



Position Paper on U.S.-Israel Relations (July 2020)

EXCERPTS:

- I am committed to Israel's security as a homeland for the Jewish people.
- I am Jewish and have traveled twice to Israel — once while a graduate student at the London School of Economics and once after my Bar Mitzvah. I have family and dear friends who live in Israel.
- The U.S.-Israeli alliance is deeply rooted and strategically vital for both countries, but it cannot be taken for granted. I will work to strengthen and deepen security cooperation, trade, and cultural ties, which benefit both countries. The U.S. Congress, with strong bipartisan support, must play an essential role in maintaining and strengthening healthy and open relations between the U.S. and Israel.
- Israel is a key ally whose national security requires the capacity to prevail in simultaneous, multi-front, protracted military conflict with multiple hostile states and heavily armed non-state adversaries. Israel's security requires the Israel Defense Forces to maintain a Qualitative Military Edge (QME) in the region.
- U.S. foreign assistance ensures that Israel has the military and intelligence capabilities necessary to maintain that QME, to defend itself against missile and rocket threats, and to prevent terrorist attacks within Israel or targeting Israelis around the world.
- An Iranian nuclear weapons capability would pose an existential threat to Israel and other U.S. allies, and would pose a critical threat to U.S. national security.
- A lasting and sustainable peace will require direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. A two-state solution, whereby Israel and a sovereign Palestinian state co-exist peacefully, remains the most viable basis for peace.

- I oppose the “Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions” (BDS) movement, which seeks to isolate and delegitimize Israel. I want Israel’s economy to thrive and I want U.S.-Israel trade to grow. I will vigorously oppose any legislation that would force the U.S. government to boycott or divest from Israel.

BACKGROUND

I am Jewish and have traveled twice to Israel — once while a graduate student at the London School of Economics and once after my Bar Mitzvah.

I have family and dear friends who live in Israel.

While working on defense policy as a national security aide in Congress, I developed subject matter expertise on U.S.-Israel relations.

In that capacity, I contributed to efforts to fund the Iron Dome and David's Sling missile defense systems, which protect Israel from rocket attack. I drafted a Resolution demanding the inspection of Iran's secret nuclear facilities and a Resolution commending the IDF and Israeli medical teams for their contributions to earthquake relief in Haiti.

At Georgetown University’s School of Foreign Service, I studied under former Israeli Ambassador to the United States Michael Oren in his course, "Military History of the Modern Middle East".

Ambassador Oren, a former IDF officer and Member of the Knesset, later wrote a letter personally recommending my admission to graduate school at the London School of Economics.

SECURITY ASSISTANCE & COOPERATION

I am committed to Israel's security as a homeland for the Jewish people.

Israel is a small country in a volatile region.

Israel’s national security requires the capacity to prevail in simultaneous, multi-front, protracted military conflict with multiple hostile states and heavily armed non-state adversaries.

I recognize that Israel's security requires the Israel Defense Forces to maintain a Qualitative Military Edge (QME) in the region.

U.S. foreign assistance ensures that Israel has the military and intelligence capabilities necessary to maintain that QME, to defend itself against missile and rocket threats, and to prevent terrorist attacks within Israel or targeting Israelis around the world.

In the Senate I will push for strong, mutually beneficial, and mutually respectful U.S.-Israel relations, whose strength can sustain Congressional support for the appropriation of U.S. foreign assistance vital to Israel's security.

I recognize that U.S. and Israeli officials have deemed the provision of humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian Authority critical to regional security.

IRAN

Nuclear weapons proliferation is one of the gravest threats to U.S. and world security.

An Iranian nuclear weapons capability would pose an existential threat to Israel and other U.S. allies, and would pose a critical threat to U.S. national security.

I supported the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which limits Iran's uranium enrichment until 2030, and I opposed the Trump Administration's unilateral U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA.

In the Senate I will support U.S. participation in an agreement that prevents Iran from developing nuclear weapons, whether based on the JCPOA, another multilateral agreement, or a desperately needed new global nuclear arms reduction and nonproliferation treaty. If a new treaty is based on the JCPOA, I will support extending the JCPOA's sunset provisions to ensure Iran can never develop nuclear weapons.

I support diplomacy with Iran.

I support extending the UN embargo on weapons shipments to Iran, strict international monitoring and enforcement of Iran's compliance with obligations to restrict uranium enrichment, and enforcement of Iran's UN-mandated obligations to cease ballistic missile tests.

I support strengthened efforts to prevent the flow of arms and money from Iran to Hezbollah.

I support U.S. and multilateral naval operations to deter Iran from disrupting and harassing military and commercial ships in critical Middle Eastern waterways.

ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN TERRITORIAL DISPUTES

I will support a Middle East policy that encourages regional parties toward a stable resolution of conflict, whereby all people living on Israeli or Palestinian territory are assured freedom, security, peace, and prosperity.

I am committed to Israel's security as a homeland for the Jewish people; I am committed to strengthening the U.S.-Israel alliance; and I will advocate for U.S. policy that respects the human rights of both Palestinians and Israelis.

The United States should play a strong and constructive diplomatic role in efforts to secure a lasting political resolution to disputes between Israelis and Palestinians so that all people living in the region may enjoy freedom, security, peace, and prosperity.

A lasting and sustainable peace will require direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

A two-state solution, whereby Israel and a sovereign Palestinian state co-exist peacefully, remains the most viable basis for peace. We must candidly observe, however, that the will and capacity of Israeli and Palestinian politicians to deliver this solution is in serious doubt.

Any peace deal should ensure Israel's security as a homeland for the Jewish people without threat of terrorism or invasion and protect the political freedom and human rights of all people in the region.

Any peace deal should ensure Jerusalem remains open to and inhabitable by people of all faiths, whether they are Israeli or Palestinian.

It is vital that the Palestinian Authority prevent acts of terrorism and rocket or missile attacks on Israeli civilians planned and launched from within territory it controls, and Hamas' involvement and complicity in the same from within Gaza is unacceptable. Palestinian authorities and groups must also prevent and cease the use of human shields and refrain from using civilian or humanitarian infrastructure for military purposes.

I oppose acts by the Government of Israel or Israeli settler groups which involve the expropriation or annexation of land, demolition of homes or civilian infrastructure, arbitrary detention or torture, unlawful settlement construction, or the displacement of civilians.

DEEPENING AND STRENGTHENING RELATIONS

The U.S.-Israeli alliance is deeply rooted and strategically vital for both countries, but it cannot be taken for granted.

I will work to strengthen and deepen security cooperation, trade, and cultural ties, which benefit both countries. The U.S. Congress, with strong bipartisan support, must play an essential role in maintaining and strengthening healthy and open relations between the U.S. and Israel.

I oppose the “Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions” (BDS) movement, which seeks to isolate and delegitimize Israel. I want Israel’s economy to thrive and I want U.S.-Israel trade to grow. I will vigorously oppose any legislation that would force the U.S. government to boycott or divest from Israel. I will also defend the First Amendment rights of American citizens to boycott or criticize any foreign government.

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