

As a Jewish American, I have a deep personal connection to the State of Israel, and I have consistently been a steadfast friend and supporter to the Jewish state in her quest for peace and security.

I am committed to ensuring the survival of Israel as a Jewish State. A negotiated, two-state solution that provides safety and security for all people in Israel and the Palestinian territories offers the best prospect for long-term peace for the region. Such an agreement has the potential to provide lasting security for Israel, a better life for Palestinians, and a future of peace for the Middle East.

While the United States cannot dictate the terms of a peace agreement, strong U.S. leadership in support of peace remains critical. I support President Obama's efforts to urge both the Israelis and the Palestinians to abide by their international commitments and to encourage both sides to meet at the negotiating table to work out a solution to the difficult and longstanding conflict. I strongly support U.S. efforts to support the Palestinian and Israeli direct talks and I am optimistic that progress can be made.

In a September 20th, 2010 address to the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said of the beginning of direct talks: “There are two things that I think made a great impression on me. One is the commitment of President Obama and Secretary Clinton to assist in the process in our quest for peace. And I share that commitment. We want peace. ...

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Israel continues to face serious security threats, and U.S.-Israel security cooperation is as close as it has ever been. This Congress, and the Obama Administration, is entirely committed to strengthening Israel's Qualitative Military Edge, or QME, over potential regional adversaries. This commitment takes the form of greater security cooperation with Israel than at any other time in history, training and joint military exercises, weapons sales, and support for research and development of new defense systems.

Recently, Congress approved the President's request for \$205 million to support Israel's deployment of the Iron Dome rocket defense system. This defensive weapons system will play a critical role in helping Israel defend its citizens from the ongoing short-range rockets attacks by Hamas and Hezbollah.

In addition, President Obama and the U.S. Congress have strongly supported the 2007 Memorandum of Understanding signed between Israel and the United States. The Obama Administration's budget requests have provided Israel with the full levels of assistance set forth under this agreement. Last year, Congress fully funded the President's \$2.775 billion request for aid to Israel, and we will make certain that full funding is provided again this year.

Under this Congress and this Administration, the United States has led global efforts to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. Tehran's nuclear ambitions pose a grave threat, not only to Israel but also to the United States and the entire world. After extensive diplomatic outreach by the Obama Administration, the UN Security Council recently passed a fourth round

of sanctions, the strongest international economic pressure against Tehran to date.

To complement these international efforts, Congress passed the Comprehensive Iran

Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act, recently signed into law by the President. This legislation implements a new array of economic penalties against companies engaging with key sectors of the Iranian economy, and is aimed at persuading Iran to abandon its pursuit of nuclear weapons.

Following a meeting in July 2010, President Obama unequivocally stated “The bond between the United States and Israel is unbreakable. It encompasses our national security interests, our strategic interests, but, most importantly, the bond of two democracies who share a common set of values and whose people have grown closer and closer as time goes on.” Prime Minister Netanyahu reiterated this point, stating “We have an enduring bond of values, interests, beginning with security, and the way that we share both information and other things to help the common defense of our common interests,”

We need to continually renew and strengthen this relationship. Both at home in my district and in the halls of Congress, I am always working to strengthen the U.S.-Israel bond, and to advance the security of the only true democracy in the Middle East, our ally Israel.

What I've done in support of Israel and Middle East peace:

Defense and Israel's security:

Cosponsored H.Res. 1359, calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. Introduced by Congressman Gary Ackerman, this resolution marks the fourth anniversary of Shalit's kidnapping, condemns Hamas for seizing and holding him contrary to international law, and expresses support for Israel.

Signed the Poe/Peters letter to President Obama supporting Israel's right to self-defense in the wake of the Gaza flotilla incident. Sent in June 2010, this letter urged the President to remain steadfast in support of Israel and to oppose and, if necessary, use U.S. veto power to oppose any Security Council resolutions condemning Israel.

Voted for H.R. 5327, the U.S.-Israel Rocket and Missile Defense Cooperation and Support Act. Introduced by Congressman Glenn Nye and passed on May 20, 2010, this bill authorizes assistance to Israel for the Iron Dome Short Range Artillery Rocket Defense system, which is intended to intercept short-range rockets, missiles, and mortars launched at Israel.

Voted for H.R. 3081, the FY 2010 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill. This legislation, passed by the House on July 9, 2009, includes \$2.220 billion for Israel which, when combined with the \$555 million that had already been approved under the 2009 war supplemental, equaled the \$2.775 billion set forth under the 2007 U.S.-Israel memorandum of understanding.

Voted for H.Res. 34, a resolution recognizing Israel's right to defend itself against attacks from Gaza. Passed during Operation Cast lead in January 2009, this resolution, introduced by Speaker Pelosi, also called for protection of civilian life and urged Hamas to end rocket and mortar attacks against Israel, recognize Israel's right to exist, renounce violence, accept previous agreements between Israel and the Palestinians, and dismantle terrorist infrastructure.

Iran:

Signed the Jackson/Pence letter to President Obama calling for crippling sanctions on Iran. Sent April 15, 2010, this letter urged the President to immediately impose crippling sanctions on Iran, including sanctions on the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corp, the banking system, and the refined petroleum sector.

Cosponsored and voted for H.R. 2194, the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2009 (formerly called the Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act). This bill was introduced by Chairman Howard Berman, passed by the House in December 2009, and is currently being finalized by a House/Senate conference. Once signed into law, it will impose new sanctions on businesses that help Iran obtain or produce refined petroleum, as well as on financial institutions doing business with Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps or certain Iranian banks blacklisted by the U.S. Treasury Department.

Cosponsored and voted for H.R. 1327, the Iran Sanctions Enabling Act of 2009. Introduced by Congressman Barney Frank and passed by the House on October 14, 2009, this bill would allow state and local governments and educational institutions to divest from entities heavily invested in Iran's energy sector.

Middle East Peace:

Signed the Hoyer/Cantor letter to Obama supporting Israeli/Palestinian peace. Sent May 1, 2009, this letter urged the President to pursue peace based on the principles that parties themselves must negotiate any agreement, the U.S. must work closely with our ally Israel, we should promote greater participation of Arab states, and the Palestinians must commit to end violence, terror, and incitement and to build institutions necessary for a viable state.

Cosponsor of H.Res. 130, a resolution supporting the appointment of former Senator George Mitchell as Special Envoy for Middle East Peace. Introduced by Congressman Delahunt, this resolution also supports the Administration in its pursuit of a diplomatic, two-state solution.

Voted for H.Res. 282, a resolution recognizing the 30th anniversary of the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. Introduced by Congressman Jeff Fortenberry and passed in March 2009, this bill also recognizes the Egypt-Israel peace treaty as a model for overcoming longstanding barriers to peace and calls for the strengthening of economic, diplomatic, and cultural relations between the two countries.

Signed a letter to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations in support of the Middle East Regional Cooperation (MERC) Program. Sent on March 19, 2010, this letter urged the subcommittee to provide \$5 million for the MERC program, which brings Israeli scientists together with their counterparts in Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon, Jordan, the Palestinian Authority, and Saudi Arabia.

Signed the Sherman/Royce letter to King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, urging him to work toward peace with Israel. This letter, sent in July 2009, expressed disappointment with the Saudi insistence on the return of all Arab lands as a precondition to any negotiations, and instead urged the Saudis to take an active leadership role in pursuit of peace.

U.S.-Israel relations:

Signed the Hoyer/Cantor letter to Secretary Clinton urging the Administration to reaffirm the strength of the U.S.-Israel relationship. This letter was on sent March 26, 2010 in the wake of President Biden's visit to Israel, and it urged Sec. Clinton to reaffirm the strength of the U.S.-Israel relationship and to ensure that future differences were resolved as befits longstanding allies.

Voted for H.Con.Res. 111, a resolution recognizing the 61st anniversary of the independence of the State of Israel. Introduced by Congressman Scott Garrett and passed on May 4, 2009, this resolution also commends bipartisan congressional and administration commitment to Israel since 1948 and congratulates the U.S. and Israel for strengthening bilateral relations in recent years.

Signed a letter to the House Appropriations Committee urging support for U.S.-Israel cooperative energy research. Sent in March 2010, this letter called for \$10 million for the implementation of the U.S.-Energy Cooperative Agreement in the FY2011 Energy and Water Appropriations bill.

Israel and International Organizations:

Cosponsored and voted for H.Res. 867, a resolution condemning the biased Goldstone report. Passed on October 23, 2009, this resolution also expressed support for Administration efforts to fight anti-Israel bias at the U.N. and called on the President and Secretary of State to

oppose any further action on the Goldstone report in multilateral organizations.

Voted for H.Res. 1391, a resolution congratulating Israel for gaining membership in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Passed on May 28, 2010, the resolution also recognizes the important role the U.S. played in Israel's accession bid and calls on nations to support Israel's efforts to join or enhance its participation in international forums.

Signed a letter to President Obama regarding Israel's accession to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Sent on May 24, 2010, this letter expresses appreciation for the U.S. role in support of Israel's membership and urges the U.S. to continue to fight efforts to undermine Israel's legitimacy.

Signed a letter to OECD Secretary General Angel Gurría regarding Israel's accession to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Sent on May 24, 2010, this letter thanks Gurría for OECD's decision to invite Israel to join the organization, and for his personal efforts to ensure that Israel's bid was judged fairly.

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