



JOHN JAMES: POSITION PAPER ON THE US-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

Israel is more than just a beacon of democracy in a sea of oppression. It is an essential and reliable ally of the United States, and our most important strategic partner in a volatile region. Ensuring the security of Israel and the peaceful continuation of Israel's democratic processes and culture in the Middle East is important not just because of our closely shared values. Israel is critical to the safety and security of the United States and failing to recognize and protect that relationship is shortsighted and dangerous.

Israel is a nation where democracy is a core value. A legal environment where the rights of women and all ethnic and religious minorities are protected by law, and where any citizen or non-citizen may directly petition the Supreme Court of Israel to challenge the constitutionality of an act by the Israeli government. A military that operates under the highest of ethical standards despite the barbarism it faces on a daily basis. Despite double-standard criticism from entities around the world, Israelis hold themselves tightly to democratic principles. Israelis truly live by the words of Isaiah, in their belief that "Zion will be redeemed with justice."

Additionally, Israel is a thriving economic partner and entrepreneurial society that stabilizes the region and produces some of the most innovative inventions in all sectors of the economy, including in biotechnology, defensive military systems, and agriculture. Israel produces doctors, professors, medical devices, computer technology, pharmaceutical advancement, and countless extraordinary advances. Israel's flourishing economy strengthens the region as a whole and benefits America's interests worldwide.

The United States must honor that strength by providing the necessary leadership to preserve and protect our unique strategic relationship with Israel – our most dependable ally in the fight against terrorism and extremism, and an outpost of stability in a violent and chaotic region.

I believe in the very special bond between Israel and the United States, and the importance of our mutual cooperation at this unprecedented time in history. I support continuing our commitments under the U.S. – Israel 10-year Memorandum of Understanding. Additionally, I support the creation of future Memorandums of Understandings, backed by Congress, so that security assistance to Israel continues to ensure Israel's military advantage in the region.

I also support efforts to increase funding for joint anti-missile and anti-tunneling programs. Additionally, I would support legislation like the Israel Anti-Boycott Act that actively opposes efforts at the United Nations or elsewhere to blacklist, boycott, divest from or sanction Israel. We must stand with Israel.

Members of the Senate have a duty to confront the very real threats we face as a result of the global struggle against radical Islamic extremism; from the rise of anti-Semitism to the perils of nuclear proliferation.

Why our Partnership with Israel Matters

Common Values

The United States and Israel have enjoyed a relationship based on shared values and common goals. Israel is a democratic stronghold in a region largely defined by oppression, tyranny and hotbeds of terrorist activity. It is imperative that America continues to support our ally who is surrounded by those who pursue its destruction. Fostering democracy around the world begins with preserving those that currently exist. Israel's commitment to democracy and the principles of individual freedom and human rights plays an essential role in ensuring human rights and liberty remain an example for the rest of the world.

Fighting Terrorism

No partnership is more essential in the fight against terrorism than the one the United States shares with Israel. The continuing and expanding threats around the world consistently show those who value the principles of freedom and liberty. We must work with our allies to confront and destroy terrorist groups—from ISIS to Iran's many terror proxies. We must also work together to continue to develop and deploy anti-missile technology to keep both civilians and our service members safe.

Now more than ever, our common belief in individual rights and democratic principles demands our full support of Israel's efforts to maintain its democracy and protect its people. In the fight against our common enemies, our ability to share intelligence and work together as partners is invaluable. The Israeli military is among the finest in the world and our commitment to support Israel's right to defend itself, by itself, is not only in Israel's best interest but in our own as well. The United States must speak in a clear, consistent voice in support of Israel and in opposition to those that threaten Israel's existence.

Opposing Iran's Efforts to Obtain Nuclear Weapons

The Iranian dictatorship is a threat to peace and stability. Iran is the largest state sponsor of terrorism in the world. I saw this firsthand during my service in Operation Iraqi Freedom, where Iran and its agents killed and injured many hundreds of Americans. Iran's desire to obtain nuclear weapons is a threat to the stability of the Middle East and the entire world. All means must be explored to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons capability.

I would have strongly opposed the Iran Nuclear Deal in 2015, because only paused and legitimized an illegitimate nuclear-weapons program, and it failed to address Iran's involvement in wars, terrorism and destabilizing behavior in many countries—actually providing massive amounts of money that Iran used to increase these activities. I support President Trump withdrawing from this deeply flawed agreement. I support the President's maximum pressure campaign, pressing the world to ensure tough enforcement including financial sanctions, to force the Iranian regime to come to a real agreement that genuinely ends its nuclear weapons program: extending sunset provisions, insistence of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspections at all sites, and prohibition of developing ballistic missiles. I also support the immediate extension of the international embargo on Iran's import and export of weapons systems, to which the 2015 nuclear deal added an expiration date in October 2020.

Radical extremist governments like Iran's must not be allowed to become nuclear powers. Iran has a history of attacking its neighbors, kidnapping American diplomats and supporting terrorist activity. Iran has made no secret of its position calling for the destruction of Israel and spending massive resources to try to achieve that goal, at the expense of its own population. The United States and the international community have a moral imperative to thwart any such attempt by ensuring Iran does not become a nuclear power.

To that end, I support a strategy that includes economic sanctions, political isolation, and, if necessary, military action. We must project strength to Iran's rogue regime, and to do so means leaving every possible option on the table. Iran cannot be allowed to develop a nuclear weapons capability and the United States must use every measure necessary to prevent Iran from crossing that threshold.

Ensuring Israel Has a True Partner When It Discusses a Two-State Solution

Time and time again, Israel has been willing to negotiate for peace. Israel has been willing to make tough sacrifices, but it is not finding a willing partner in Palestinian leadership who will also make the tough sacrifices to bring peace.

I support a two-state solution: a Jewish state of Israel living in peace and security with a demilitarized Palestinian state that recognizes Israel's legitimacy instead of defining itself by hatred and rejection. That two-state solution can only come if two true partners come to the table and have direct talks. Direct talks, not using international organizations such as the International Criminal Court attempting to impose their will on Israel, can only occur with Israeli and Palestinian representation that truly believes in a peaceful outcome. Hamas is not a willing partner and should not be included in these talks as they are fundamentally dedicated to Israel's destruction. Other Arab states can play a constructive role in fostering peace in the region. Only when Palestinian leadership truly believes in a peaceful outcome and is willing to make sacrifices, can the parties achieve a peaceful solution.

Regarding peace efforts, I support the current framework proposed by President Trump for a responsible two-state solution. This peace plan is yet another positive step in the right direction, following on the heels of President Trump moving our embassy to Jerusalem.

I also oppose all forms of BDS, which by denying Israel's legitimacy and applying a double standard on it, is a form of anti-Semitism. BDS is also dishonest and counterproductive. I will stand up for Israel and against anti-Semitism. I fully respect the free speech rights of every American, which are separate from the lawful right of Congress to regulate commerce, including to oppose commercial BDS activity. These issues should not be partisan and I will work with leaders from all parties to ensure there is appropriate support for Israel.

Conclusion

We live in perilous times, and I'm committed to protecting Americans from those who wish to do us harm and destroy our way of life. To do that, we must protect our friends in Israel. I have been and always will be a friend to Israel. Whether it's confronting Iran, defeating terrorists in Syria, or advocating for the US-Israel partnership internationally and at home, measures to bolster our alliance with Israel can count on my full support in the US Senate.

Paid for by John James for US Senate, Inc.

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