

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?

History has taught us what dark depths of depravity and inhumanity anti-Semitic bigotry can lead to. I'm deeply disturbed that in recent years, we have heard similar anti-Semitic tropes from the extreme far-right and far-left in the United States. We have also seen a rise in anti-Semitic hate crimes throughout the United States, including the tragic mass shooting at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh.

America has always been a warm and welcoming home for the Jewish diaspora, especially during times in which totalitarian regimes systematically discriminated against their Jewish citizens. We can never allow anti-Semitism to gain a footing in mainstream American politics or society, because such hate runs directly counter to the American values we have always cherished.

As a U.S. Senator, one of the ways I've worked to counter anti-Semitism is by forcefully opposing the "Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions" Movement — an orchestrated campaign to delegitimize the State of Israel, shun Jewish academics, boycott Jewish goods, and disrupt Jewish commerce.

In 2019, I strongly supported the Strengthening America's Security in the Middle East Act, which among other things empowers state and local governments in the U.S. to counter the anti-Israel BDS movement's discriminatory economic warfare against the Jewish state.

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?

The ultimate goal of Israel and the United States is a two-state solution that brings long-term peace and stability to the region.

The only path to a two-state solution is through a bilateral agreement based on existing legal framework. Unfortunately, the Palestinian Authority has routinely demonstrated an unwillingness to honor conditions laid out in previous agreements. The Palestinian Authority must meet its existing written obligations to collect illegal weapons; pursue terrorists; cooperate with Israeli security forces; change the Fatah Constitution which still calls for the complete eradication of the State of Israel; and to stop inciting terrorism.

I am adamantly opposed to any proposal to base a Palestinian state on 1967 borders, which leaves major settlements in the West Bank outside Israeli borders. This is a reckless and unfair precondition that threatens the security of Israel and ignores decades of history in the process.

Additionally, the United States must reject any Palestinian Authority attempts to demand concessions as preconditions for peace talks with Israel.

Israel has constantly demonstrated that it is a fair and honest party in peace talks, willing to make major concessions to secure a lasting peace. A two-state solution will only become a reality when the Palestinian Authority is willing to do the same.

I applaud the President's efforts to bring peace to the entire Middle East. He has certainly been more effective than President Obama in this regard.

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?

A nuclear Iran represents a national security risk to the United States and a mortal threat to Israel.

I opposed the Obama administration's nuclear deal with Iran, which was signed under the operating principle that any deal – even a bad one – was better than no deal. A bad deal is exactly what we got, effectively paving the path for Iran's nuclear ambitions. I was not surprised when the agreement was met with staunch bipartisan opposition in the Senate, and I voted in favor of the resolution of disapproval, which unfortunately did not pass at the time.

When I visited the Middle East in 2016 to meet with foreign leaders, including Prime Minister Netanyahu, they all expressed fears that the deal would fail to halt Iran's march toward nuclearization and empower the regime by lifting economic sanctions. Their fears have been realized, as Iran is now more emboldened than ever.

I supported President Trump's decision to withdraw from the nuclear deal, which ends the experiment of appeasement and allows us to once again hold Iran accountable for its belligerence and support for terrorism. I have also voted in favor of imposing sanctions on Iran, which have been proven to be effective in weakening the Iranian regime.

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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?

Although Israel spends a greater percentage of its GDP on defense than any other advanced nation in the world, it is still forced to contend with increasingly significant threats to its national security.

American military aid to Israel is absolutely crucial to maintaining Israel's "qualitative military edge" over hostile regimes and terrorist organizations in the region.

Likewise, Israel has made vast contributions in maintaining America's global military superiority, greatly assisted by Israel's highly advanced weapons and missile defense systems technology. Countless American lives have been saved thanks to the invaluable information Israeli intelligence services provide the United States.

As U.S. Senator, I have pushed for a continuation of significant military assistance to Israel to help ensure its security in an increasingly unstable region. I strongly supported and voted in favor of the Strengthening America's Security in the Middle East Act of 2019, which strengthens the U.S.-Israel alliance by authorizing security assistance to Israel over a 10-year period pursuant to the 2016 Memorandum of Understanding.