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Israel is one of the United States' most important allies in the world. Our strong relationship and continued partnership with Israel is vital to the future of both countries, and the future stability in the Middle East. A strong Israel is critical to long-term stability in the region. The U.S. must work with Israel to ensure a safe and secure future.

## Iran

Our primary goal in the Middle East must be stopping Iran from ever gaining nuclear weapons. The leading state sponsor of terrorism in the region can never obtain nuclear capability. Iran continues to sponsor terrorist activity across the globe, and at home they preach death to Israel and to America. We must work to exert maximum pressure on the Iranian regime to ensure that the national security interests of both Israel and America are being met.

The Iran Nuclear Deal that was negotiated under former President Obama put both America and our allies at great risk. By freeing up billions of dollars in sanctions and not having strict inspections, Iran remained free and capable of advancing their nuclear program.

President Trump has stated that the United States is withdrawing from our deal with Iran. This move allows us to move forward, returning sanctions into place and gives us the opportunity to take steps towards real inspections of Iran's nuclear potential and an opportunity to curb their other malign activities in the region. With a hostile nation like Iran, we must verify, and never trust.

## United States Aid to Israel

Israel has always faced the threat of radical Islamic terrorism, and that threat continues to grow. Israel must be empowered to secure their borders and protect its people. Continued advancement of missile defense systems like David's Sling, Arrow 3, and the Iron Dome air defense systems are key to Israel being able to combat threats from neighboring states who wish to destroy the only true democracy in the region.

The U.S. needs to do its part to assist Israel by ensuring they have the funding and resources necessary to defend their borders and react to imminent threats. Israel cannot begin to tackle many other issues until they have truly secured their border. As an ally, we must do all that we can to ensure Israel has the resources to perfect these defensive systems, strengthen its military, and ultimately secure its sovereignty. I support full funding of aid in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding and cooperative efforts in other areas like drone and tunnel detection technology, cyber security, and water.

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## **Combatting BDS Act**

The only goal of any boycott, divestment and sanctions policy is to destabilize Israel, and these policies cannot be permitted. The U.S. needs a strong Israel as a pillar for democracy and a real ally in the Middle East, and we cannot afford to risk the long-term stability of our partner.

In Congress, we must support and enact anti-BDS legislation such as the Combatting BDS Act of 2017. This legislation enables state and local governments to restrict business dealings with any groups that target Israel through the use of BDS tactics. Empowering our states to seek out and deny these bad actors will help support Israel and safeguard against any destabilizing efforts. I would also support the Israel Anti-Boycott act, which defends U.S. companies from being forced to participate in anti-Israel boycotts from international organizations like the EU or UN. BDS is anti-Semitic and seeks to economically isolate Israel. The U.S. must stand with Israel against BDS.

The U.S. contributes more than 20% of the permanent budget to the United Nations. As such we hold tremendous influence and should use that influence to combat anti-Israel bias within the international community. The Palestinians continue to use their diplomatic status to make false accusations of war crimes and garner support for biased boycotts. The U.S. must always work to make sure these arguments are exposed as lies and stand strong in defending Israel within the international community.

## **Peace in the Middle East**

We cannot have peace in the Middle East without a safe and secure Israel. Palestinian refusal to recognize Israel as a Jewish State, along with the continued incitement of violence and support of terrorism continues to be the primary barrier to any real advancement of peaceful solutions. The U.S. must hold Palestinian leadership accountable. Only then can real progress towards peace be accomplished. I am supportive of the efforts of the Taylor Force Act, which eliminates funding to the Palestinian Authority if they continue their practice of paying terrorists and their families. I will work towards furthering these efforts to bring peace to the most volatile region in the world. This peace process must come from the parties themselves, though, or it will never last.

If Middle Eastern peace is to be solved, the state of Israel and the Palestinian Authority must come together to negotiate and ultimately agree upon the terms. This problem cannot be solved by the United Nations. And the U.S.'s role should never be to pressure Israel into any agreement. Israel must retain its sovereign right to defend itself and the Palestinian Authority must denounce violence against Israel carried out by Hamas.

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**Conclusion**

Israel is the one true democracy and our greatest ally in the Middle East. We must continue to partner with them to ensure they are able to secure their borders, create a thriving economy, and prosper in a dangerous part of the world. As a member of Congress, I will support Israel and work to promote policies and legislation that further the cause of one of our oldest and strongest allies, not just in the region, but in the world.

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