The Battle for Zionism at the UN: Statement Delivered by Ambassador Danon Commemorating 40 years Since the Resolution that Compared Zionism to Racism

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Permanent Mission of the State of Israel

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Secretary General Ban Ki -Moon,

Secretary Kerry,

Fellow ambassadors,

Leader of the Opposition, Member of Knesset Herzog,

Ladies and gentlemen.

It is my great pleasure to welcome you here tonight, and to thank you for joining us on this very special occasion, as we mark the historic speech of the late President Chaim Herzog.

I would especially like to welcome the Secretary of State of the United States, the honorable Mr. John Kerry. Mr. Secretary, we are truly grateful that you could join us here tonight. Israel has no greater ally than the United States, and your presence here on this important occasion is a reaffirmation of the unshakeable bond between our two countries.

I wish to welcome his Excellency, Mr. Ban-ki Moon, the Secretary General of the United Nations. Thank you for honoring us with your presence.

I was proud to accompany you on your recent trip to Israel, where we stood together in Hadassah hospital in Jerusalem, and saw the pain of the victims of terror first-hand. It was a powerful moment I will never forget.

I want to welcome her Excellency, Ms. Samantha Power, US Ambassador to the United Nations.

Samantha, this is an opportunity for me, to thank you and your team, for your daily commitment and efforts to fight those who seek to deligitimize Israel at the UN.

I would also like to extend a very warm welcome to the Herzog Family, Michael Herzog, Chairman of the Chaim Herzog Public Council which is sponsoring tonight’s event with us, Yitzchak Herzog, Member of Knesset, Chairman of the Labor Party, and Leader of the Opposition.

The presence of so many distinguished guests here tonight is truly a fitting tribute to your father’s enduring legacy.

I want to recognize my friend Natan Sharansky, Chairman of the Jewish Agency, and a true hero of the Jewish people.

And Mr. Yaakov Hagoel, from the World Zionist Organization.

Let me also thank the AJC for being a sponsor of this event, and David Harris, Executive Director of the AJC, for all your support.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Forty years ago this week, the world witnessed the low point in this institution’s past, and a high mark in the history of statesmanship which still inspires us in the present.

When the United Nations voted to condemn the national aspirations of the Jewish people to live in our historic homeland as a form of racism, it earned a badge of shame that it continues to bear to this very day.

When President Chaim Herzog, serving as Israel’s ambassador, stood at the podium of the General Assembly, and denounced the disgraceful resolution as “without moral or legal value”, he earned a place of honor in the history of the Jewish people.

Ambassador Herzog’s courageous stand for the dignity of Israel, remains the model of leadership on the world stage, and I look to his example, as I have the honor of sitting in his chair.

With his powerful words, Ambassador Herzog stood up for Israel and the Jewish people, and spoke to the conscience of the world, but the world refused to listen.

For sixteen shameful years, the comparison between Zionism and racism continued to be official UN policy.

It was not until 1991, with another brave stand, and with the help of the United States and other allies, that the infamous resolution was finally repealed.

While this act removed the hateful resolution from the books of the UN, no vote can erase the hatred from the hearts of those who seek to delegitimize the Jewish state.

Forty years later, in the halls of this institution, and in the international community, we still see the same hostility towards Israel, the home of the Jewish people.

Just today, The European Union adopted a decision to label products from Israel. This is a biased and unjust act, and this shameful decision will also be repealed.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is time to eradicate the hatred of Israel by some in this institution, once and for all.

It is time to restore the values of integrity and moral leadership to the parliament of nations.

We must draw on the strength it took to denounce the resolution and the sprit and determination that was needed to repeal it.

The challenges may have changed, but the will to stand and fight remains.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

When Chaim Herzog famously tore the resolution he was tearing up a page of prejudice and standing up for Jewish self-determination.

I look forward to a day when our adversaries tear up their own biases and write a new page of fairness and equality.

Only then can we come together to sow [SO] a new future: a future of peace, of tolerance and of friendship among the nations.

Ladies and Gentleman,

At the conclusion of tonight’s event, we will be the singing Hatikvah, the national anthem of the state of Israel.

In Hebrew, Hatikvah means hope.

And so I would like to end here with the words of this song of Hope,

Our hope is not yet lost, the hope of two thousand years, to live as a free people in our land, the land of Zion and Jerusalem.

Thank you