

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS

ABRAHAM ACCORDS FORUM

March 29, 2022

- Thank you....and welcome to Oakland University, where we are so proud to be a venue for public discussions about the issues that are shaping our world like tonight's discussion, which has been a front-and-center topic in shaping American foreign policy for decades.
- I'd like to take a moment to thank Michael Pytlik and the Cis Maisel Center for Judaic Studies and Community Engagement for their support for tonight's event....
- On behalf of the Oakland community, I'd like to extend our deep appreciation to Bill Swor for his generous support for tonight's fascinating discussion...
- And, of course, thank you to the Center for Civic Engagement for being a convener of conversations....The center's director, Dave Dulio, has done an outstanding job in elevating our public discourse while remaining true to a nonpartisan approach that places understanding and the public's best interest at the center of our shared discussion.
- Thank you, Dave, for your commitment and passion for civic and civil discourse.
- And thank you to tonight's moderator, Carol Cain, a friend of Oakland University and among our finest journalists.
- Tonight, is an example of how each of us must play a part in working for a better world. And that starts with a better understanding of our world....our differences, and what we have in common.
 - Our guests certainly have done their Our panelists – who played key roles in the Abraham Accords – understand what is needed and what is at stake in the ongoing effort to bring peace and cooperation to the Middle East.
- Ambassador Fischer and Ambassador Rakolta... we are so pleased that you are with us, and we are so appreciative of your work in the pursuit of a lasting peace in a region that is bound by a common geography, and, as the name of the accords makes clear, a common spiritual and religious forefather – Abraham, the patriarch of Judaism, Islam and Christianity.
- The Abraham Accords were announced in a joint statement on August 13, 2020 from Israel, the United Arab Emirates and

the United States. The accords marked the first public normalization between an Arab country and Israel since the 1994 agreement between Jordan and Israel.

- In a few minutes, we will hear the ambassadors discuss their views about the chances for peace in the Middle East. But for a moment, let's think about why this discussion is so important and impacts us every day.
- For more than a month, we've witnessed the horrific war in the Ukraine. We have heard and seen the stories of refugees, the humanitarian disaster and the plight of the Ukrainian people, who are standing up for self-determination and against unprovoked aggression.
- Our ethos as a nation is shaped by our responses to the events that challenge our values, here in America and around the world.
 - What happens in the Ukraine matters.
 - What happens in the Middle East matters.
 - We must think clearly about the causes of conflicts and the possibilities of resolving the conflicts because our identity and purpose as a nation is also at stake.
- A geopolitical strategic case can be made about America's foreign policy, but each of us must ask what is right, what is just and what can be done in the name of peace.
- It is within that context that we invite tonight's distinguished guests to share their experiences, expertise and wisdom.
- And now, Oakland University's Board President Bobby Schostak will introduce the ambassadors.