

DOLD FOR CONGRESS



COMMITMENT TO A STRONG U.S.-ISRAELI RELATIONSHIP AND ISRAEL'S LONG-TERM SECURITY

My Trip to Israel

It is a strategic imperative and moral necessity for the United States to preserve its close relationship with the State of Israel. Since the beginning of the modern Jewish state in 1948, the United States and Israel have shared a special bond. This relationship is based on shared values, including our mutual commitment to democracy, the rule of law, freedom of religion and freedom of speech.

I traveled to Israel for a week-long visit in May of this year because I wanted to see, first-hand, the critical security challenges that Israel and America currently face together in the Middle East. It is essential that we recognize Israel's many challenges and sacrifices, and this visit further made it clear to me why American leaders must have the courage to publicly express solidarity with Israel—especially when she is forced to act in self-defense. In these critical times, when many in the international community routinely single out Israel for condemnation and attempt to delegitimize her very existence and humanitarian values, we must stand firmly with our ally, Israel.

I have had serious concerns about this Administration's tone and tactics in the Middle East. The United States must not distance itself from our historic allies, in a misguided effort to engage our foes. Rather than pressuring Israel publicly, we must keep primarily focused on working with our Israeli partners to halt Iran's drive toward a nuclear weapon, and to advance the peace process in a way that ensures Israel's long-term security. Together, we face the common threats from radical Islamic terrorism, Iran, and Iran's proxies throughout the world—we must stand together in this fight for freedom and democracy.

A Local Issue

For our community, Israel is a local issue. With hundreds of suburban Chicago students, families and community leaders traveling to Israel throughout the year, Illinois's 10th Congressional District has a proud tradition of leading on the pro-Israel movement. We are home to one of the largest and most passionate pro-Israel communities in America, and have truly been blessed with outstanding leadership on this issue in Congress. I am dedicated to continuing Congressman Mark Kirk's hard work and achievements towards a strong U.S.-Israel relationship. Our District deserves a pro-Israel champion representing it in Congress, and I am committed to being that voice.



Overlooking Jerusalem's Old City



Discussing security matters in Jerusalem with Col. Dan Tirza (Ret.), the chief planner of Israel's security barrier

"Robert Dold's commitment to the U.S.-Israel relationship is impressive. I am confident he will continue our tradition of strong, effective pro-Israel leadership in the House of Representatives."

-Congressman Mark Kirk (IL-10)

The Peace Process

Democracies are best when they stick together. As Congressman, I will back the democratically elected government of Israel as it works to keep its citizens secure. The United States can play an important role in the peace process; however, it is ultimately up to Israel and the Palestinian Authority to forge a peace agreement. No country, including the United States, can impose its own solution on the two parties.

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Throughout my trip to Israel in May, I met with numerous security experts and gained a renewed perspective on the threats posed by Hezbollah, Hamas, and by terrorist attacks inside Israel. I am confident that an unwavering U.S.-Israeli relationship is the best way to confront these threats, and the only appropriate way to move forward.

Israel has repeatedly demonstrated its willingness to act unilaterally to promote peace in the region, as evidenced by its unilateral withdrawal from Gaza in 2005. I will oppose any support to or recognition of Hamas, unless Hamas (1) recognizes Israel's right to exist; (2) ends its support for terrorism; and (3) accepts all agreements made between the Palestinian Authority and Israel.

I support an undivided Jerusalem as the recognized capital of the State of Israel. Jerusalem must remain unified under Israeli control if it is to survive as an intact city offering religious freedom to everyone within its boundaries. Further, I support moving the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, in accordance with the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995.



Looking into Gaza from the southern Israeli city of Sderot

Foreign Aid from the U.S. to Israel

Foreign aid is the cornerstone of the U.S.-Israel relationship. The foreign aid program is critical to maintaining Israel's qualitative military edge, increasing bilateral defense coordination and creating jobs here at home. As Congressman, I will vote for the annual foreign aid bill which includes security assistance for Israel and support for our commitment under the current 10-year Memorandum of Understanding. I believe this MOU helps us safeguard democracy, deter the growing threat from Iran, and fight terrorists and their sponsors.

In addition, I will work to increase oversight of U.S. assistance to Egypt, the Palestinian Authority and multilateral organizations like the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) to ensure taxpayer funds are never used to support terrorism, weaken Israel's security, or undermine U.S. foreign policy goals. UNRWA should be pressured to allow an independent audit of its expenditures to ensure no funds benefit Hamas terrorists in Gaza. Egypt must remain a partner in combating terrorism by stopping the flow of Iranian arms into Gaza.

Iran

The United States must continue to take strong and immediate actions to stop Iran from developing nuclear weapons. A nuclear Iran is not just a threat to Israel – it is a threat to the United States, Europe and our allies around the globe. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's threats to "wipe Israel off the map" and his denials of the Holocaust reflect a dangerous ideology that threatens world peace. Strong, determined action is needed now for diplomacy to succeed, but all options must always remain on the table—a nuclear Iran is unacceptable.

I support the United States in using all diplomatic, political and economic measures available to remove the threat posed by Iran's nuclear weapons program. Such measures could include increasing economic sanctions on the current regime and the country's central bank; increasing sanctions against foreign suppliers, insurers and brokers of gasoline; and support for democracy groups inside Iran. I fully support tough, unilateral sanctions aimed at Iran's nuclear energy program, including the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act that Congress passed this summer. The President needs to implement this law aggressively and quickly against those who support Iran's nuclear program. I also support Congressional action to authorize state and local governments to divest from companies investing in Iran's petroleum and natural gas sector, and protect fund managers who divest from such companies from potential lawsuits.

As Congressman, I will strongly support missile defense programs, including the Arrow-3, to defend the United States, Europe and Israel from Iran's growing ballistic missile threat.