



INTERNATIONAL HOTEL ASSOCIATION
ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'HÔTELLERIE

**SPEECH BY YITZHAK RABIN, PRIME MINISTER OF ISRAEL
TO THE ANNUAL CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL HOTEL
ASSOCIATION**

TEL. AVIV, 2ND NOVEMBER 1995

Greetings to all who have come from so many countries all over the world to attend this congress. at this time in Israel.

I, and I speak in the name of the government of Israel, really appreciate your decision to come over, to be here, to see the changes that have taken place, that hopefully are only the beginning of greater changes in the life of the countries and the peoples of the Middle East.

Nothing will happen quickly, but determination, single-mindedness and the continuation of the efforts to bring about peace. And for me, to bring about peace is to achieve peaceful coexistence. I believe you can coexist in peace with somebody you don't love. Love is not needed as the basis for peaceful coexistence and in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict we can't change inter relationships in a short time in a very dramatic way. It's a prolonged process, once the partners to the peace on the Arab and Israeli sides are really determined to continue to build structural peace instead of the realities of war, violence and terror.

I believe in tourism. I believe in its combined aspects of industry and opportunity for many people to enjoy themselves and to learn. I believe that tourism can be one of the major instruments for people knowing about each other, their history, their roots. Tourism will create better understanding all over the world - and no doubt in the Middle East as long as the peace process will continue.

I believe the future of tourism is one of the best of all industries in the world... Since the standard of living in considerable parts of the world is in the process of rising, hundreds of millions have a very high standard of living and I'm sure have a tendency to use their private income and company income to give individuals the opportunity to make tourist trips.

Some estimate that hundreds of billions of dollars will be invested very soon in tourism, and that it will become, if not the major industry, one of the most important and huge.

As an Israeli, I look at it as an industry that the government has to assist because its coupled with its very existence. First it is the most added value industry that we have in terms of foreign currency spending, which is greater than that of the hi-tech industry. Secondly, it employs many people (whereas) the hi-tech industry relies on automation and the reduction of the number of workers to compete with international markets.

Tourism brings knowledge, enjoyment, added value and understanding - of the meaning of Israel, the roots of Israel, our efforts in building peace and security, an advanced progressive society.

The Amman Economic Conference addressed the issue of tourism and tourism packages, building new hotels, cooperation in making tourists more safe wherever they go.

I believe we are at the threshold of new realities in the Middle East. I am sure that with your help, with your participation, we will see that tourism promotes peace and peace assists tourism.

(TRANSCRIPT)



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**SPEECH BY SHIMON PERES, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF ISRAEL
TO THE ANNUAL CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL HOTEL
ASSOCIATION**

TEL AVIV, 3RD NOVEMBER 1995

Like many politicians I have always the pleasure to be hosted by many of you in your own hotels. It's a pleasure to try and host you, not in a hotel but in a political surrounding. Because I do believe that you can play today an extremely important role in changing the face of the world.

Usually relations among countries and among people are characterised either in the way of wars as enemies, or as partners, neighbours, but in my judgement the best guarantee for a different world is that a man to a man can become a host to a guest. It is when you are a guest or a host that you are being called upon to demonstrate the best of qualities, the best of intentions.

If I had a choice to add 100,000 soldiers to our defence or a million tourists to our security, I would say give me tourists, rather than soldiers. I think every hotel in the world is a contribution to security and peace, more than a military position, because this creates a real interest and serves as a declaration of an entirely new intention of rapport in human relations.

In the Middle East undoubtedly tourism can play a major role and I am a great believer that the Middle East is condemned to live in peace. Not because any new sentiment was added to our history but really because of a major revolution in the history of political relations.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the West became an orphan - it lost an enemy... Why did the Soviet Union collapse? It collapsed because the Russian people awoke one morning to discover Marx finally was wrong and that the world is acting on an entirely different basis. And also because dictators lost their capacity to blind people. The minute the silver screen became more powerful than the Iron Curtain, the life of dictators became impossible because television and radio take straight into the bedroom the sort of news and comparisons you they wanted to forbid and the young generation wakes up and asks the terrible question: 'Why there and not here? Why them and not us?'

The sources of strength and wealth in the modern age are no longer material. You can have vast lands and little to eat. You can have many minerals and not balance your budget.

Science and technology have nothing to do with nationalities. Science doesn't have any sovereignties, technology does not hoist any flags, information does not require any visas. Everybody can acquire it no matter what the colour of your face. And what we have seen in the 20th century is just a beginning.

I don't have the slightest doubt that what is happening today is just a beginning; the end of the hunting season in human relations, the beginning of the creative era in mankind. And here we have the basic issue: how to safeguard it, how to offer a wealth of opportunity to our families, the young generation, to our country.

In the Middle East there are three things that can save time and offer many opportunities. One is education. Nowadays there is no sense to teach the things that we know, what we have to teach our children is how to learn the things that we didn't know. In Israel we have computerised completely our education for children from the age of 4. The results are unbelievable.

The second thing is irrigation. Poor people make the land poor. A poor land makes the people poor. I believe that by producing water either by recycling or by better distribution or desalination, we can made the land green and fertile and fresh again.

The third is tourism. Tourism is the most promising industry. Relatively it can be introduced in a very speedy manner. Today tourism is 10.6% of the world economy. The Middle East and the Mediterranean makes 78 billion dollars out of tourism. The World Travel and Tourism Council estimates that in 10 years time it could be increased to 334 billion dollars - nearly three times as much. The Middle East has many attractions, a nice climate, a mystique that comes from a place that has created the major religions, and once it will start, the human dimension...

I can't think of a better contribution to a change in relationships, to the awakening of the economy. Tourism will bring us together, it will open up, it will introduce the best guarantee we can have for peace, namely an interest of millions of people to keep the situation stable, to keep the land tranquil, to demonstrate the best we have in our tradition, the best we can offer in food and wine, and the hospitality that people to people can really show.

Like so much in our life, the time has come to privatize peace aswell. Peace is not just a national or a regional or an international challenge, it is challenge to every private company, to every private person. It is in this spirit that we welcome you and we are sure that your contribution will be noticed and remembered in the future.

(TRANSCRIPT)