We just shared in a powerful moment.

We saw the purpose of our work.

We are part of a larger story. A story of American greatness.

The moment of liberation 75 years ago was the culmination of a mission.

To liberate nations. To save lives.

And in that moment, we saw the power of America’s friendship.

It was a friendship that gave survivors, like Rabbi Lau, their freedom and a chance to rebuild their lives.

It was a friendship that three years later helped to create the nation that Rabbi Lau and so many others fought to build.

It is a friendship that has incredible meaning and power.

It is a friendship that we celebrate and strengthen today.

It is a friendship we have a responsibility to protect.

Especially now.

Today, I must sound an alarm.

There is an emerging threat to America’s friendship with Israel.
The work we have done and continue to do is at risk.

For decades, we have built a broad and bipartisan consensus as the foundation of support for Israel in America.

This foundation consists of both parties. Democrats and Republicans. All faiths. All races. All Americans.

It is a foundation that has endured no matter who was president, no matter who controlled Congress, no matter how events unfolded in the Middle East.

We believed, and continue to believe, that when America stands with the Jewish state, Israelis are more secure, and Americans are too.

But today that foundation is in danger of being rocked as it never has been before.

A growing, highly vocal, and energized part of the electorate fundamentally rejects the value of the U.S.-Israel alliance.

It is no longer on the margins – but instead has taken the spotlight of our political life.

Its most radical views are bending the political conversation and commanding attention.

And this movement has national ambitions.
The leaders of this movement occasionally seek to mollify us with empty reassurances and hollow affirmations of Israel’s right to live in peace.

But far too often, they reveal their true beliefs.

The leaders of this movement say they support Israel’s right to exist, but that’s not up for debate. Israel exists, and it doesn’t take a true friend to support that.

Or these leaders say they support Israel’s right to defend herself, but every time Israel exercises that right, they condemn Israel.

These leaders are quick to blame Israel for the deadlock in the Middle East. But they don’t seem to understand that peace requires negotiations between two parties – and the Palestinians won’t even come to the table. Not today, and essentially not for the past 9 years.

In their political utterances, the leaders of this movement repeatedly and reflexively disparage Israel’s democracy and lump her in with nations hostile to American interests and American values. Again, these are not the things a friend would say or do.

These political leaders have chosen to deploy several surrogates who have long records of hostility to the Jewish state. In the rising movement against the U.S.-Israel relationship there are familiar faces, but they are not our friends.

What we see instead are some who question the moral right of the Jewish people to a homeland of their own. What we see is a litany of double-standards applied to everything Israel does. What we see is a casual
disregard for the vital role Israel has played – and continues to play – in supporting America’s interests and America’s security.

If any of these leaders want to dispel our fears, they have many options available to reassure us. Instead, they say divisive things and do divisive things.

They say it and they do it because they believe it. And they believe it helps them.

Israel cannot afford false friends.

So, let me say this plainly: Any leader who energizes their political movement by demonizing Israel is not a friend of Israel.

That term – friend – means something very real to all of us.

In every moment, throughout its history, Israel has required friends. True friends. Israel cannot afford a single minute where America’s friendship with Israel – at the highest levels – wavers or skips.

And throughout its history, and thanks to the work of our movement, Israel has been able to count on its friendship with the United States.

Friendship means many things, and it means most of all that we care about each other. In our relationship, between America and Israel, we listen to each other. Especially when we struggle with the toughest issues.

And even when we disagree about the next steps we should take, we must agree that we are on the same path together. Because that’s where we build the trust that makes everything else possible.
For decades, and to this very day, that path has united Democrats and Republicans in a broad and bipartisan agenda.

It means, most of all, that America will help Israel defend herself by herself.

America’s security support for Israel should never be used as a bargaining chip in the U.S.-Israel relationship. Israel’s security in a dangerous region is in America’s interests. And we are grateful that overwhelming majorities of Democrats and Republicans in Congress have consistently supported Israel’s security without conditions and without hesitation.

This support in Congress rests on the work of successive American administrations – each of whom made 10-year commitments with Israel’s leaders on security assistance. President Clinton did it. So did President George W. Bush. So did President Obama. Each understood that America’s commitment to Israel’s safety must be consistent. It must be unequivocal. And it must be dependable.

It is also critical that America promotes the cause of peace. Our deepest desire is that Israel reaches an enduring peace with the Palestinians, leading to two states for two peoples. We know every Israeli desires peace with all willing nations in that region. As friends of Israel, we want to see a just and lasting peace, backed by America, where Israel’s security needs are met and Israel has partners who are willing to permanently abandon incitement, terror and war.

As part of our commitment to Israel’s security and the cause of peace, it is vital that America continues to confront the Iranian regime’s efforts to dominate the Middle East and threaten Israel and our allies with terror and
nuclear weapons. The best way to stop the next war in the Middle East is to stop Iran now.

Finally, it is critical that America fight all efforts to isolate and demonize Israel in diplomatic arenas and international organizations. If nothing else, America’s friendship means Israel never stands alone.

What I have described is the kind of support a friend should expect – and it is a standard nearly all American leaders have met over many decades, and continue to meet to this day.

We appreciate the unyielding support of President Trump and everything he and his Administration have done on these issues.

We are deeply grateful to Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Hoyer and Republican Leader McCarthy for their decades-long friendship and remarkable leadership. And in the Senate, we applaud Senator McConnell and Senator Schumer for being champions for the U.S.-Israel relationship when it has mattered most.

And we thank the hundreds of members of Congress – Democrats and Republicans – who come to this conference, meet with our citizen lobbyists, and most important, consistently support a strong pro-Israel agenda.

This is a bipartisan movement. Democrats and Republicans, with very rare exceptions, have been part of this cause from the very beginning, because on this one issue, elected leaders have always known they were standing with the majority of American voters in both parties, and on the right side of history.
Which is why we are sounding the alarm today.

The U.S.-Israel relationship has always had its critics and its detractors.

But today we face something far more corrosive.

We face a collection of political leaders and their supporters who want to turn our political system away from Israel.

If they have their way, they will diminish America’s support for Israel and increase the risks for war in the Middle East.

An Israel without American support would be weaker, more isolated, and more vulnerable. Israel’s neighbors could seek to exploit new opportunities to terrorize Israel. How could these conditions help the cause of peace?

And here at home, we face an equally disturbing prospect. The political leaders opposed to America’s close relationship with Israel want to force their priorities onto candidates in every election in this nation.

If they have their way, they will undermine the bipartisan foundation that is at the heart of the U.S.-Israel relationship today – and so necessary for whatever lies ahead.

These political leaders don’t just want to win a single election. They want to unravel the bipartisan consensus of our movement.

And so they need to defeat our friends in Congress.

For decades, the pro-Israel movement has said that if elected leaders stand up for the U.S.-Israel friendship, there will be millions of voters who
will stand with them. For decades, our movement has honored this promise, and we have been loyal to our friends.

So our mission is clear. Our friends must receive every effort the pro-Israel movement can provide – and the extra measure of support they deserve.

But it’s not enough to play defense. The pro-Israel community has to take the fight to the other side.

If our movement chooses to tap into our energy, if we win the battle of ideas, if we put the full weight of our movement’s resources into this fight, we will put our friends in a position to win.

The pro-Israel community will work to defeat those who try to harm our friends and those who try to harm the U.S.-Israel relationship. We will demonstrate that friendship with Israel is valued across this country and by voters in both parties. The pro-Israel movement will show that standing with Israel is what the American people want.

This fight won’t be easy.

There will be angry opposition.

And it won’t end in November.

But remember this: We are lucky to be living in this moment of history. A strong Israel, standing side by side with a strong America. No one could have foreseen this 75 years ago. And no matter what challenges we face, we start in a position of strength.
And we are blessed still more by something else: The living reminders of true courage and the greatness of the American people.

You saw them today. The liberators. There aren’t many left.

But they stood and you saw them.

Those men crossed an ocean and they fought halfway across a continent.

Not to conquer but to liberate.

When we recognized those men, we all recognized something deep and true about this nation.

What America has fought for.

What America still stands for.

It was a moment that was particularly moving for me.

You see, my father was in Dachau – one of those camps.

And so I know personally what it means when America fights for you and stands on your side.

We all know.

We all have seen it in our own time.

And we all take pride in America at its best.
I am here to tell you this: We are part of this story. And we can write its next chapter.

Because when America stands with its friends, that is America at its best.

When America works for the security and peace of a distant, small democracy, that is America at its best.

When America comes to the aid of an ally, still beset by enemies, still isolated in world bodies, that is America at its best.

This is our cause. This is our purpose. This is our mission. To write that next chapter in the American story.

To show our fellow Americans – to show the entire world – what America stands for, and what America always will be.

Thank you.