

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?

The Democrat Party, and its auxiliary organizations, have been taken over by anti-Israeli and antisemitic forces. I was stunned when President Obama, supported by Democrats in Congress, risked Israel's safety and security by forming the horrible JCPOA. Even the influential group J-Street, a Democrat controlled advocacy organization that claims to seek "real peace and security for Israel," supported the JCPOA despite that fact that they are not technically beholden to the radical primary voters the Democrat members of Congress are.

On the other hand, Republicans were virtually unified in our opposition to the JCPOA — this was to be expected. From the moment I took my Congressional seat in 2001, it was clear to me that support for Israel and the Jewish people is a top priority for the Republican party. During my first term, I worked closely with my fellow freshman Mark Kirk and Eric Cantor, both of whom later entered party leadership as a Senator and the House Majority leader respectively, to send pro-Israel legislation to President Bush's desk.

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?

I have always thought that a fairly negotiated 2-state solution between Israelis and Palestinians is essential for achieving long-term stability in the region. However, that negotiation needs to occur in good faith between two sensible partners who are equally committed to attaining lasting peace.

Regrettably, good faith negation is not currently possible because of the PLO's conduct. While the PLO expresses a desire to negotiate a final peace deal with Israel when it speaks to the international community, in the rhetoric it delivers to its Palestinian constituents, it continues to stoke the flames of division.

Until the PLO's leadership abandons this behavior, I am not optimistic there will be a peace deal. The PLO has been playing this political game with the world for years—including during my opponent's formative years when his father was an active member.

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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?

In 2006, the United Nations Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 1737 to impose economic sanctions against Iran. This multinational agreement was effective in tempering Iran's destructive tendencies.

Like most Republicans, I was candid with my strong opposition to President Obama's decision to terminate these effective sanctions and to pay Iran a 1.7 billion-dollar bribe. Those actions augmented Iran's ability to threaten and harm Israel.

Apart from Congressman Juan Vargas, all the other elected Democrats representing the greater San Diego region held the Democrat Party line and voted with President Obama against Israel. Israel and the United States must now work together to reverse the damage the JCPOA did to global security.

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?

Israel is no longer a recipient of foreign economic aid. Almost all U.S. aid to Israel is now in the form of military assistance. This assistance should continue. Israel is the region's only democracy; long-term regional stability in the Middle East will only be possible if Israel remains a decisive military ally.