



## **THE WEST, NATO AND ISRAEL**

**JINSA, Washington DC, February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

It is truly an honour for me to be the recipient of JINSA first award on global leadership. I must thank all the people, that thought of me as a candidate for it.

I take it as a great compliment, and even if I'm the one receiving it, I would like to dedicate this Award to the memory of those who gave their lives fighting to defend our freedom, our prosperity and our way of life.

Being JINSA an institution where our common defense is number one priority, I believe you will find no difficulty to share my feelings.

Let me start my remarks with two questions:

First, Is it possible that Israel may disappear? That Israel may be 'wiped off the map' before our eyes?

These are two questions that only a few months ago, should be understood as a rhetoric tool. Today, nonetheless, I fear these two questions must be seriously considered. For one reason: if we let our enemies to fulfil their dreams, they won't hesitate to resort to any means to obliterate Israel to expand their radical and

totalitarian vision, and to force all our nations to surrender to the new Caliphate. If we failed to what their goals, their victory will be our end.

Fortunately we have at our disposal many tools not only to avoid a catastrophic defeat, but to win over our existential foes.

I do believe in the West. And I also believe in multinational organizations if and when they are effective.

Have no doubts some have been very effective in the past securing our existence, like NATO, and should be put to work in the right track to solve the strategic problems we are facing today and we will be facing in the near future.

To me, the most important threat we are facing today is the fundamentalist Islam, the hotbed of Islamic terrorism. Islamo-facism, terror, and weapons of mass destruction are being blended in a very dangerous cocktail.

If we do nothing to confront the growing assertiveness and boldness of radical Islam, it will be too late the time we realize that we should be doing something. As senator Vitter once said, 'no price is too great to ensure the safety and security of our nation, our freedom, and our values'. We must make understand our fellow citizens that freedom is indeed not free, and that we must start paying for it right now.

I'm an optimistic. I survived a terrorist attack, back in 1995, when the Basque terrorist organization ETA tried to kill me using a car bomb. But I knew they wanted to assassinate me because they feared me much more than I feared them. In all my years in government I did everything to assure that the terrorist got the feeling they were being defeated, everything to make it clear that we were fighting to win.

With all this in mind, a year ago I produced a report in my Foundation in Madrid, Faes, calling for a new collective approach from the West, from the Atlantic Alliance, to secure our future. Its title: 'NATO, An Alliance for freedom'.

The report was full of ideas, but let me underline two: First of all, we need to change the strategic approach of NATO moving the organization decisively into the fight against terrorism. If NATO was created to defend our liberties and way of life, it should continue to do so, though not against the enemies of the past, but against the present danger posed especially by radical Islam, terrorism and the proliferation of WMD.

Secondly, in order to be effective on a global scenario, NATO should become a global organization for the Western democracies. Its Atlantic dimension has been already over passed by the current threats. Thus, I defend that NATO should invite to become full member some like-minded nations, willing and able to fight terror. Among the, Israel occupies a central place. Australia and Japan are also natural candidates.

Yes, I believe Israel should be an integral part of NATO, among other things, because Israel is an integral part of the West. It is located in the Middle Eastern nation is a Western one.

If we really want to prevail in this struggle we are in, there is a road we must walk together. We need to start rebuilding the West. We need an Atlantic America firmly anchored in the World: we need a strong atlantic Europe; and we need an atlanticist Israel.

Let me say a few words why I'm fully convinced that Israel must be part of NATO, something I have to admit is much easier to be said than done, I know.

We must understand that is mutually beneficial for the Alliance and for Israel to get Israel as a full NATO member. Take the case of Iran, for instance.

I think that nobody will have any doubt already about the real intentions of Teheran concerning its nuclear program. The ayatollahs want the bomb, unless we do something to thwart their efforts, the bomb they will get. We have spent years now trying to incite the Iranian diplomatically to freeze their research, to no avail. And now, we are caught in an evil alternative: to keep playing the diplomatic game, sanctions or not or to take action. While we decide ourselves, we should prepare for the worst, and the worst here is to face a nuclear Iran at some point.

We must do whatever is in our hand to prevent Iran to become nuclear, and we should prepare ourselves to force Iran to behave wisely. If Iran sees and feels that Israel is an integral part of the West, I think our deterrence posture will be strengthened; having a NATO umbrella over the Middle East will have, that's my view, a beneficial impact. It won't weaken stability, on the contrary. Alternatively, having an Israel that is progressively isolated from us, NATO allies, will increase the chances that a miscalculation of some sort may happen, engulfing everyone, into a conflict of incalculable consequences.

Secondly, we are witnessing day after day that the Palestinian nationalism is being transformed into Islamic extremism. Hamas victory is not bringing to the Palestinian territories just a hotter rhetoric against Israel, but a social order based in theocracy and religious intolerance, among other things. So, Israel has become another piece in the global puzzle the jihadists are trying to put together. Islamic extremism is getting closer and closer to Israel, threatening also the stability of the whole region, from Jordan to Syria.

The West cannot flight this radical tide without Israel. Israel cannot fight against it alone. Actually, it shouldn't. We must stand together in the face of a powerful enemy.

If for whatever reason the West becomes more divided, it will be perceived by our foes as weaker. And in fact, it will be weaker to deal with today's and tomorrow's challenges.

I started my words saying that I believe in the West. I really do. But if in order to preserve our values, our freedom, our prosperity, we need to expand the geographical concept of the West, I won't oppose it, quite the contrary. Today's West requires a different geography. One that includes Israel and countries from the far East.

What is at stake is not just a leader here or there, among friends or adversaries. What is at stake is our civilization. It is entirely in our hands that we prevail. But we must act, from now on. Avoiding bad decisions and taking the right ones. Bringing Israel to NATO is a correct and urgent one. It should be done, and it can be done.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me conclude my remarks tonight with some personal beliefs I have developed along the years. I know very well that there are some points in time where everything seems to be dark and despair is easily accepted. Fortunately I know that we can overcome the power of the bad ideas. We only need moral clarity and endurance.

I do believe in those who fight terrorism, and I think that those we prefer to appease terror are wrong.

I do believe in those who have the determination to win, and I think those who are defeatist are wrong.

I do believe in those who think that terrorists are enemies and criminals, and I think that those who say that is possible to talk to them or to negotiate to them are wrong.

I do agree with those who look directly into the problems, and are willing to try to solve them, and I think that those who let the problems grow, in order to say there are solutions to them, are wrong.

Because all of that I fought terror. For all of that I suffered fighting it. But let me tell you, I'm still willing and committed to keep the fighting. Fighting for the West.

I know we will win. I know the power of freedom will prevail.