

JEWISH INSIDER

1). Do you believe there is a concerning rise of antisemitism on the [Right or Left], including in your own party? How do you propose to address this issue?

Yes. Anti-Semitism is intolerable and we must root it out wherever it is found. Since President Trump has taken office, antisemitism in the United States has increased dramatically. The horrendous massacre of Jewish worshippers at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh should have been a wake-up call, but unfortunately, we haven't done nearly enough to combat the surge of hatred. It is particularly important that those of us who are committed to the pursuit of social justice, equity, and antiracism stand up against antisemitism wherever and whenever it rears its ugly head. We must be vigilant not only to fight bigotry when it comes from the other side of the aisle, but to also hold ourselves accountable.

In addition, there are a few concrete measures Congress can take at the federal level to address the intolerable rise of antisemitism, including:

- 1. Increasing funding for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program. Most temples and synagogues do not have the funding on their own to install adequate security measures, which are all the more critical to preventing hate crimes against the Jewish community in the context of rising antisemitism in America. Funding the NSGP corrects this problem. Senator Chuck Schumer has called for increasing the funding to \$360 million, a position I support.**
- 2. We need a federal domestic terrorism statute to empower the FBI to open investigations into domestic hate crimes and attacks, on the Jewish community and all others.**

2). Do you think a two-state solution will facilitate peace between Israelis and Palestinians? If so, what are the basic parameters? If not a two-state solution, what do you suggest? What do you agree or disagree with about the Trump peace plan?

There is no substitute for a two-state solution, which would result in a Jewish democratic Israel alongside a free and independent Palestine. And ultimately, this simply won't happen unless the parties come to the table and negotiate the parameters for a solution themselves.

The Trump Administration's foray into the peacemaking process is unlikely to

change matters for the better. In particular, by failing to take into account Palestinian interests and perspectives, the Administration effectively seeks to impose a solution upon the parties— which all but guarantees the initiative will fail. The United States—as

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a key ally and friend of Israel—should instead encourage the parties to work towards peace and discourage both sides from taking unilateral steps that will make a two-state solution unattainable.

3). Why would you re-enter or stay out of the JCPOA with Iran? If re-enter, under what conditions or changes? How should the United States deal with the Iranian government on an ongoing basis? Should the U.S. military maintain a presence in the Middle East?

As the son of an emigrant from Iran who left a country of dictatorship for a country of freedom, I take very seriously Iran's human rights abuses at home and the threat it poses to the Middle East – Israel, in particular. All promise for peace could be lost if Iran acquires nuclear weapons, threatening Israel's existence and launching a nuclear arms race in the Middle East.

In spite of its limitations, the JCPOA united the P5+ plus 1 countries to curtail the Iranian regime's uranium enrichment and institute an inspections regime. It also sent a message to the seventy percent of Iranians who are under 30 and those that oppose the regime, that the United States and our Allies, while insisting that Iran not be allowed to have nuclear weapons, were open to using strong diplomacy backed up by a strong military to resolve our disputes.

Ultimately, there is no substitute for rigorous diplomacy. And it is best for the U.S. to pursue a coordinated strategy with our lead allies to try and replace the JCPOA with a stronger, better deal – one which deprives the Iranian regime of nuclear weapons, curtails its sponsorship of terrorism, and limits its campaign to destabilize the Middle East.

The Trump Administration can't make up its mind regarding the scope of America's international military presence. Its so-called "America First" foreign policy (a phrase which -- we need to remember -- originated with Nazi sympathizers in the 1930s that President Trump adopted in spite of objections from the Anti Defamation League) is an incoherent mess, which fluctuates between bellicose adventurism and selfish isolationism. Instead, the United States should honor its commitments to its allies and have a thoughtful, strategic, foreign and national security policy that protects the vital interests of the United States and our close allies.

I'm honored that several senior national security leaders have endorsed me in my race for Congress and I will continue to call on them for advice and counsel if elected. These include Former UN Ambassador and National Security Advisor Susan Rice, Four Star General Stan McChrystal, Former Undersecretary of Defense Michele Flournoy, Senator

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Gary Hart, Ambassador Daniel Benjamin and Former Assistant Secretary of Defense, Douglas Wilson.

4). 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 aid for specific results? What does the U.S. benefit from its relationship with Israel?

The United States' relationship with Israel is deeply rooted in shared democratic values and common interests. Our relationship with Israel contributes to our national security and to our economic prosperity -- we benefit from sharing intelligence to fight terrorism, the entrepreneurial innovations that Israel and its people continue to develop, its model of national service and more. I fully support of our aid to Israel.

I don't think we should be leveraging or conditioning aid to our allies. The Trump Administration has dramatically weakened our credibility in its willingness to tear up international agreements

and hold up foreign assistance. We need our allies to be able to trust the United States, and know that even if we're divided on important issues, we will still stand together.

I also strongly support resuming assistance to the Palestinian people, and finding ways to proactively invest in those who are working to achieve a two-state solution.