

Biden Administration Abandoning Israel, Appointing Antisemites, Says Zionist Leader

“We’re at a critical moment when Israel and her leaders and all of us who love Israel must stand strong against what this administration is trying to do,” ZOA President Mort Klein said.

Leaders of the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) warned supporters to be vigilant against what they believe to be increasing anti-Israel positions from leaders, and the trend of encroaching tolerance for anti-Semitic rhetoric masked as anti-Zionism, during the organization’s annual gala on Sunday.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the gala was held as a webcast, highlighted by video addresses from leaders and activists in the ZOA, as well as politicians such as former U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett.

The event was hosted by Jewish Iranian-American journalist Lisa Daftari, who personally praised the ZOA for its work in teaching about the dangers of a nuclear Iran, a cause she is intimately involved in.

Mort Klein, president of ZOA for the past 28 years, told viewers that advances which the ZOA supports often get reversed by various governments — dating back to the time Great Britain restricted immigration at the outset of World War II despite international treaties giving Jews the right to immigrate to Mandatory Palestine in 1920.

“Britain turned around and slammed shut the doors to Israel, just at the moment when millions of Jews faced annihilation in Europe,” Klein said.

Today too, according to Klein, the ZOA needs to remain vigilant against what he said was the Biden administration backtracking advances made during the Trump administration.

Klein listed the Trump administration’s pro-Israel accomplishments that the ZOA had long backed, including the recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s undivided

capital, moving the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem, recognizing Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, recognizing the legality of settlements in Judea and Samaria, pulling out of the Iran nuclear deal, adding sanctions against Iran, defunding the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), supporting Israel in the United Nations, opposing the International Criminal Court's investigations into Israel's alleged war crimes and cutting off funding of the Palestinian Authority over payments to the families of terrorists.

Almost all these policies have been reversed by the Biden administration, Klein noted.

"We are now facing an administration that is moving to backtrack on some of these very important advances. We're at a critical moment when Israel and her leaders and all of us who love Israel must stand strong against what this administration is trying to do," Klein said.

Klein read the words of then-U.S. Sen. Joe Biden from 1995 in support of the 1995 Jerusalem Embassy Act, which enshrined in American law that Jerusalem is the undivided capital of Israel and that the U.S. embassy should be moved there. At the time, Biden emphasized how despite efforts by various empires and regimes tried to sever Jewish ties to Jerusalem, "the Jewish people returned to claim what many rulers have tried to deny them for centuries, the right to peaceful existence, their own country, in their own capital." Yet today, the Biden administration is working to open a Palestinian consulate in western Jerusalem.

"Such a consulate would undermine Israel's sovereignty over Jerusalem, it violates the Jerusalem Embassy Act, will likely result in violating the Oslo Accords which prohibit the Palestinian Authority from engaging in foreign relations," Klein said. "The consulate is a diplomatic insult and danger to Israel and the Jewish people."

Klein said that opening the consulate would be a reward to the "fascist, terrorist dictatorship" of Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas, who he said will continue to encourage Arabs to kill Jews.

The ZOA has placed giant banners on major buildings in Jerusalem, urging Israeli leaders and citizens to say "no" to the consulate. The organization has also urged other Jewish groups to join this effort.

“But no Jewish group has — I’m sorry to say, it pains me to say — not AIPAC, [American Jewish] Committee, not the ADL, not the Conference of Presidents and not any of the other major groups have done so,” Klein said. “We must urge them to do so to support the Israeli government.”

Klein said that the Biden administration is also undermining Israel’s right to build settlements in Judea and Samaria, which was recognized as legal by the Trump administration. Meanwhile, there are no restrictions on Palestinians building in the same areas. Klein called these actions from the Biden administration blatantly anti-Semitic.

He also pointed to Biden’s warning against the scourge of anti-Semitism during a commemoration of the Tree of Life Synagogue massacre in Pittsburgh, but then asked why Biden and Democratic leaders do not condemn by name the anti-Semitic comments by progressive members of Congress.

“While Israel was being bombarded with over 4,400 Hamas rockets, President Biden shockingly, strongly praised the Jew-hater Rep. Rashida Tlaib, who opposes Israel’s very existence,” Klein said. “Shortly after Tlaib again promoted boycotting Israel and called Israel an apartheid state, Biden disgracefully said to Rashida Tlaib ... ‘I admire your intellect. I admire your passion. I admire your concern for so many other people. You’re a fighter, Rashida Tlaib, and God thank you for being a fighter.’ What a disgraceful episode in Biden’s administration.”

He also raised alarm about numerous Biden administration appointees who, according to Klein, had a record of anti-Semitic and anti-Israel statements. This was so alarming, he said, that ZOA established a webpage to list and document the statements of 20 appointees.

‘Fighting for Truth’

“The fact that thousands of us are gathered here at this virtual gala shows that so many of us, such huge number of us, do care,” Klein concluded. “We will continue to be strong and with the help of Almighty God and with the help of the Jewish Zionists and evangelical Christians Zionists and remarkable Israeli people, we will overcome all of these serious but temporary obstacles and will ultimately re-strengthen U.S.-Israel relations and promote the truth of the Arab Islamist war against Israel and the West, and will finally implement the moral, principled, wise policies that will strengthen and benefit both Israel and America.”

The event also featured a brief address by the ZOA's newly elected board chairman, attorney David Schoen, who served on Trump's legal team during his Congressional impeachment hearings.

"Tonight, we celebrate an organization that is dedicated to fighting for truth, an organization that is brave and bold, and an organization that is determined to share and promote facts," Schoen said. "As we look around the world at the end of 2021, we see increasing anti-Semitism both in the United States and abroad, including violent attacks on college campuses and synagogues across the country, and a harsh anti-Israel climate on Capitol Hill. Israel bashing has become the norm as few are willing to stand against the current in order to shut down the lies."

ZOA presented the Mortimer Zuckerman Award for Outstanding Jewish Philanthropy to Gloria Kaylie and her late husband Harvey, as well as the Justice Louis D. Brandeis Award to activist Rubin Margules.

"Like Mort, I was born in a [displaced persons] camp in Germany — in Bamberg, Germany. My father and mother were liberated from concentration camps in which nearly all their former families were murdered. So too my wife's family," Margules said. "My father was consumed with pride by the emergence of the State of Israel, a haven then and now for the Jewish people and a source of pride to all of us. He taught me love of Israel and even more importantly, that we must do what it takes to ensure that never again means never again!"

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