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A position paper on Israel
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Personal History –

There are seminal junctures in a person's life during which one understands the importance of the moment even while experiencing it. Two such moments define my connection with the nation of Israel.

The first was in January 2016. My husband, as a member of Congress, and I, as a spouse, travelled with a Congressional Delegation to the Middle East and our first stop was Israel. During this visit, the spouses were escorted to primarily historical sites while the Members of Congress received more high-level intelligence briefings. Spouses, however, were included in a final meeting with Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israel prime minister.

During the approximately 90-minute meeting, I felt I was taking a master class in international relations and Israeli policy. It was both fascinating and educational. To hear the Prime Minister so eloquently speak to his country's place in the world was a transformative experience for me, especially because I was a Government and International Studies major in college. His discussion helped me understand the United States' relationship with Israel in a more concrete way than if I had read dozens of books on the subject.

The second moment came in December 2016, after my husband lost his race for re-election. Israeli Ambassador Ron Dermer and his wife, Rhoda, invited us to their residence for a dinner among the four of us. During the dinner we discussed the history of Israel, saw artifacts from history, and talked about how the United States and Israel could move forward together. Speaking with Ambassador Dermer, a former American who believed in a greater cause and emigrated to Israel, increased my understanding of Israel's importance, and how the Jewish state places great value on longstanding relationships: it is apparent that they reach out to support those that support them. I sensed their feelings of gratitude toward America.

Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions –

The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions ("BDS") campaigns that are occurring with more frequency across the world and on American campuses represent the most recent bags of tricks employed by opponents of Israel. This anti-Semitic movement attempts to equate the nation of Israel falsely with South African apartheid (early 60's to mid-90's). The absurdity of that would be laughable, if it were not so sinister. I know that from personal experience.

I was in South Africa during the time of apartheid and was in Israel in 2016 and the two periods have nothing in common. Clearly, these negative campaigns are simply marketing tools of anti-Israel groups that are designed to elicit an emotional reaction to turn people against Israel.



Because of these false accusations, it is more incumbent upon our elected officials to take decisive action against any type of BDS efforts. The United States and Congress, with the rule of law, must ensure that this movement does not gain a foothold in our country. Therefore, the United States must lead by example by not allowing these anti-Semitic efforts to occur. Furthermore, we must also continue initiating discussions with our allies everywhere to prevent that from happening.

In addition, the trade agreements the United States enters should contain language that explicitly prohibits trade with those entities that engage in BDS activities against Israel.

Human Rights –

With regard to important guideposts in the universal struggle for women to gain true equality, it is clear that Israel has already achieved a great deal of success. They have, for example, elected a woman as their prime minister, Golda Meir. The United States has not yet reached that goal. In addition, 51% of the officers in the Israeli Defense Force are women. Israel is again a leader in offering women equal opportunities to serve their nation.

Indeed, there are many areas within the human rights arena in which our government could look to Israel for examples.

My previous professional experience includes eight years as Vice President of Human Resources at Valmont Industries, a pioneer in center pivot irrigation systems and champion of wise water utilization across the world. With Israel recycling approximately 86% of its wastewater, there are obviously lessons that Israel can share with all of us. And as the world becomes more and more affected by climate change, it is important for all nations to have a place at the table combatting its devastating effects. Israel has become an important voice in this battle for the future of our planet. As allies, we grow stronger working together, trading technical knowledge.

Issues and challenges regarding fair labor practices, LGBTQ+ rights, education, and healthcare still exist for both our nations. We must take every opportunity to learn from one another, using best practices to develop solutions that work in our respective countries.

Security Assistance to Israel –

I support the assistance the United States provides to Israel in helping to maintain our ally's qualitative military edge in the Middle East and the 2016 Memo of Understanding between our two countries, with the United States committing \$38 billion over 10 years. This foreign aid investment in Israel also creates jobs for our American work force.

The United States must continue to support and rely upon Israel as the lone democracy in this volatile region. We share so many common values. We must continue our partnerships in innovative security and military solutions that benefit both our nations. With the most recent attacks on Israel and its people by the Palestinian Islamic Jihad as well as the continued actions of more traditional actors, it is more important than ever that the United States and Israel remain strongly committed to our strategic relationship.



Conclusion –

I believe that both Israel and the United States are committed to peace in the Middle East. Throughout the years, Israel has demonstrated a willingness to negotiate peace with the Palestinians, including instances in which Israel has given up land for peace. A two-state solution is the ideal for which we should strive. While it is important for the United States to recognize a Palestinian state, such recognition must not come at the expense of a secure Israel. I am committed to support the United States' actions that will lead us to peace. A strong and secure Israel is imperative to achieving this goal.

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