

## Congressman Rothman Delivers Speech on Gilad Shalit's Freedom

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Tenafly, NJ – On October 23, 2011, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ) was a keynote speaker at a Solidarity Gathering hosted at the Kaplen JCC on the Palisades by the Jewish Federation of Northern New Jersey in honor of the freed Israeli soldier, Gilad Shalit. After 1,940 days in captivity by Hamas, Gilad Shalit was freed and has returned home safely. Below is Congressman Rothman's speech from that evening.

Congressman Rothman speaking at the Kaplen JCC on the Palisades for a Solidarity Gathering hosted by the by the Jewish Federation of Northern New Jersey in honor of the freed Israeli soldier, Gilad Shalit, on October 23, 2011

The full speech:

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Good evening. Thank you Neal, and let me thank you and Joy Kurland, the Regional JCRC Director, Pearl Seiden,

President of Kaplen JCC on the Palisades, Carol Silberstein, Vice President of the Jewish Federation of Northern New Jersey, and everyone who made tonight's community gathering possible. This is an important moment in history that needs to be acknowledged.

Let me begin by saying thank God for Gilad Shalit's freedom and his safe return to his family and to the Jewish state of Israel! This is a great day for Israel and all of her supporters. It reminds us of the people we love, the Israelis, and of the enemies of the Israelis and the United States that we both still face. The Jewish State of Israel remains surrounded by murderous terrorists who seek to kill Israelis. From Hamas and Hezbollah, to Syria and Iran, Israel's and America's enemies continue their evil obsession to slaughter the Israeli people and drive the Jewish State into the sea. Even if it means using their own men women and children as shields from behind which they launch thousands of rockets at innocent Israelis &ndash; these barbarians are still locked into their genocidal course.

Even Fatah, of the Palestinian Authority, under Mahmood Abbas, still celebrates those who murdered innocent Israeli men, women and children by naming streets and soccer stadiums after them, and paying money to terrorists just released by Israel. And President Abbas, the so-called Palestinian "moderate" has refused peace negotiations with Israel and has even refused to consider Israel as the Jewish State. And Abbas continues to try to use the United Nations to achieve statehood, without first making peace with its neighbor, Israel.

Thank God for the United States, and our friends in other governments as well, who have prevented the Palestinians from, so far, succeeding at this betrayal of the Oslo Accords and all common decency.

For every day since Israel's Declaration of Independence in 1948, her enemies have sought to destroy her and undermine Israel's legitimacy, but despite relentless attacks, Israel has not only remained strong, but has stayed true to the values on which Israel was founded.

Gilad Shalit's freedom is not only important because Israel saved one of its own, but it also reminded the world what kind of a people the Israelis are: ones willing to free 1,027 terrorists for one Israeli hostage &ndash; those who truly value human life versus those hell-bent on taking human life. The exchange of Gilad Shalit's freedom for the freedom of more than 1,000 convicted terrorists was certainly a high price to pay. As America's dearest friend and most important strategic ally, Israel must continue to have America's powerful support.

We must also remember that those in Israel, those who made and approved of the deal, are best positioned to weigh any risks to Israel's national security. They are the ones who have put their lives on the line in defense of Israel, and they are the mothers and fathers who send their sons and daughters off to defend Israel. And Israelis are those who most well understand what terrorists are capable of.

But today, thank God, Israel and all of her enemies know that the U.S. will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Jewish State and that Israel's enemies are our enemies. Israel's enemies know of the US's X band radar in Israel, pointed at Iran. They know that the US just arranged for another X band radar battery to be stationed in Turkey, again pointed at Iran &ndash; with data gathered by these radars conveyed instantly, in real time to the Israelis, as well as the US military.

Israel's enemies also know of the US's and Israel's satellite, submarine, anti-missile ship, anti-missile batteries &ndash; of Aegis missiles, the Iron Dome anti-rocket system, Patriot II missiles, David's Sling, Arrow I, II, and II missile defense system, as well as the most awesome intelligence team of our two nations working together in an unbeatable partnership. The US and the Israelis, along with many of our other allies, are all allied against Iran, Hezbollah, Syria, Hamas, and anyone else who would threaten Israel or the United States.

Israel's enemies, for good reason, have no doubt where the US stands. The US stands with the security of the Jewish State of Israel!

Over the past two and a half years there has been an absolutely unprecedented level of US and Israeli military and intelligence cooperation, including long range bombing exercises between the US and Israel, utilizing Israeli bombers with US and Israeli refuelers and escort jets, as well as intelligence operations involving literally thousands of US and Israeli intelligence personnel &ndash; in Israel. And this is only a glimpse of the depth of what the US and Israel have

been training for, preparing for, as a deterrent, and in the event that offensive operations are required. If you don't think Israel's enemies know that the US and Israel are an unbeatable pair, you should think again.

And so my friends, as we celebrate the return of Gilad Shalit to his family, his country and to his life, we also continue to grieve with the families of those whose loved ones were killed or maimed by those Israel has chosen to release to gain Gilad's freedom.

And we still wait in hope and anguish for the release of information regarding six other Israelis who are still missing in action: Zechariah Baumel, Tzvi Feldman, Yekutiel Katz, Guy Cherver, and Ron Arad. Majdey Hasab.

Thank you for coming out tonight! God bless Israel, and God bless the United States of America.

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