



## **United States-Israeli Relations**

### **Overview**

After graduating from the United States Naval Academy, I spent almost ten years on active duty in the United States Navy where I served in Europe and the Middle East. During my career, I flew missions as a helicopter pilot throughout Europe and the Middle East, and I finished my Naval career on the Battle Watch Floor in the European Theater during the Iraq invasion. My experience in the United States Navy provided me with a frontline view of the challenges our military and its allies face in our efforts to maintain peace and stability throughout the world.

The only way the United States will be able to face these challenges is through strengthening our relationships with our traditional strategic allies, of which Israel is critically important. Our partnership with Israel since 1948 has been instrumental to global security and has helped pioneer incredible discoveries that have changed the face of technology, cyber security, homeland security, military defense systems, medicine, disaster response, clean energy, and agriculture. Strengthening the United States' relationship with Israel is and should continue to be a national imperative.

### **The United States and a Safe and Secure Israel**

With the insecurity growing in the Middle East and throughout the world, the United States must continue to help ensure a safe and secure Israel. Israel's strategic role in the war on terrorism cannot be understated. Israel's intelligence and information sharing is vital to the United States' mission to combat the threat of terrorist groups like ISIS, Hamas, Hezbollah, Al-Qaeda, and more. Because Israel faces threats that surround it on every border, the United States must defend Israel's legitimacy and its right to exist, and continue to assist Israel in strengthening its critical defense infrastructure. Specifically, the United States must stay committed to helping Israel maintain its qualitative military edge and continue the funding levels laid out in President Obama's Memo of Understanding (MOU) with Israel.

Already, Israel's Iron Dome missile defense system has saved countless lives against attacks leveled by Israel's neighbors. Next level missile defense systems currently in development, including Arrow-3 and David's Sling, will not only save lives, but also create jobs in the United States. Continuing to bolster these programs will provide the

surest means of keeping Israel safe in an especially destabilized Middle East. Investments in Israeli defense are investments in the safety and security of the United States.

## **Iran**

U.S. foreign aid and missile defense cooperation are critical to the defense of Israel, especially as we begin to understand the broad implications of implementing the Iran nuclear agreement. Since the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Iran has launched numerous ballistic missile tests. The seeming grey area in the deal surrounding ballistic missile testing leaves underlying questions as to whether Iran can be trusted to act in good faith and observe the full terms of the deal.

Congress must ensure this agreement is not merely a pause in Iran's nuclear development, but an actual deterrent to Iran obtaining a nuclear weapon. Congress must remain vigilant in the enforcement of the agreement and be prepared to take immediate action should violations occur. We must also ensure that the International Atomic Energy Agency is fully funded to carry out inspections, that the inspectors have full and unencumbered access to Iranian military and nuclear facilities, and work to ensure that the sunset provisions of the JCPOA are extended.

While we must continue to ensure a non-nuclear Iran, we must also fully recognize the multifaceted threat Iran poses to Israel and the Middle East. Even as they comply with the letter of the nuclear deal, Iran continues to be the leading state sponsor of terrorism in the world and continues to commit human rights violations.

As Iran works to grow its sphere of influence in the Middle East, they continue to fund terrorist activities across the region as well as export extremist ideologies that destabilize and incite violence. It is in the strategic interest of the United States and our allies to ensure Iran ceases support for terrorist groups like Hamas and Hezbollah and to prevent further Iranian efforts to destabilize Syria. Regardless of the nuclear agreement, Congress should continue to consider non-nuclear sanctions in response to Iran's actions in support of terrorism around the globe and aggression in the region.

## **United States, Israel, and the Two-State Solution**

A safe and secure Israel, bolstered by the United States can help to stabilize the region, especially when it comes to ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For four decades the United States has endorsed a two-state solution as a means of resolving the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians and we should continue to support ways in which a two-state solution can be seriously pursued.

Until that time, the United States can and should remain committed to standing up for Israel's security by holding Palestinian leadership accountable when they incite violence or bolster support for groups engaging in terrorism. Additionally, the path to peace can

only be decided when both sides return to the table and restart negotiations. It is important to let both the Israelis and Palestinians set the terms for peace.

We also must continue to provide our support for Israel both internationally and here at home. The US should acknowledge its commitments, such as the recognition of Israel's capital. Israel has the right to determine where its capital should be located, and I support their right to do so. Furthermore, movements like Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions, or BDS, will only continue to grow, the more intractable the road to peace becomes. It is imperative that U.S. leaders continue to educate the public on the strategic importance of the United States-Israel relationship and work to bring both the Israelis and the Palestinians back to the negotiating table.

### **United States, Israel, and the Innovation Economy**

I believe we should continue to further the economic partnership between the United States and Israel. The information age is changing societies, countries, and cultures in the blink of an eye. But the United States has always been a country built on innovation, drive, and a belief in possibilities. By investing in Israel's economy, we have furthered our access to cutting-edge technologies that save lives and propel our economy forward.

Israel's advances in aerospace, defense, information technology, life science, clean energy, and pharmaceuticals present opportunities not only for the United States in general, but for New Jersey in particular. Currently, Israel is one of New Jersey's largest trading partners. Our exports to Israel accounted for \$412 million last year. Together Israel and New Jersey have \$1 billion in shared activity annually.

We need to continue to foster this relationship so we can attract new businesses and partners to our state and New Jersey's 11th Congressional District. The advancement of clean energy in New Jersey will add thousands of jobs to our state and congressional district.

### **Conclusion**

In a time of such global uncertainty, the United States must stand firm with the states that are committed to the progressive ideals of democracy, the rule of law, and freedom of speech and religion. A major concern of mine is the increase in the anti-Semitic rhetoric and actions that have occurred since the 2016 election. For these reasons and more, if elected to United States House of Representatives, I will always support Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state, will work to ensure that our long-standing relationship with Israel remains strong, and will stand up to acts of hate here at home.