

L'taken Speech
January 26, 2014

Topic: Israel

The security and well being of Israel is one of the most important issues to American Jews. In a region of the world that is widely considered not politically stable, Israel offers an example of democracy that we as Americans often take for granted. Unfortunately, the neighboring countries of the Jewish state fail to acknowledge Israel, not only as an independent Jewish state, but also as a model of democracy functioning in the Middle East.

A couple of years ago while touring with my family, I fell in love in with Israel. Contrary to the beliefs of most people, I felt extremely safe while there. I fell in love with not only the falafel and Shawarma but also the vast history and beautiful scenery. While in the holy land, I had a difficult time grasping that I was in the Middle East, a region that is often on the news for negative reasons. I am really looking forward to visiting Israel in the future!

US-Israeli relations not only benefit the Jewish state, but our country as well. 75 % of American foreign aid sent to Israel is spent in the United States, which helps our technological innovation and job creation. US military aid to Israel also enables Israel's military to fend off serious security threats such as terrorism and weapons proliferation, which is incredibly important to a country surrounded on all borders by unfriendly nations. In turn, Israel actively shares prized information concerning technological advances with the United States military. Every year, Congress supplies Israel with a portion of the ten-year 30 billion dollar assistance package, and it is up to our Congressman to assure that the critical amount is received by the Israeli government.

When I traveled to Israel a few years ago, I had the privilege to pray at the Kotel. Never have I felt more blessed to openly pray at a Jewish Landmark, and I feel incredibly thankful to the forces that protect the Jew's homeland. I am especially grateful to the United States' government for continually helping to shield Israel, so that American Jews like me can have the pleasure of traveling to the Jewish State.

We believe a two-state solution is necessary to protect Israel's status as a Jewish, democratic state. A state, which offers an example to its neighbors on how to bridge the gap between democracy and religion.

In addition to threats from Israel's immediate neighbors, we fear Iran's development of nuclear weapons. The acquisition of nuclear weapons by Iran whose leadership has repeatedly called for the destruction of the Jewish state, would pose an unacceptable and existential threat to Israel and imminent danger to other nation, including ours, as well.

Senator/Congressman, we urge you to continue to vote for foreign aid for Israel, as a demonstration of American support for Israel, their peace process, and Israel's security.

We also urge you to support active and sustained US involvement in achieving a viable two state solution for the Israelis and the Palestinians. This is in line with resolutions previously passed by congress and represents the only viable option for peace in the Middle East.

The RAC L'Taken weekend was one of the best weekends of my life! I met people from all over the country who were for the most part very intelligent. I cannot wait to go back to L'Taken next year!

- Danny Goldberg
- Zoe Zirlin