Phil Jackson
Candidate for Florida 20th

1) What is the one policy issue or area that you are most passionate about?

I have always had a strong interest in foreign affairs, human rights and social justice. American policies should promote democracy and human rights abroad and social justice and civil rights at home.

I believe America has to end its forever wars around the world and focus its attention on our own backyard here in the western hemisphere. I believe our 21st century foreign policy has to give special attention to the plight of the people in Central America’s Northern Triangle (Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador); support the Haitian people as they seek to create a stable and prosperous society; and stand with the Cuban people as they strip away the shackles of autocracy after decades of oppressive rule.

We need to address the push and pull factors that cause people to leave their home countries and risk their lives to traverse treacherous terrain to reach our borders in search of a better life and existence.

2) Which organizations or leaders do you consult with for advice on policy? Are there any whose views particularly align with yours?

I have followed The Congressional Black Caucus very closely as their views closely align with my own as an African-American man. I have provided input in their meetings via social media and reached out to the group on issues such as the recent expulsion of Haitian Immigrants on our border. Prior to his passing in April of this year, Representative Alcee Hastings was among the individuals whose opinions I valued. I marched with Rep. Hastings against gun violence here in Riviera Beach, Florida in the 1980s and 1990s when gun violence ravaged our communities at the peak of the crack cocaine epidemic. I have also sought assistance from his office on issues affecting our congressional district over the years. I have been involved with the National Urban League in Palm Beach County and I have also been involved with the NAACP since I was a college student in the late 1970’s when our student chapter at North Carolina Central University sought justice for those who were gunned down in what is now known as the “Greensboro Massacre.”
3) Recent statistics from the FBI indicate that Jews are the victims of more than half of all religiously motivated hate crimes in the U.S. This uptick in antisemitism coincides with a robust debate about the role of policing in American society, with some arguing for abolishing or defunding the police, while others advocate for limited reforms or preserving the status quo. What is your position on police reform and — in light of that — how do you believe the government should address violent antisemitism?

In regard to police reform, I support the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act that shifts from policing to a focus on public safety where police departments have the support of social workers, mental health professionals and receive extensive training in de-escalation techniques. The Justice in Policing Act would end police racial profiling, create a national police misconduct registry, end limited immunity for police officers, ban choke holds, and empower the Department of Justice to address police departments with a pattern of unjust practices. None of the changes proposed in the Justice in Policing Act would put constraints on the government’s ability to address violent antisemitism and racism in other forms. The Department of Justice is empowered to pursue and bring to justice violent racist/antisemitic criminals. In fact, the recommended changes in police practices would shift police departments away from over policing our minority communities and allow them to address the growing issue of domestic terrorism that has anti-semitism and racism at its core.

Optional: Describe any efforts you’ve made to combat antisemitism within your own party, and how you’ve held your political allies accountable for any instances of antisemitism.

Fortunately, I neither surround myself nor align myself with party members or political allies that hold antisemitic views. If I were to find myself in the company of individuals or groups that hold anti-Semitic views, I would not hesitate to confront them on those views as I have stood against prejudice and discrimination throughout my career as a political and community activist.

4) Do you believe that Israel’s role and location in the Middle East is a strategic asset to the United States? Why or why not.

America has to continue its support for Israel which is an important international ally and the only democratic state in the Middle East. Ending tension between the Palestinian and Israeli people by bringing Israelis and Palestinians together to negotiate a lasting peace agreement under a two state solution has to be central to U.S. Middle East policy.
5) On September 23, 2021, the United States **House of Representatives voted 420-9**, with two members voting present, to provide $1 billion to Israel to replenish the Iron Dome missile defense system. If you were in Congress, how would you have voted and why?

I would have voted in favor of the funding for the Iron Dome. I support the joint work on the Iron Dome and other defensive weapons used by the U.S. and Israel. I worked in the Science and Defense corridor in Maryland for seven years. As a member of the Northern Maryland Technologies Council and the Cecil County Leadership Group, I had the opportunity to tour many of the defense companies that produce defense technology such as the Iron Dome. Components of the Iron Dome system are produced by ELTA Industries. I can be an ally with other members who support Israel and Iron Dome defense as the next Congressional Representative from District 20.

6) Should the U.S. increase, maintain or decrease the amount of foreign aid to Israel and other countries in the Middle East? Should the U.S. condition its foreign aid based on specific results?

I do support the current Aid Package for Israel. In regard to conditions, I fundamentally believe that whenever the government spends the U.S. citizens’ tax dollars there should be an expected return on investment no matter which country these funds go to. Please note, my response does not imply that I support DBS.

7) What is your view of the Abraham Accords, which has brought Arab countries including the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco and Sudan into a warm peace with Israel? Do you believe there will be more peace in the Middle East? If so, what will it take?

In my opinion, the Abraham Accords simply put in a formal written agreement the relationships that already existed between Israel and its Arab neighbors in the region. Although it is good to see these relationships finally openly formalized in writing, it really changes very little in the region. A test of movement toward true peace in the region would be a peace accord between the Israeli and Palestinian people and an agreement that brings an end to the Iranian backed Hezbollah’s actions against Israel that includes a long term agreement that brings an end to Iran’s pursuit of nuclear weapons. Such an agreement would start with a “longer and stronger” JCPOA.
8) Do you support or oppose a return to the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran? In your view, what is the role of ‘leverage’ in these negotiations and is the U.S. using its leverage effectively?

I agree with the Biden Administration that we need a “longer and stronger” JCPOA that builds upon the previous agreement. The current JCPOA is based on the use of leverage and the threat of sanctions by the P5+1 to create and ensure compliance with the agreement. The Trump administration weakened our position by withdrawing from the JCPOA. This led Iran to begin enriching uranium once again. Given that fact, the Biden administration is right to use what little leverage it has to push Iran to stop uranium enrichment activities and get them to return to negotiations.

9) Government entities should not have to do business with entities that engage in immoral practices or espouse values that are inconsistent with society’s

   Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Other

10) I support public efforts to divest from companies that engage in BDS

   Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Other

11) Anti-Zionism is a form of antisemitism

   Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Other

12) The United States should use all means available to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon

   Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Other