) And I am worried that the West wants a deal more than they want the right deal. And it is ultimately the right deal -- now, what's the right deal in my mind? The right deal doesn't mothball Iran's illicit nuclear infrastructure program to create nuclear weapons for the future and kick the ball down the court. It dismantles its illicit nuclear program. (Applause.) It ultimately achieves, not as Princeton -- the Princeton report suggested that we can take the Arak reactor and reduce the level of plutonium it can create. I don't want it creating any plutonium as a separate path towards nuclear weapons. (Applause.)

And I also -- verification is great, but verification which gives you a two months' or three months' timeframe only ultimately creates an opportunity for the entire international regime that we have created to be dismantled at the end of the day, and then at some future date -- if all we do is mothball Iran's nuclear program, then they can kick it up at some future date and we will be

back to a North Korea type of circumstance. (Applause.) So I continue to hold the fervent view that we must keep the course that we have been on.

I see that some of our colleagues are increasingly thinking about joining us and adding to those who have sponsored the Menendez- Kirk legislation to create potential sanctions if Iran doesn't ultimately agree to a verifiable program that meets our challenge and our interest. And I still am of the view that at an appropriate time -- and I think that time may be coming soon -- in pursuing a course of action that sends a very clear message to the Iranians: Either you dismantle your illicit nuclear program and provide us the wherewithal to ensure that a future American president doesn't only have the option of either accepting a nuclear-armed Iran or having a military option -- that we can prevent that set of circumstances by moving forward now in an aggressive way to get a deal that ultimately can provide us the type of security and our ally Israel the insurance of not having existential threats.

Thank you very much for -- (applause).

MS. DERSHOWITZ: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

(END)