



VALERIE PLAME FOR CONGRESS
POSITION PAPER ON ISRAEL

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I. The Iranian Threat and Israeli Security

During my career in the CIA, I worked hard to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, specifically nuclear weapons, and managed top-secret covert programs intended to keep terrorists and rogue nations from acquiring such weapons. I was responsible for recruiting foreign assets, briefing U.S. policy-makers, and exercising solid judgment in a field in which mistakes could be disastrous. I have continued to be actively involved in anti-proliferation causes since my CIA career ended. Iran's nuclear program and its support of terrorism pose an existential threat to Israel, destabilize the region, and threaten vital security interests of the United States. It was because of my professional experience with these difficult issues that I strongly supported the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action ("the Iran nuclear deal"). I saw it, and continue to see it, as an important step towards changing Iran's dangerous behavior.

I have no illusions about the threat Iran poses to Israel and peace in the region, even under the nuclear deal. Israel's existence and the safety of its people have been threatened from its founding to this day. I strongly support Israel's right to defend itself against attacks from terrorist organizations, including Hamas and Hezbollah, whose principal state sponsor is Iran. The Iran nuclear deal did not end Iran's continued support of terrorist organizations, its destabilizing role in the region, and its threat to Israel, whose very right to exist it continues to deny. However, the nuclear deal was an important accomplishment - the product of prolonged, thoughtful, and aggressive efforts by diplomats from the United States and the other participants. I am convinced that Israel and the world are safer with that deal than without it. I believe the decision by the current administration to withdraw the United States from the deal was a serious mistake.

If elected to Congress, I would rely on my knowledge and experience as a former CIA covert operations officer to promote aggressive, multilateral diplomatic efforts to continue to prevent Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons, which would pose an unacceptable threat to Israel and the world. And I would stand with Israel in our mutual efforts to thwart Iran's support of terrorist organizations in the region.

If the Iran nuclear deal still exists in some form after the 2020 election, I obviously would support rejoining it. But at the same time, I would focus on the need to address Iran's ongoing, malign behavior in the region. The evidence indicates that during U.S. participation, the deal succeeded in its primary objective: preventing Iran's further work toward developing nuclear weapons. However, the deal has not begun to accomplish the additional goal of reducing Iran's destructive and dangerous activities in the region, directly and through its allies. Whether under some version of the nuclear deal, or in its absence, multilateral

diplomatic engagement and economic pressure to discourage and impose a cost on such behavior must remain a priority.

The threats to Israel and its people are not entirely from Iran, of course. In Congress, I would advocate for continued military and intelligence cooperation between our nations to prevent terrorist attacks from any source, protect the lives of the Israeli people, and maintain stability in the region. We must support Israel in its self-defense and against the forces that seek to destabilize the region.

II. The Two-State Solution

I believe the best hope for security, peace, and opportunity for both the Israeli and Palestinian people still depends on pursuing a two-state solution to the conflict. That outcome requires negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians and cannot be successfully dictated or imposed by others. However, the United States must play an active and engaged role in encouraging and assisting in those negotiations. It must do so as a fair broker, honoring both the need for Israeli security and the rights of Palestinians. In Congress, I would support active United States participation, as necessary, to help the parties pursue the goal of a two-state solution.

III. Aid

Israel is our closest and most reliable ally in the Middle East. I support continued aid to Israel not only as part of our commitment to its defense, but also as vital to our defense of important American interests in the region. I also support aid to the Palestinian Authority, which is essential to help strengthen its standing as a viable partner in negotiating peace. Although foreign aid can be an easy political target, it can serve important humanitarian and strategic interests and represents only about 1% of the federal budget. Aid to Israel, in comparison to the cost and extent of our military commitment to other important allies in other regions of the world, has been a particularly effective investment in the security of our most important ally in that region.

IV. Anti-Israel Bias and Growing Anti-Semitism

I agree with our country's strong disapproval of bias against Israel within the United Nations. Israel should be treated no better or worse than any other country by that organization, which has not always been the case. I oppose the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions ("BDS") campaign. Although we must respect everyone's right to criticize the policies of any government, including Israel's, the BDS campaign, particularly its leadership, opposes Israel's right to exist. It unfairly demonizes and isolates Israel, and it is counterproductive to the goal of a two-state solution and peace.

While we engage in honest, good-faith debate about U.S. and Israeli policy in confronting the difficult challenges of achieving peace and stability in the Middle East, we must also recognize and aggressively confront the latest increase in anti-Semitism throughout the world, particularly in Europe, but also in our country. Recent horrific killings in houses of worship, motivated by religious hatred, and the sharp rise in anti-Semitic incidents, are

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warnings that must be heeded. Our increasingly divisive and heated political discourse can fuel the flames of anti-Semitism and all forms of bigotry. We must not only be sensitive to that reality in choosing how we express our views, we must also join together in condemning such hatred.

I learned a deeply painful, personal lesson about the importance of being thoughtful in the language used in political discourse, especially in our accelerated social media interactions, in which careful deliberation is sometimes sacrificed. I accept responsibility for an instance in which my communication caused pain in the Jewish community, and I am committed to doing my part going forward to encourage tolerance, respect, and sensitivity in our politics.

V. The United States-Israel Relationship

The relationship between the United States and Israel is based on a sacred, moral commitment, deep cultural ties, and vital security interests of both nations; it is rooted in the history of Israel.

Israel declared its independence 71 years ago as a democratic Jewish state. Its Jewish population doubled in the first three years of its existence as it became a refuge for holocaust survivors, as well as victims of pervasive anti-Semitism in Russia, other Eastern European, Middle East, and North African countries. The day after it declared its independence on May 14, 1948, it was invaded by four of its Arab neighbors – Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, and Syria – as well as contingents from Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Yemen, and Morocco. The express purpose was to drive the Jews of Israel into the sea.

In 1948, 1967, and 1973, Israel was invaded by its neighbors. Its military, with weapons support from our country, repelled these existential attacks. Uncountable sneak attacks, bombings, and murders have continued throughout its history.

Yet Israel has survived and thrived as the only democracy in the Middle East. Vibrant, strong, and a close ally of the United States, it is a living testament to the indomitable spirit of its people.

It is this history that is at the heart of my, and our country's unwavering support for the State of Israel. If elected to Congress, I would work to support and strengthen that relationship, which is essential to Israel's survival and to our own vital national security interests.