

# Stand with Israel

***“The United States was the first country to recognize Israel in 1948, minutes after its declaration of independence, and the deep bonds of friendship between the U.S. and Israel remain as strong and unshakeable as ever.”***

--President Barack Obama, April 28, 2009

**President Obama is steadfast in his commitment to the American-Israeli relationship and believes that standing with Israel includes helping Israel find security through peace.**

As a presidential candidate, Obama stated that “the United States’ special relationship with Israel obligates us to be helpful to them in the search for credible partners with whom they can make peace, while also supporting Israel in defending itself against enemies sworn to its destruction,” stressing that Israel has “very real – and very dangerous – enemies.” President Obama reiterated this in April 2009 when he said that he “looks forward to working with Israel to advance our common interests, including the realization of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East, ensuring Israel’s security, and strengthening the bilateral relationship, over the months and years to come.”

**President Obama believes that honesty is integral to being an ally.**

In reference to Israel, President Obama said that “part of being a good friend is being honest. And I think there have been times where we are not as honest as we should be about the fact that the current direction, the current trajectory, in the region is profoundly negative, not only for Israeli interests but also U.S. interests. And that’s part of a new dialogue that I’d like to see encouraged in the region.”

**President Obama is firm in his commitment to Israel’s security.**

In May 2009 President Obama reaffirmed that Israel “is a stalwart ally of the United States. We have historical ties, emotional ties. As the only true democracy of the Middle East it is a source of admiration and inspiration for the American people...It is in U.S. national security interests to assure that Israel’s security as an independent Jewish state is maintained.”

**President Obama has consistently defended the American relationship with Israel to the Arab world.**

One week after his inauguration, President Obama gave an interview to Arab satellite news channel *al-Arabiya*, in which he said: “Israel is a strong ally of the United States. They will not stop being a strong ally of the United States. And I will continue to believe that Israel’s security is paramount.” Then again, in his June 2009 speech to the Muslim world, the President said, “America’s strong bonds with Israel are well known. This bond is unbreakable.”

**President Obama believes in a broader definition of what it means to be pro-Israel.**

Speaking with Jewish community leaders prior to the election, Obama spoke to the need to expand our understanding of what “supporting Israel” means. “There [is] a very honest, thoughtful debate taking place inside Israel. ... Understandably, because of the pressure that Israel is under, I think the U.S. pro-Israel community is sometimes a little more protective or concerned about opening up that conversation. But all I’m saying though is that actually ultimately should be our goal, to have that same clear eyed view about how we approach these issues.”

**President Obama has spoken out unequivocally against Palestinian violence.**

The President called on Palestinians to understand that “violence is a dead end. It is a sign neither of courage nor power to shoot rockets at sleeping children, or to blow up old women on a bus. That’s not how moral authority is claimed; that’s how it is surrendered.”

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