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In May of 1945, my father was liberated from the Gunskirchen concentration camp in Austria. During the war, he had been interned in Auschwitz and Mauthausen, prior to being transferred to Gunskirchen. He survived two death marches at the young age of only 13 years old. During the war, my mother hid underground with her family in Romania. She helped dig bomb shelters with her bare hands, to help protect her family and others in hiding.

The knowledge of what my parents endured – persecution because of their Jewish identity - is ever-present on my mind. It's what shapes my worldview, and particularly my perspective on the State of Israel. **Israel's existence is our strongest assurance that another Holocaust will never befall the Jewish nation.** The world is a safer place for everyone, as long as the State of Israel is strong.

The relationship between Israel and the United States of America goes beyond a typical allyship. Since Israel became a State on May 14, 1948, our two countries have never wavered in our commitment to each other's success.

As the only stable democracy in the Middle East, Israel is the United States' only reliable ally in one of the most volatile regions in the world. I believe that the US shares a common interest in ensuring that an attack on Israel be treated with the same severity as an attack on the US, which is why I intend to actively advocate for the \$3.8 billion in defense aid that the United States has committed to over the course of ten years, to fund **the Iron Dome Air Defense Missile System, David's Sling, and Arrow 3** all of which protect Israeli citizens, respectively from rockets, mid-range rockets, and long-range ballistic missiles. Furthermore, I will advocate strongly to ensure that these funds continue to be allocated without condition. The safety of Israeli citizens is paramount, and must be the very first priority of our government.

It is vital that the United States respects and supports Israel's right to lay claim to its own land. For example, I strongly support that President Donald J. Trump recognized Jerusalem as the true capital of Israel, a move that should have been made years ago. Our embassy in Jerusalem, much like our recognition of Israel over

J 72 years ago, is a powerful symbol of partnership and admission of an irrefutable fact.

As a Member of Congress, **I intend to support Israel's qualitative military edge (QME) in the Middle East.** The United States has a responsibility to ensure that Israel maintains the technological, tactical, and other advantages that allow Israel to deter numerically superior adversaries. With a nuclear prone Iran, the instability of Syria, and the continued spread of extremism in the region, Israel is the world's first line of intelligence-based and military-based defense against the unpredictability surrounding them. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action ("Iran Deal") that was signed by President Obama put Israel at great risk, and I strongly support President Trump's decision to withdraw from the deal. It is important that we establish a broad plan to combat Iran's mission to obtain a nuclear weapon. I believe that a deal with no sunset clause would be effective, and there needs to be a great deal of transparency on Iran's part, including allowing inspections with no conditions.

The ideological war that is waged against Israel is of great concern to me personally, and something I will work to combat as a Member of Congress. Groups that champion the BDS movement, like Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), have infiltrated college campuses and influenced young, misinformed minds against Israel. This campaign against Israel has spread as far as sitting Members of the United States Congress, who support boycotts of the State of Israel. This anti-Israel sentiment in Congress is a stain on our nation, and I intend to fight back against this shameful behavior. The BDS movement aims to destabilize Israel through economic warfare – another phase in a long, sordid history of coordinated attacks on the young country.

As a member of the NYC Council and the Chairman of the Council's Jewish Caucus, I have consistently been a unwavering advocate for Israel. **In the dangerous times we live in, with antisemitism on the rise, we must have a zero tolerance policy when it comes to hatred directed at Jews and the State of Israel.** Anti-Zionism is antisemitism, period. I look forward to continuing this fight as a Member of Congress.