



Alan Khazei's Approach to BIG CITIZENSHIP:
A Blueprint for American Policy

A Plan for Peace and Stability in The Middle East Policy

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Alan Khazei's Framework for Peace and Stability In the Middle East

The bond between Israel and the United States is unshakeable. We share a democratic tradition, cultural values, and a spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation that will continue to endure. As our most important ally in the Middle East, the United States has a special responsibility to uphold Israel's security.

Guiding Principles

- The United States' special relationship with Israel has been a cornerstone of our foreign policy since 1948.
- Israel's right to exist is non-negotiable, and its security is paramount. The United States should offer Israel—a democracy and critical ally in the region—its full support against terrorism and hostile surrounding regimes.
- The United States must make the achievement of progress in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict a central diplomatic priority. The conflict has produced terrible suffering for both the Israeli and Palestinian people, and the United States should commit to achieving a two-state solution that allows both peoples to live side-by-side in peace. Ultimately, the parties themselves must come to an agreement on the issues that divide them.
- We cannot permit Iran to acquire nuclear weapons. A nuclear Iran would fundamentally threaten Israel's security and trigger a dangerous arms race in the Middle East.
- The United States should implement these guiding principles by adopting a zero-tolerance policy with regard to organizations and political movements—such as Hamas—that adopt terrorism as a means to achieve their ends.
- The United States should also work to identify and assist moderate Palestinian leaders who recognize Israel's right to exist. We should commit to supporting these moderate leaders in their efforts to build democratic institutions and promote economic development in West Bank and Gaza.

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A Shared Perspective

The United States' alliance with Israel is based on a solid foundation of shared democratic values. Since the State of Israel was founded in 1948, our two nations have engaged in ever-increasing cooperation to realize shared goals. We both aspire to be free, prosperous, democratic, and at peace.

Having been fortunate enough to travel to Israel, I feel a deep connection with the state and its people. Climbing up Masada, traveling to the Golan Heights, and feeling the vibrancy of Tel Aviv, it is impossible not to appreciate the struggles and triumphs the Jewish people have faced throughout history. Walking the streets of the Old City in Jerusalem – where for hundreds of years Christians, Jews, and Muslims have lived together in peace – inspired me to believe that a peace agreement among Israel, the Palestinians, and the Arab community can be achieved. Israelis of all political viewpoints concur on the need to take significant action to achieve lasting security, and the United States must vigorously support those objectives.

The Peace Process

Although Israelis are rightly concerned about their security, they also want to achieve a lasting, peaceful solution to the conflicts with their neighbors. Chief among these concerns is Israel's relationship with the Palestinian people. The United States, as a key ally and friend of Israel, must appreciate this sense of urgency and do everything in its power to facilitate these desires for peace.

Progress toward an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement will require major commitments from both parties. The Palestinians, who themselves have a legitimate right to sovereignty in a future separate state, must realize that full recognition of Israel and cessation of terrorism are essential for serious negotiations. In particular, Hamas, if it is to represent the Palestinians in Gaza, must begin by halting rocket attacks and recognizing Israel's right to exist. Hamas must thoroughly prove its willingness to be a negotiating partner before we bring it to the table. Simultaneously, responsible behavior from the Palestinian Authority should be rewarded with additional sovereignty and funds for institutional development. Israel has already demonstrated that it can be a reliable partner for negotiations and that it is willing to make hard compromises on territory and settlements to achieve a lasting peace.

Iran

All promise for peace could be lost if Iran acquires nuclear weapons, threatening Israel's existence, destabilizing the entire region, and posing a massive security challenge to the West. The United States must take firm action to avert this possibility through vigorous diplomacy and the threat of severe sanctions. Such sanctions might include restricting travel, restricting international banking, limiting foreign investments, or cutting off gas supplies.

It is best for the U.S. to pursue a coordinated strategy with our lead allies. The Iranian regime has lost legitimacy due to fraudulent elections, the murder of peaceful protesters in the streets, and the rape and torture of people in prisons.

Iran undermines regional security not only by pursuing nuclear weapons proliferation, but by funding and supporting organizations like Hezbollah. Iran cannot be permitted to wage a proxy war against its neighbors or Israel. The U.S. must stand side-by-side with other nations to shut down Iranian-sponsored terrorism.

Seventy percent of the Iranian people are under the age of thirty, and were not even born when the 1979 revolution happened. Many Iranians love Americans and, as the protests clearly showed, want freedom and democracy. The right comprehensive strategy, using all of the tools we have available to us, can yield productive results for the U.S., the region, and the world.

Regional Dynamics

Finally, as the strongest, most established democracy in the Middle East, Israel shares with the United States a set of democratic institutions and a respect for freedom of religion and of the press. These features enable Israel to offer a progressive political and economic model to the rest of the region. The United States should help Israel improve its relations with other Middle East states, enabling greater economic and political cooperation across the region. As someone with a proven record of building diverse coalitions to achieve shared objectives, I am determined to engage in the hard work ahead. The stakes are too high for complacency and indecision. The bond between Israel and the United States will always be strong, and as Senator, I look forward to making it even stronger.

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