

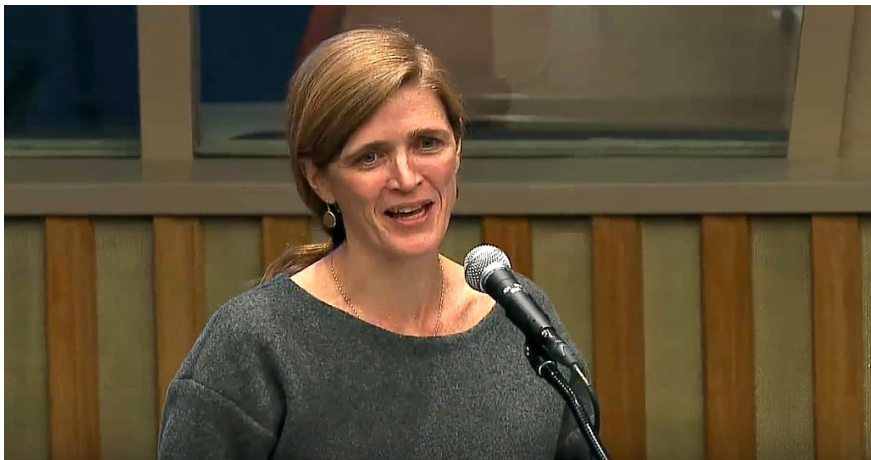


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Address on Overcoming UN Resolution 3379

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Thank you all. I don't know what's worse, following John Kerry or Daniel Patrick Moynihan.

But let me start by thanking the people who have organized this amazing event and my friends and partners: David Harris, thank you for always having the best ideas and being such a tremendous partner; Isaac Herzog, it's a great honor and privilege to meet you and thank you for being so principled on behalf of peace; Danny Danon, thank you, it's great to get to know you, and thank you also for your team because it is teamwork that allows us to fight what goes on here every day.

Secretary Kerry had to leave so I can say behind his back, as it were, what I was going to say to him in person. But he is just the most tremendous co-conspirator a person can have, and he has two qualities that I think are totally defining: one, he is completely sincere and authentic in his convictions and in what he says. He is completely -- he's the most sincere person I think I've ever known. And second, he never ever gives up. So if anybody else is tempted to give up, you will not get company in him.



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I'm very honored to just be a part of this, and particularly amongst such a distinguished group. I should also thank the Secretary-General, of course, for always being willing to get on a plane and to invest himself if he can improve or save lives. It's the sine qua non.

We are marking two somber anniversaries here today. One, of course, is the UN General Assembly vote -- 40 years ago -- branding Zionism as "a form of racism." The other is *Kristallnacht*, the night of the broken glass, 77 years ago. *Kristallnacht* was not a night, it was several days of violence targeting Jews across Germany, Austria, and the Sudetenland. Synagogues were destroyed; Jewish homes, schools, and businesses looted; at least 91 Jews were murdered; 30,000 Jews deported to camps.

In Baden-Baden, Jewish men and boys were rounded up and marched to the synagogue, where the SS forced them to remove their kippahs and read aloud from sections of *Mein Kampf*, beating those who refused to or who did not read with enough enthusiasm. After hours of this abuse, the SS loaded the men onto trucks to Dachau and burned down the synagogue. Even the stones of the synagogue's foundation were broken up and used to pave a road.

Speaking 40 years ago on the day UN Resolution 3379 was adopted, Israel's ambassador to the UN Chaim Herzog -- who had himself, as his son has shared with us, helped liberate Jews in concentration camps -- recognized the horrific symmetry between these two events. In both instances, actions that should have been a source of shame -- whether the horrific violence against Jews in 1938, or the 1975 smearing of Jews' aspirations to have a homeland -- became for certain people a perverse source of pride. And both were rooted in what Herzog called the "two evils of hatred and ignorance."

As Herzog rightly recognized, the proponents of the resolution not only discredited themselves, but they discredited the United Nations and the principles this institution was supposed to defend. He said, "The issue before this assembly is not Israel and is not Zionism. The issue is the fate of this organization." Ambassador Moynihan saw it the same way: "What we have at stake here is not merely the honor and the legitimacy of the State of Israel," he said, "but the integrity of the whole body of moral and legal precepts, which we know as human rights." That such a poisonous idea could be not only discussed in the United Nations, but given its imprimatur, called into question the moral authority and legitimacy of this institution.



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But just as important as what Herzog and Moynihan said on that day of the infamous vote was what they and others did after it -- fighting for the principles that they knew to be right. Chaim Herzog's speech marked the beginning of a movement, and it's really important to bear that in mind. I just want to touch -- in my very brief remarks -- on two things that happened next.

First, Herzog and Israelis continued -- as they had been -- dedicating themselves to the enduring project of building the State of Israel -- what Herzog described as, "our attempt to build a society, imperfect though it may be -- and what society is perfect? -- in which the visions of the prophets of Israel will be realized." In other words, Israel's most powerful rebuttal to "Zionism is racism" was showing how Israel's aspirations as a nation aligned with the principles at the heart of the UN Charter. Herzog did more than tear apart the General Assembly's resolution with his hands and with his arguments; he helped build a vibrant and democratic Israel; an effort that his son, who spoke with us earlier, is nobly carrying forward to this day. And just as Herzog could count on Moynihan's searing condemnation of Resolution 3379 in the General Assembly, so too over the years could Israel count on the United States - - as it has since its creation, and does to this day -- as its strongest partner, at the United Nations and in the world. That bond, as we know, was underscored this week, when President Obama and Prime Minister Netanyahu reaffirmed their shared commitment to the vision of two states for two peoples, living side by side in security and peace.

Now the second part of the aftermath that bears noting is the United States, Israel, and our collective partners worked relentlessly for that decade and a half to build up the support to revoke this resolution that had cast such a stain on this institution and on so much else. And while the history of the resolution's adoption and these incredible speeches is well known, the story of its overturning is not. In this country, it was a campaign led jointly by the Jewish community, members of Congress, and successive administrations from both parties. And their effort succeeded not only because they were persistent, but also because they methodically set about winning over governments on the opposite side -- one by one, targeted campaign by targeted campaign. And that's what it takes, as we know, to this day.

Herzog and Moynihan understood the critical importance of winning over this international support, and they personally played a crucial role over the years in getting their governments to use every tool in their tool boxes to shift the positions of those countries that had voted for this horrific text -- Herzog from the Knesset and eventually as President of Israel, and



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Moynihan from the U.S. Senate. To just give you one example, when in 1985 the U.S. Congress overwhelmingly adopted a resolution condemning the UN's proclamation of Zionism is racism as, what it called "a permanent smear upon the United Nations," the members of Congress included language exhorting the parliaments in other countries to adopt similar condemnatory resolutions.

Their relentless pressure -- and that of so many of their stalwart allies, including many in this room today -- culminated in 1991, when then-President George H.W. Bush told world leaders¹ gathered at the General Assembly that the resolution mocked the UN's principles, and that by repealing it, "the United Nations will enhance its credibility and serve the cause of peace." American diplomats then made a final push in capitals across the world, which helped to swing some of the countries that were still, remarkably, on the fence. When a vote was called in December of that year, 1991, 111 nations voted to revoke the resolution, including many who had originally voted for it; only 25 countries voted to keep it in place -- 25 too many. Only one time before in the then history of the UN had a UN resolution been revoked, and it has never happened since. So it is worth remarking on that as well as the outrage of the event itself that we are commemorating tonight.

Let me conclude. When the UN adopted resolution 3379, Moynihan declared that "a great evil had been loosed on the world." To be sure, there have been meaningful victories over that evil since 1975, as in January of just this year, when we joined Israel, the EU, and Canada in co-sponsoring the first ever UN General Assembly meeting on anti-Semitism. On that day -- in the very same hall, in the very same chamber you saw in those videos tonight where 72 countries had branded Zionism as a form of racism -- more than 50 nations denounced anti-Semitism and vowed to take steps to address it. We also see victories -- modest victories, but victories -- in Israel's growing inclusion in UN bodies from which it has long been unjustly excluded, which, as you all know, has not come without a fight, and it is a fight we continue to wage together with our Israeli counterparts every single day.

But for all of this, and again these are really important to note as well as the outrages, we are very far from vanquishing anti-Semitism. Indeed, as we know, it is on the rise in so many parts of the world. Even in Ireland -- even in our Ireland -- where Herzog and I were both born and spent our childhood years -- a plaque marking the site of Herzog's Belfast birthplace was taken down last year, after the building where it was placed was repeatedly defaced with anti-Israel graffiti and where objects were routinely thrown at it.



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What more do you need as a testament to how far we have left to go? Additionally, here in the halls of the UN rarely a day goes by without some effort to delegitimize Israel, or to unjustly exclude it from what for all other countries is just business as usual. We will never stop fighting for Israel to achieve a very simple goal here, which is to be treated like every other country.

And it remains as true today as it was 40 years ago that the enduring bias not only threatens Israel, but threatens the legitimacy of the UN. So as we continue to confront these dual evils of hatred and ignorance -- and confront them we must, and confront them we will -- we would do well to learn from Herzog and Moynihan. If we bring the same moral clarity that they so eloquently expressed four decades ago; if we relentlessly fight back against ignorance and hatred of all forms in our nations and in international institutions like this one; and if we continue to work to win over other people and governments to our just causes, as Herzog and Moynihan never stopped doing -- long after these speeches -- then we will bring our nations and the United Nations closer to living up to their ideals.

Thank you.

¹ Full quotation: "UNGA Resolution 3379, the so-called 'Zionism is racism' resolution, mocks this pledge and the principles upon which the United Nations was founded. And I call now for its repeal. Zionism is not a policy; it is the idea that led to the creation of a home for the Jewish people, to the State of Israel. And to equate Zionism with the intolerable sin of racism is to twist history and forget the terrible plight of Jews in World War II and, indeed, throughout history. To equate Zionism with racism is to reject Israel itself, a member of good standing of the United Nations."