



I will never forget the moment when I realized that the Nation of Israel was of overwhelming value to not only me personally, but also to the United States of America. I had just spent a few hours in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in the old city of Jerusalem. I had touched the site where Jesus' cross stood in the ground, and then kneeled and prayed inside His tomb. I walked outside of the Church, and after being blinded by a ray of sunlight, looked over and saw a group of IDF soldiers, patrolling the streets of Jerusalem, heavily armed and trained to protect and defend the Holy Land. I immediately knew that these sites, this history and the ability to draw near to the Lord in this way would not exist without a strong Israel. There are too many enemies to the Jewish and Christian Faiths in this volatile regional neighborhood (i.e. historical sites destroyed by ISIS). I'm grateful that the nation that produced a boy who killed a giant, conquered Jericho, and defeated Egypt, Syria and Jordan in the Six Days War and then again in the Yom Kippur War, is guarding the most precious and important historical and archeological sites in the world for people of Abrahamic faiths.

As an Intelligence Officer in the US Air Force, I have seen the amazing work of both the IDF and Mossad, and could not be more impressed. Also, as a Christian with many Jewish friends, I have not only studied and visited the historical sites of Israel, but have experienced the vibrant night life of Tel Aviv, the dynamic business culture (as outlined in one of my favorite books - Start up Nation), universities advancing ground breaking technologies (Technion), and the amazing people who so generously welcomed me to their country. Furthermore, my business partner is Israeli, born and raised outside of Tel Aviv, and is the grandson of one of the founders of the Nation of Israel. We met during my MBA at The Wharton School of The University of Pennsylvania - I chose him for his brilliance, tenacity, boldness and compassion - characteristics very common among Israelis in my experience.

SECURITY PARTNERSHIP

Israel has proven time and time again to be one of the United States' closest national security allies. The bilateral, mutually beneficial relationship originated at the founding of the Nation of Israel and has ensured Israel's qualitative military edge in the region ever since. This relationship provides the United States with a military staging area for Middle Eastern operations, highly valuable intelligence, and the ability to project power throughout the region. Furthermore, our partnership has developed groundbreaking military technologies like Iron Dome and David's sling. We must continue to work together to combat the numerous threats in the region that include transnational terror groups, Iran's development of nuclear weapons, and state backed terror groups like Hamas and Hezbollah. The \$3.3 billion appropriation for security assistance to Israel and \$500 million for cooperative missile defense programs outlined in the 10-year memorandum of understanding (MOU) is a critical first step in the security partnership between the U.S. and Israel.



COUNTERING THE AYATOLLAH & IRGC

Iran, led by the dogmatic and radical Ayatollah Khamenei, is one of the most dangerous threats to global security today. Iran is not only the largest state sponsor of terror in the world, but is also steadily moving towards the production of nuclear weapons. Israel provides the most robust and effective counterbalance to the Iranian threat through its military deterrent and intelligence operations designed to uncover and cripple Iran's nuclear advances. Furthermore, Israel's offensive cyber capabilities are exceptionally effective, as seen in the 2010 Stuxnet attack on Iran's nuclear weapons program. The United States must help Israel counter the Shia threat to its security and safety in every way possible. Pulling out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was a wise and responsible decision, but it's just a start. I will support future legislation that prevents Iran from further uranium enrichment, advancing its ballistic missile program, supporting Hezbollah and Hamas, committing human rights abuses, and advancing its goal of regional hegemony. In the immediate term, we must extend the UN arms embargo, which is set to expire in the fall of 2020. If we do not, Iran will be able to legally purchase weapons on the open market. The Ayatollah's will to fight on the world stage was exposed after the killing of IRGC General Soleimani earlier this year and the subsequent counter strike (I happened to be on military duty at the time of the strike). Weakening Iran is only possible if leaders within the United States government have a keen focus on this issue and a steadfast will to fight Iran and its supporters, like Russia. I pledge to be this type of leader in Congress. We must keep the pressure on Iran through political, military, economic, intelligence and diplomatic levers of power, and they must never acquire nuclear weapons. Allowing them to do so will threaten the existence of Israel and pose unthinkable danger to the United States.

ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AND TRADE RELATIONS

I witnessed first hand the power of the Israeli economy, which is fueled by the power and boldness of the Israeli mind, while visiting Israel in a Wharton Business School class entitled "Venture Capital and Entrepreneurship in Israel." We met and discussed YOZMA, the state backed Israeli technology incubator that jumpstarted the venture capital industry, and the IDF's Unit 8200, where much of Israel's defense technology originates. I was blown away by the entrepreneurial spirit in Israel and the incredible advances in a multitude of industries-- especially defense and high tech. Trade relations between the US and Israel must continue to grow and prosper in the coming decades. The United States is Israel's top export partner at \$18Bn. The majority of trade occurs in the defense, chemicals and pharmaceuticals, transportation equipment, food products, and telecom industries, but we can and should expand this list to additional sectors. Both the United States and Israel have much to gain from bolstering the relationship.

REJECT THE BDS NARRATIVE

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I pledge to combat the dangerous boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement, a Palestinian backed information warfare campaign rooted in anti-Semitism and anti-Israel rhetoric. The movement has been spread throughout college campuses and international bodies like the UN for decades. This destructive movement only impedes the peace process with the Palestinians. I will support future legislation to counter the BDS movement, and will work to prohibit U.S. corporations from doing business with entities that boycott Israel.

PROMOTING PEACE

I vividly remember traveling through a checkpoint in east Jerusalem, and immediately thinking how different the landscapes appeared. I traveled through the West Bank for hours and saw nothing but barren desert and desolate people, and heard stories of terrorist attacks and other violence at border checkpoints. I quickly realized that a two-state solution, directly negotiated between Israel and the Palestinians, is the only way forward in the peace process. Israel was founded as a Jewish homeland after the atrocities of WWII, and should remain so due to the thousands of years of anti-Semitism that our world has experienced. The one state solution would transform the Nation of Israel into an unrecognizable amalgamation that defies the original mission of founders like Ben Gurion and others. A peace settlement must begin with the understanding that Israel has a right to exist, and must include a commitment to stop terrorist threats originating from Gaza and the West Bank, both organically and sponsored from outside groups like Hezbollah and Hamas. I support continuing and expanding legislation such as the Taylor Force Act that can leverage foreign aid to Palestinians in order to meet these security goals. The US embassy was finally moved to Jerusalem in 2018. We must continue to make similar important milestones as we support Israel in the coming years.



Ben Bullock is a member of the Air Force Reserve. Use of his military rank, job titles, and photographs in uniform does not imply endorsement by the Department of the Air Force or the Department of Defense.

