



SPEECH

On Foreign Policy and National Security

Alan Keyes

August 25, 2004

Joan Dachs Bais Yaakov School Library Lincolnwood, Illinois



MP3 audio

First, let me express my thanks to Rabbi [Mark Kalish] and to Moshe Davis for the great work that he did in helping to put this together. I know it was on short notice, but I felt that it was important--especially before heading off, as we will soon do, to the Republican National Convention--to share a few thoughts about a subject that so far, in the course of my efforts in the state, hasn't come in for special attention, but which I believe it is essential to think about, especially as we are approaching the moment when folks will be focused on the great national choice that we have before us for the presidency, and one that is going to have a great bearing on especially the security of the United States over the course of the next several years.

So I wanted to share some thoughts about the nature of the challenge that America faces in the international arena today. That is a challenge that has to have an especial importance for us, because we address it in a context that is different than it might have been several years ago, a context that was fundamentally altered by the events of September 11, 2001.

This is something that I begin from, because I think we have to remember the reality that we are a nation at war. I was reading a couple of stories this morning--folks who were, for instance, apprehended just recently taking pictures of the Bay Bridge across the Chesapeake, others who have been apprehended at facilities in various parts of the country, taking what might, under ordinary circumstances, be considered no more than the ordinary photographs that tourists would take, but who, in our present context, become potential security threats.

This is important because it teaches us that, in the midst of war, the ordinary features of the landscape are no longer what they appear to be. You must look at everything with a general's eye: the eye that understands that that hill, which was just a nice place to have a picnic yesterday, becomes a place of fortification today; that that valley, that might have been just a place in which people were farming and producing what was necessary for the country's good, becomes a potential trap, where the enemy might set an ambush or otherwise harm you, in the context of war.

I mention the general's eye for obvious reasons. The word general, in Greek, *strategos* () , is the root of our word "strategic." And that implies that in war one must approach the ordinary landscape--both of geography and of events--with a strategic understanding, an understanding that is not based upon just looking at discrete events as if they are to be taken only in and for themselves, but which looks at those events in terms of their relationship with one another, and with the ultimate purpose and reality of the conflict in which you are engaged.

I think that that principle is essential now, to understanding the situation of the United States as we deal with the events, and circumstances, and challenges of the international

environment. We are a nation at war, and we must look at those circumstances with the eye of a general--with a strategic understanding.

That's important, especially, as we listen to the back and forth of debate in this era of elections, people always trying to color our understanding in various ways because they have purposes to win support, to take it from others. But I think from the point of view of the people of Illinois, and the American people in general, we have to listen with an understanding of the truth that in these discussions our security--the direct physical safety of our people and the survival of our way of life--is now at stake.

Things that might once have been considered to be simple episodes, even opportunities or challenges, in the international arena become instead potential dangers that must be understood in terms of their relationship to the objective of the war, which in this case is the defeat of terrorism.

I think that this is important. It is important because that objective, then, must color all of our relationships--again, one of those elements that people forget.

What are international relations, after all? In ordinary parlance, they are the relations that occur between states, between countries, between different and defined geographic and political entities in the international arena. But in the midst of war, those international relations also involve the relationships between one situation and another that may have implications for our safety and our security in the context of the war.

Now, as you might expect, I am going to take a case in point today. And that case in point is intended, both from my own point of view, to help educate people about the choice they have for the United States Senate in Illinois, but also because it happens to be a strikingly good example of what happens when you ignore the strategic context as you discuss international relations.

My opponent, Senator Barack Obama, gave a speech before the Council on Foreign Relations here in Illinois. It was one of those speeches that in some ways is characteristic of the way people can sometimes address international relations. It had sections that sounded reasonably good on all kinds of issues. It was "First, second, third, fourth, fifth," a nice laundry list of the things America must deal with. It included the stock criticisms of the Bush Administration as acting unilaterally, withdrawing from the world in this way and that.

I don't want to try to go through each and every one of the difficulties. But I want to particularly focus on a couple of paragraphs in the speech that I think are illustrative of the general point that I am making about the need to have a strategic understanding, and what can happen when you don't, but that also, I think, go to the heart of our present situation.

Because we are engaged in a particular war in America, right now, and have been, of course, since September 11, against terrorism. Terrorism is a phenomenon that, obviously, has global implications, a global reach, and that must be responded to in a way that understands that because it has that global presence, it potentially effects what we do, and what we risk, in every part of the world.

It's also true, though, that if you look at September 11 itself, the terrorist threat that we face in the world today has particular characteristics. It is no accident that the terrorists hailed from the Middle East, that they were identified, in particular, with Arab countries, that Osama bin Laden, when he talked about the act of terror, put it in the context of the ongoing problems and confrontations between Israel and the Palestinians.

No, that actually is an indication of a fact--that at the present time in the world, the phenomenon of terrorism is directly related to the reality and the history of events in the Middle East. And we can't afford to ignore this truth. Some people, I think, might want to. But we won't understand the nature of the threat we face, and we won't understand the implications for our policy, particularly in the context of the Middle East, of terrorism as a threat, if we don't take it seriously.

And I think that this was one of the problems I noted when I sat down and read through Senator Obama's speech. And I want particularly to draw your attention to the couple of paragraphs in that speech that dealt, in particular, with the Middle East. And I'm going to take a little time, in this briefing today, to walk you through those paragraphs, because I think they perfectly well illustrate the general problem, and they also illustrate the particular challenge that we must confront when we talk about the dangers of terrorism, and the implications those dangers have for the Middle East.

He was listing various and assorted challenges for America and the world, and he got to this. He said:

Sixth: America's moral authority and credibility will be needed, now more than ever, in the quest for a Middle East peace.

What I found fascinating about that in the first instance is that he approaches the subject of the Middle East, he uses the phrase "a Middle East peace," as if the situation in the Middle East had no relationship whatsoever to the general war--that is, the war against terror.

This could be a problem, you know. It could be a problem overall, because even though we, all of us, want peace, we obviously want, as the first element of our objective in war, to defeat the enemy, and to remove the threat the enemy poses to our people. We are certainly not going to be willing to purchase peace at the price of accommodation or surrender to the enemy that poses that threat.

So to stand before the world and talk about the Middle East as if the challenge there is simply peace, and the war does not exist, is to ignore the truth that, in a very real sense, the war we face on terror has a particular implication and a particular relationship to the situation in the Middle East.

This is just one little hint, I think, of the difficulty with the way in which Senator Obama was presenting this problem in his speech. But we go to the next:

Our first and immutable commitment must be to the security of Israel, our only true ally in the Middle East, and the only democracy.

This is a remarkably good statement. It's a statement that I don't think many Americans would disagree on. There has been a generally bipartisan commitment, reflected particularly in the actions of the U.S. Congress, to understanding that the special relationship between the United States and Israel is effectively important for the United States and our security because Israel is a true ally; it is important in terms of our values and our culture, because it shares the common culture of a commitment to human rights and true self-government. And it must be a bedrock foundation of our policy. This sounds very good. But here's the problem. It's a problem, by the way, that I won't go into in great detail. But I found it to be a general problem with Senator Obama when he speaks about issues. At first glance, he makes a statement that is unobjectionable. But then he says things that, when you think them through, utterly contradict the seemingly benign nature of the statement. For he goes on to say this:

The Administration's failure to be consistently involved in helping Israel achieve peace with the Palestinians has been both wrong for our friendship with Israel, as well as badly damaging to our standing in the Arab world.

Now, here again, a person who is not familiar with events over the last several years in the Middle East, a person who did not understand the relationship between certain of the actors and countries in the Middle East, and the general phenomenon of terrorism which now directly threatens the United States and the world--that person would read that sentence and think: "Why, here is a reasonable person, who believes that the Administration has failed to be consistently involved, and that this has hurt our friend Israel. And it is also damaging our place in the world, the way people look at us. And it looks like it's all our fault."

Do you know the only problem with this? If you know the reality of what he is speaking about --the fact that at certain points over the last several years, the so-called "Middle East discussions," the "peace process," have come to a halt, have been broken off; there have been no contacts; there have been no actual, effective, ongoing discussions--and he points the finger of blame at the Administration. We're at fault!

What does this leave out, y'all? Well, it leaves out this one very important and interesting fact --that at each juncture in which those halts occurred, the Administration, and also, by the way, the Government of Israel, were reacting to and against bloody and terrifying episodes of slaughter that had taken the lives of sometimes scores of people in Israel.

He ignores the fact that this whole thing takes place against a backdrop of a consistent campaign of terror that reached a crescendo at certain points, in events like the terrible assault at Hebrew University.

I happened, by the way, to be in Israel at the time that that took place. And I can say, first hand, what a horrible impact it had on the people and their consciousness.

But the truth of the matter is that a statement that seems innocuous is actually ignoring a fundamental reality. And that fundamental reality is terror: the cost it takes in human lives, but also the implications of that terror for any discussion of peace in the Middle East.

Let's posit, for example, that you are trying to get a discussion--as they were--with Yasser Arafat, and then a terrorist attack occurs. It could be a so-called suicide bombing attack, or whatever. And people die. What happens if you simply say, "Okay, let's go on with the discussion," as if nothing had occurred? Well, what happens is that you have created capital, you have created money that terrorists can then spend. It is money that has been coined in the coinage of human blood, that increases their legitimacy. And while they hold the dagger of terror over the process, you essentially turn them into interlocutors who can, at will, intimidate the parties involved to achieve their objectives.

Now, I want to share with you a thought that I've shared many times over the course of the last couple of years--that if you look at the history of the situation in the Middle East, it is the willingness, on the part of some countries in the world, including previous American administrations, including European governments, over the course of the range of history in the last several decades, there have been repeated episodes in which terror occurred, and instead of reacting adversely to that terror, and making it clear that those with blood on their hands cannot claim to be legitimate interlocutors in the processes of peace, folks instead waited a couple of minutes after, as if the blood were not still dripping from their hands, and sat them down at so-called "tables of peace."

Can we assume that this pattern of behavior did not encourage terrorists to believe, and did not encourage, sadly, people, for instance, in the Palestinian community, to believe that terror could be a useful instrument with which to break free concessions. Especially not when over the course of those decades, concession after concession after concession was in fact made to elements of the declared agenda of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, for instance.

I think that it is precisely that pattern of accommodation with terror, the failure to understand that it cannot be rewarded without danger--it is that pattern that has helped to make the Middle East into the incubator of that terrorism which now threatens not only Israel, but the United States, and indeed the entire world.

Senator Obama's statement, innocuous as it seems, falls into that same pattern of naïve accommodation. At the very least I have to assume that it is the consequence of his ignorance of the events of the last several years. At most, I would have to assume that, like many folks over the course of the last couple of decades, he is one of those people who seems to misunderstand the dangerous world in which we live: that we cannot, in fact, afford to give encouragement to terror with the belief that it shall be rewarded at the negotiating table for what it wins in the bloody war it makes upon innocent human life.

Let's go on. He said:

I do not pretend to have all the answers to this vexing problem.

Based upon our analysis of the first paragraph, we would heartily agree with him about that.

And untangling the issues involved is an appropriate topic for a separate speech.

I hope to provide a little bit of insight that might help him to do better in that speech than he has done so far.

What I can say is this. Not only must we be consistent, but we will not succeed unless we have the cooperation of the European Union and the Arab states in pressing for reforms within the Palestinian community.

Now, again, you listen to these words, and you think, "Well, that sounds reasonable." We need reforms within the Palestinian community--that refers, of course, to a whole universe of problems with the Palestinian leadership. Beginning, although he does not seem to be acting with an awareness of this, beginning with the fact that many elements of that leadership are implicated in terror. One of the great reforms that the Bush Administration has consistently insisted on is clean hands, that we cannot afford any longer to send the signal that we will negotiate with those who are actively engaged in the business of slaughtering innocent people, whether in Israel or in other parts of the world.

That so-called "reforms within the Palestinian community" is, in fact, intimately connected with the challenge of terror in the Middle East, intimately connected with the decisions that were taken by the Bush Administration to stop, to halt, a process that might seem to aid, and abet, and support, and legitimize, a leadership committed to terror.

Now, obviously, Senator Obama understands, as he puts it here, the theme of reforms within the Palestinian community; and yet his words seem to ignore what is the foremost element of reform that is required--which is the elimination of terrorism as an instrument of policy from the Palestinian agenda and from the actions of its leadership.

But then we have here: ". . . we will not succeed unless we have the cooperation of the European Union and the Arab states" Let's think about that. Because that too would seem, well, "multilateralism! We need everybody in the world cooperating to achieve this result."

But who are the member countries of the European Union? Well, I'll tell you. At the moment they are people who are under, in reality, a significant demographic pressure that has come over the years from the truth that they are, more and more, significantly hosting increasing populations of folks who are of the Islamic religion, of Arab origin, increasingly active and involved in politics, but also, sadly, increasingly evident in an environment that has been punctuated by an increasing tide of anti-Semitism that is unmistakable throughout Europe today.

We speak, of course, now in the context of what? The terrible fire-bombing that just occurred in Paris, the destruction of a Jewish community center that was one of the major focuses of activity for French Jews. And, of course, the world condemns--"What a terrible thing!" One of the folks said--the government officials in France--that "We wouldn't want to signal any acceptance of this kind of anti-Semitism."

I would have to say, that's a rather mild way to put it. I think we need strongly to stand against that kind of violence directed against the Jewish people, as we ought to stand against any such violence motivated by anti-Semitism and racism.

But if that tide of anti-Semitism is a reality--and we know that it is--if that demographic pressure and its political implications are a reality--and we know that it is--then why would we want to base policy on the notion that we can hold our--that is, America's--approach to the

Middle East and to the defense of both our strategic interests in the Middle East and our partnership with Israel--why would we accept the notion that we can afford to hold all those vital elements of our policy hostage to the cooperation of governments that are undoubtedly going to be rendered confused, hesitant, timid, by the nature of these realities?

It doesn't make sense.

He states in the first line that we have an immutable commitment to the security of Israel. He acknowledges the relationship involved, an alliance that effectively strengthens our position in the Middle East. But then he says that we should hold our policy hostage to cooperation with European states and governments that are under serious pressure that undermines their ability forthrightly to understand or deal with the challenge of terrorism that poses such a threat to both Israel and to American security, and which is, at this time in our history, the subject of the ongoing **war** that is the fundamental challenge of our policy.

Again, I would have to tell you, it's either ignorance of the real circumstances, for instance in Europe, and their implications, or a brutal naiveté that will have extraordinarily bad consequences, both for the security of America and the security of Israel.

And then he says that we must have the cooperation of the Arab states in pressing for reforms within the Palestinian community! Again, a theme that has been sounded both in this context, and more generally, by critics of the Bush Administration, among others, that we need to have standing in the Arab world, and cooperation from the Arab countries.

Sounds good. Until you remember what? Until you remember the truth that some of those Arab countries have been directly implicated in the challenge of terror, have provided financial support, material support, material infrastructure, host ground for the training camps of terror, have been directly involved, whether against our ally Israel, as in the case of Syria, or against us, as in the case of Iran and Iraq and so forth! Have been directly involved in acts of terror that have claimed already the lives of innocent people, both in Israel and in America.

So we are to hold our policy hostage to--we are to make our actions contingent upon--cooperation from a group of countries that include those who are aiding and abetting, comforting and supporting, the very enemy we fight.

Last time I looked, it's not entirely a safe and secure policy to base your decisions upon the cooperation of your enemies. Doing so in the midst of war can not only be ironic, it can be fatal.

I say again, nice sounding phrases in this talk, but when you think through their implications with any experience, any knowledge, any understanding of the situation, it turns out that they are phrases that portend great danger to American security, and great danger to the security of the partnership between America and Israel, and finally, the greatest danger of all to Israel itself, that must live in the context of this very volatile situation in the Middle East.

And if the actions of its most important partner in the situation, the United States, are held hostage to the cooperation of those who have had in evidence, over the course of several generations now, no particular concern for Israel's security--that is, the European countries--or those who have in fact had in evidence for many generations outright hostility to Israel's existence--some of the Arab countries--this is a very dangerous formula.

It is a formula for disaster that, I think--especially in the context of the war on terror--does not contribute to peace, does not contribute to an outcome that will ultimately lead to a betterment in the Middle East, but rather aids and abets the phenomenon of terror, encourages terrorists to believe they will achieve their political objective, undermines the political will, and therefore the credibility of the United States, and overall contributes to the very likely possibility that we shall not defeat those enemies that threaten our people, but rather be defeated by them.

Add to this--add to this--the fact that this takes place in the context of our direct presence in Iraq, and you are also endangering the lives and fortunes of American soldiers who are

staking their lives on the policy that aims to protect our people by striking directly at those states and at that infrastructure which aids and abets the terrorists in our world.

Now, I've gone through this analysis because I think it is a prime illustration of the dangers that arise when one deals with foreign policy as if it is some kind of abstraction, as if nice sounding platitudes are a sufficient substitute for knowledge, and experience, and judgment, and discernment, as one thinks through the challenges of foreign policy.

I know that there are many people, for various reasons, who have looked upon Senator Obama--he has a nice manner; he speaks well, or at least he reads speeches well, when he is given the opportunity. But when you are dealing with matters of life and death, these superficial evidences of some kind of capacity or competence are not sufficient.

I do have to say, I work from a long experience with these problems, in one of the most complex and challenging environments that it is possible for someone dealing with international relations to work in--the environment of the United Nations, where continual assaults were made, in the course of my time there, upon America, upon the U.S.--Israeli partnership, upon the interests that we have at stake in the Middle East, in which knowledge of the background, knowledge of the circumstances, knowledge of how to apply oneself in an environment of complex policy was not a matter of abstraction, was not a matter of partisanship, was not a matter of articulating something that might, temporarily, win the allegiance of this or that voter group. It was, in fact, a matter of the utmost importance to the reputation, to the security, of the United States.

I know what it is like to bear that burden. And I know that we can't afford this kind of carelessness.

We cannot afford it for **our** future, in the midst of a war against terror. We cannot afford it for the sake of those very critical alliances, like the alliance we have with Israel. We cannot afford to allow this kind of superficial thinking to put in danger either our interests or the interests of our friends.

And that is why I believe that we have to rise to a somewhat higher level in our analysis and understanding of these foreign policy challenges, if the people of Illinois are going to be effectively represented; and more than that, if they are going to provide an effective voice of **leadership** on these issues in the Senate of the United States.

Now I would have to tell you--and I mean no disrespect to anyone--that I put my background, knowledge and experience in these matters on the table for the service of the people of this state. I do so with the confidence that they have been tried and tested under many circumstances.

And my voice has been, over the years, consistently raised on behalf of a strong, clear U.S. commitment to the survival and success of the State of Israel. It is not a commitment that I come to for political reasons. It is not a commitment that I come to because it is going to win the support or allegiance of this or that community. I have had many political years of experience, stood in campaigns--haven't always gotten the support of the Jewish community. It has **never had any effect, whatsoever**, on my understanding of this situation.

And the reason is very clear: because issues are at stake that transcend any ambition, that transcend any election, and that must be addressed with integrity if America is to survive, and if our reliance upon the common culture of representative government and human rights is to be vindicated in the Middle East.

I think that the principles that I have outlined here, as they apply to the Middle East, actually are important in every aspect of our foreign policy. But I think, though, that I chose today to concentrate on this area because again, unlike Senator Obama, I don't think we can deal with the Middle East as if it is just one element among others of our foreign policy today. The critical war we are in, the enemy that we are facing--that critical war and that enemy have a particular and special relationship to the complex problems and challenges that are on the table in the Middle East. In fact, I would argue that we shall not deal effectively with the

strategic challenge of terrorism unless we deal effectively with the strategic challenge that is posed, overall, by the Middle East.

That's one of the reasons why I think, in spite of all the criticism, that President Bush has shown extraordinary courage, extraordinary judgment, and extraordinary **statesmanship**, by being willing to face the challenge of America's necessary role in the pursuit of victory against terror in the Middle East, in spite of all its complexity. A president that failed to meet that test would ultimately fail the American people in the great strategic challenge of the war on terror.

Because he has **not** failed that test, I believe the President eminently deserves re-election--indeed, I think his re-election is vitally and critically important to the safety of our country, and of our friends and allies in the world.

Thank you very much.

~ Q & A session ~

Now, I think we have a little time. I'd be glad to take some questions from the assembled folks, if anyone has any.

Q: I have a question. Obviously, you are well thought out in your views, and they are extremely on point and well on target. I would wonder if you have given any thought to why it is that the world out there, especially in the information age that we are in, how is it that Senator Obama is able to make, for instance, abstract comments and get away with it? Why is it that the world does not know that the Arab population, many within their population, are only limited by their ability to pull something off, not their will to hurt us?

KEYES: I have to say--and I will say this with due apologies to the representatives of the media who are here, and don't take it personally, because I'm not talking about you--but my experience has been that the American media has really been very remiss in its coverage of events in the Middle East.

That remissness, by the way, is partly the result of a false understanding of fairness. Because they think that fairness means balance, and balance these days means you hear from both sides.

But actually, fairness is, first of all, fairness to reality; fairness to the facts; fairness to that truth which you have some way of knowing or understanding.

So if you are collecting information, and you have a view that is presented by one side and a view that is presented by another, and you have reason to believe, based on the facts, that one of them is false and one of them is not, fairness to the audience does not consist in simply presenting them as if they are equal--because that is unfair to the truth.

I will give an example. The famous--or infamous, now--so-called "massacre in Jenin." I was on the air on MSNBC when the myth of this massacre was invented. The events took place. Some parties started talking in elaborate terms about the death of hundreds, or thousands of people. The Israeli government issued a statement that kept the deaths at, I think, between fifty and sixty--I forget exactly, but it was in the tens, not in the hundreds.

Over the course of time, even the United Nations conducted a research into this, and found, at the end of it, that what the Israeli government had presented was consistent with the facts.

At the time, and to this day, it is the case that people will go on the air, they will refer to the "massacre at Jenin," and their statements will be unchallenged by people in the media. They will not be pressed, as I am every day pressed for common sense statements that I make. People won't ask the follow-up question, "Why do you say that? This report said this. What are you referring to?" No. They simply get away with it.

And I think that that has ultimately been not unfair to Israel, so much, as unfair to the truth. It

means that we end up basing our policy on fictions; that our policy-makers--including people like Senator Obama--are influenced by fictions.

And as I have often pointed out in recent days, fiction is not a good basis for policy. I think that ought to be clear common sense.

So I think it is partly because the facts are not being properly presented, are not being properly presented because some elements of our media don't seem to remember their responsibility. They enjoy First Amendment rights so they can fulfill what becomes, in the context of those rights, their First Amendment obligation to try, as best they can, with integrity, to inform accurately the people who are reading their stories.

And this obviously can be a great disservice. Apparently, my charitable interpretation of Senator Obama's speech is that he has allowed himself to be the victim of this fact, when he should have taken a first-hand look before he formulated his platitudes.

Q: In October of 2000 I was the victim of an attempt on my life, point-blank shooting by an unknown assailant, perhaps a person of Arab origin, perhaps not. It was clearly described as a hate-crime by the media. This morning, on the way to my office, I heard your views on gun laws, that you would like to change the gun laws to allow the carrying of concealed weapons and so on. As a victim, if I could have a moment with my assailants with a gun I would be most appreciative. On the other hand, I'm concerned that other individuals out there may have easy access to weapons, and I'm not so comfortable with that position. Your comments, please.

KEYES: First of all, we mustn't confuse what I am saying with easy access to weapons. Since, as far as I know, all those who have implemented concealed carry laws, like Florida, have done so with great care to assure that that is going to be something that is accessible to people who are law-abiding, who are carefully checked out in those terms, and who give evidence of their need, and of their ability to behave responsibly in acquitting what is, after all, both a right but also a responsibility.

And in that regard, I don't think we are talking about easy access; we are simply talking about responsible access.

And frankly, I've never quite understood this debate. Because the very situation that you mention there is an illustration of the truth. For all the talk, and all the gun control laws, and everything that people do, it appears that the folks who have easy access to weapons are the criminals.

Now, a world in which the criminals have easy access . . . why is this, by the way? It's because you pass laws, and law-abiding citizens obey the law. So if you pass a law preventing law-abiding citizens from having weapons, they won't have weapons. If you pass a law preventing law-abiding citizens from having weapons, and you are dealing with criminals--will somebody please remember the definition of a criminal?

A criminal is someone who breaks the laws. That means all your laws will not have an effect on the behavior of the criminals, and will not therefore affect their access to weapons. As I put it yesterday at a press conference, that leaves us in a situation where, as Senator Obama seems to desire, we have one part of the population entirely unarmed, and the only people who would be assuredly armed are the crooks.

I do not regard this as a safe situation. Some people may say we would be safer that way. No. I think we will be in most serious danger of the kind of harm you yourself faced, and will be left naked and defenseless in the face of that danger.

Q: Ambassador Keyes, you've discussed the relationship between several parts of the government before. That is, you know, the proper relationship between Congress and the President, and so forth. What's your position, if you would become a Senator, on giving war powers to a President when Congress has not declared war, as we did with Iraq?

KEYES: I have stated repeatedly over the course of my public life that I think it is very dangerous for us to surrender, as a people, the safeguard that is represented by the right and obligation, under the Constitution, of **our representatives** to declare war. That we back into wars, that we get into situations of long-term commitment to war without the **formal declaration of war** that is required by our Constitution is dangerous and unacceptable. And I would be one of those people working to assure that appropriate steps were taken to make sure that a formal declaration of war took place where that was appropriate.

Now, what do I mean by "where that's appropriate?" It's quite easy. When the executive is responding to an emergency situation, he is under no obligation to sit around and wait for a declaration of war before he does what is necessary to protect our people. And that might be an extensive necessity. It might involve a great mobilization, because that I can't predict. It depends on the nature of the threat, doesn't it?

But once the circumstances are such that a space of time exists for proper deliberation, then I think it is a responsibility, an obligation, both of the President and of the Congress, to take account of the formal consultation with the representatives of the people provided for in our Constitution.

The fact that we have, either through what is, in my opinion, careless legislation, or through the development of bad habits, allowed this process of formal declaration to fall into desuetude--that means not to use it anymore--I think is dangerous. And I would be working to change that bad habit.

Q: What about the case of Iraq? Was that a situation where Congress should have stepped up to the plate and actually asked for a formal declaration from themselves?

KEYES: Yes. I say that without equivocation or hesitation. Yes. We went to war with a state. We went to war with that state because we considered it to be part of the threat against us that had killed our people on September 11. We were opening a front in the ongoing war against terror. And I do not see **anything** that stood in the way of a formal declaration of that state of war. And I believe it should have been done with due process, according to the Constitution.

Q: Being that we are sitting in one of the two schools that make up the largest Jewish day school in the Midwest, maybe you could elaborate on your position on the issue of school choice and vouchers.

KEYES: Well, my position of long standing on school choice is very simple. I think the principle we should follow in education is that the money that we, as a people, through our mechanisms of government and appropriations, spend on education, should follow the choice of the parents, not the choice of the bureaucrats, the edu-crats, and the politicians.

And that basically means, if a parent feels like the government schools are serving their children's purposes--fine, leave your child in the government school. If you feel that that government school is failing you, or if, by reason your faith and belief, or by reason of your spiritual code or your moral beliefs, or any other thing that you believe is essential to the quality of your life, you want your child to be raised up in another environment that is compatible with your faith and beliefs, I think parents should have that prerogative. And I don't think that they should be penalized as they are now.

Think about it. A parent that simply wants to do that which is best for the child in light of their conscience must today suffer a serious burden of double taxation. You will pay to the government system for an "education." And then to get education for your child, you will pay again. And it seems to me that that system of double taxation is eminently unfair, especially when we consider that not only does what you do benefit the child--and therefore, because of your attachment to the child, it benefits the family--it benefits the society.

Who are we kidding here? One of the reasons that families that are raising children ought to enjoy respect and those privileges essential to the strength of the family, is because at the

end of the day, the family is a factor of special production for the future of the society, doing a service, in fact, by raising up those who will be, as citizens, strong individual elements of our society of freedom.

And that being the case, it seems to me we shouldn't be unfairly burdening the judgments of those parents by essentially penalizing them when they do what they conscientiously believe to be--and what, by the way, on the basis of facts and evidence is born out to be--in the best interests of their children. Because to keep your child in failing public schools, and government schools, rather than to look around and try either to send them to a school, or put together a school that is going to be better for them--I think it is totally unfair to say you don't have not only the freedom, but the obligation to do that. As parents, you feel that obligation in your heart.

And I also think it is against self-government. Because when all is said and done, self-government is about what the people can do for themselves. And if people in a community--as the folks who support this school--are willing to get together, and through their initiative, hard work, enterprise and participation they are going to put together a school that they believe is going to be best for their young, why should we say that the money we spend as a people on education is not going to support that effort?

And I would extend that to everybody. I extend it to parochial schools; I extend it to private schools. I would extend it to schools that don't exist yet.

I still have a dream, which is in my book *Masters of the Dream*, of the day when, through a system of proper vouchers, there will be a strong network of schools attached to the strong network of churches that now exist in the Black community. Imagine the revolution that would work in the prospects of education for the children.

So I think it's good for everybody, and that's the way I think we ought to go.

Q: Just to follow up on that a little bit. Practically speaking, how would that work? There's a great deal of money now going to the federal government for education spending. Would you return that to individual states, or individual taxpayers, or how would that work?

KEYES: The present "No Child Left Behind" policy does include provisions that, under certain circumstances will allow parents to make this kind of a choice. But it is under circumstances that are, or could be, regarded as kind of penalties because the government schools have failed live up to their promise to accommodate themselves to certain standards. I think that that shows that there is a certain grudging understanding of the right principle, but I don't think it is being implemented with full conviction. And I think it ought to be. That's the first thought.

In practical terms it would mean that, whether you are talking about money that is being spent at the federal level or the state level, the total amount of money that, per capita, is available to spend on a child in a given area, or a given state like Illinois, that amount of money would then become available up to that limit. In Illinois it is what, about \$11,000 overall? It would be available up to that limit for somebody who wants it to send their child to a school of their choice. Whether that money would source with the federal government or the state government, we're talking about the total amount here that would be available.

Now, to tell you the honest truth, you and I both know, from the factual statistics, that this is not going to result in the expenditure of all that money. Because a lot of the schools that are operating on a non-government basis--the private schools, the parochial schools, the day schools like this Jewish day school--they actually operate more economically than the government schools.

Do you know why, one reason? One reason is what I experienced growing up as a child, and what I think would be renewed as an experience if we indeed help to reinvigorate the system of parental-choice education in our country. And that is that a lot of the schools are based on dedication, rather than money. Not that people don't need money to raise their families and take care of their kids. But there is a certain modicum of what would be required to motivate

those only motivated by money that is not needed, so long as they can get the satisfaction of working for what they deeply believe, in righteousness, to be necessary for the children, and good in light of God's will.

And right now, we impose upon our whole country a kind of education tax, because we don't want to collect the fruits that would come to us from that dedication. We don't want to encourage folks who will operate not just on the basis of "How much do I get in my paycheck?" but "What does this imply for my heart and my conscience?" We're not fully implementing what will help them.

So I think we need to look at these benefits, and take advantage of them.

