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# J STREET'S POLICY AGENDA for the Trump Administration

As J Street heads into 2026 and three more years of the Trump Administration, we will need to continue to stand up for our pro-Israel, pro-peace, pro-democracy values. This will not be an easy time. Many of the Trump Administration's domestic policy actions and overall agenda are in direct contradiction to J Street's values. Some of the Administration's broader foreign policy edicts, such as shuttering USAID and picking fights with key allies around the world, will also have deeply damaging effects for Israel and Palestine.

Still, in some areas we have been able to find common ground. Most notably, J Street supports the ceasefire in Gaza, the release of Israeli hostages, and efforts to galvanize the international community and Arab world around the Trump Administration's 20-point plan for rebuilding Gaza. The Administration will need to maintain this support and commit to implementing the reconstruction plan in full, and must be clear-eyed that both Prime Minister Netanyahu's government and Hamas are likely to resist progress and prefer to simply maintain the new status quo where each controls half of Gaza.

This memo outlines a number of J Street's key policy priorities for 2026. Where the Administration's policies run counter to our recommendations we will oppose them, but where we have overlapping interests we will support bipartisan cooperation.

## **Implement the Gaza ceasefire in full, invest in rebuilding Gaza, and build a viable governing and security alternative to Hamas instead of perpetuating the conflict.**

In 2026, the United States in partnership with international and regional allies must enforce the ceasefire and apply pressure on Israel and Hamas to refrain from violence while vigorously implementing Phase II of the Gaza ceasefire. President Trump and senior officials from the other mediating countries must remain personally invested in continuing to hold both sides to their commitments and defusing the challenges that will inevitably arise. This is especially important as both Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and Hamas prefer the status quo and will continue to hinder progress unless faced with American, Egyptian, Qatari, and Turkish pressure.

A key element of the ceasefire's success will be its ability to facilitate the recovery of Gaza. The rehabilitation of key infrastructure and the construction of housing, so that Gaza's 2.1 million residents can leave refugee camps and return to their homes, will signal a transition away from frozen battle lines and toward post-war recovery. Under Phase II, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2803 ("Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict") adopted in November 2025, the parties must: identify qualified personnel to staff key ministries and agencies, in addition to the 15-member transitional

Palestinian technocratic committee that was recently established; deploy a Palestinian police force — with Hamas' consent — to restore basic law and order; and deploy the International Stabilization Force as soon as possible. The United States should move away from any efforts to broaden the Board of Peace beyond its Gaza mandate, which is deeply problematic and undermines the broader international system of alliances, while creating a major distraction towards the main mission of rebuilding Gaza and replacing a disarmed Hamas with a viable alternative.

Failing to pursue a viable alternative post-war governance path could lead to a resumption of Israeli operations against Hamas targets — a recipe for perpetual war that will lead to indefinite misery for the two million people living in Gaza, not replace Hamas, and come at a very high cost to Israel — both in terms of military and economic costs as well as international isolation.

## **Oppose settlements, annexation, and settler violence. Take steps to improve the situation in the West Bank and set conditions for a Palestinian state, including applying pressure on the Palestinian Authority to reform.**

J Street opposes any steps towards annexation whether de facto or de jure, taken by the Netanyahu government, and calls on the Trump Administration to more forcefully oppose these actions in word and deed. The Trump Administration's reversal of President Biden's Executive Order that sought to counter settler violence by targeting both individuals and organizations who facilitate this behavior was an early setback and should be reinstated and become law through the passage of the West Bank Violence Prevention Act. New means will be needed to make clear to the extreme right wing government of Netanyahu, Smotrich, and Ben-Gvir that the United States opposes steps that trample on Palestinian rights and make a Palestinian state less likely.

There is also a need to relax restrictions on Palestinians in the West Bank — most importantly by transferring parts of Area C to Palestinian control, both for economic development and freedom of movement. Additionally, the United States should work with and apply pressure on the Palestinian Authority to make necessary reforms, including: ensuring implementation of the reforms to end the prisoner payment system and replace it with a social welfare system, implementing better governance and rooting out corruption, and ultimately holding new elections to put in place a leadership representative of the Palestinian people.

## **Pursue a “23-State Solution,” which ends Israel's conflict with its Arab neighbors, while also creating a Palestinian state that would be Israel's 22nd Arab neighbor.**

Israel's increasing integration into the Middle East through the Abraham Accords and the Gaza peace process, presents significant opportunities to end decades of conflict and increase economic prosperity for millions across the region. Conversely, as we have seen with the war in Gaza, failure to address the Palestinian issue will hinder the warming of relations between Israel and its neighbors, and has already led to an erosion of some of the progress that was made under the Abraham Accords.

There are numerous pathways to get to both a two-state solution and a simultaneous comprehensive regional peace, but any step-by-step process must involve:

1. Full implementation of the US plan for the “day after” in Gaza;
2. Tangible, credible, irreversible steps on the ground that improve freedom for Palestinians and set the conditions for the establishment of a Palestinian state in exchange for additional steps towards economic and military cooperation between Israel and its Arab neighbors;
3. A pace that persuades skeptical Palestinians that this time the process will be implemented.

All of this would culminate in full recognition by the Arab world of the State of Israel, and full recognition by Israel of a Palestinian state. Along the way, Arab leaders will need to pursue vigorous public diplomacy to convince the Israeli public that peace and security is possible. The United States should be willing to make major commitments of its own to both Israel and the Arab states as part of a step-by-step process and eventual agreement.

## **Support transactional diplomacy with Iran while continuing to apply economic and international pressure on the regime to facilitate a managed transition.**

Iran has experienced unprecedented setbacks over the past two years, including the fall of its ally Syrian dictator Bashar Al-Assad; the dramatic weakening of Hezbollah through the Fall 2024 conflict with Israel that saw much of its leadership eliminated, and the June 2025 12-Day War between Israel and Iran in which top Iranian nuclear scientists and military leaders were killed and that culminated in the US bombing of Iranian nuclear sites. These regional setbacks were then followed by mass demonstrations against the Islamic Republic, which resulted in a brutal crackdown against protestors leading to at least 5,000 but likely significantly more protestors killed.

The end result is a series of contradictions. Iran is as weak as it has been since 1979, but the likelihood of repeated Israel-Iran regional conflicts has never been higher. The likelihood of regime change is as high as it has ever been but so is the possibility of collapse, which could lead to chaos and horrific suffering and violence. Iran's nuclear program has been significantly set back, but without International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors visibility into the program is as low as it has been since the early 2000s.

As of the writing of this memo, the Trump Administration is considering military strikes on Iran but also engaging in talks. J Street opposes military strikes, which are just as likely to trigger internal instability and great suffering as they are a managed regime transition. Instead, we support ramping up economic and international pressure on the regime, supporting the opposition movement and helping it to consolidate and unify, playing a stabilizing role in avoiding future regional conflicts by providing Israel with ballistic missile defenses and working with the Gulf states to expand communication channels with Iran, and being willing to negotiate a limited transactional agreement with Iran to return international nuclear inspectors to Iran.

## **Support US security assistance to Israel in a manner that ensures US interests and values are advanced.**

US assistance to Israel plays a critical role in assuring Israel's security against serious external threats and advancing US national interests. There was overwhelming bipartisan support for the 10-year memorandum of understanding (MOU), negotiated by the Obama Administration in 2016, providing Israel with \$3.8 billion per year, and for the \$14 billion supplemental in security assistance to Israel passed in 2024 in the aftermath of the October 7th attacks. We support US security assistance and partnership with Israel especially in the provision of ballistic defense systems that are for defending Israeli civilians.

As with all nations that receive US security assistance, aid to Israel is legally subject to a number of restrictions and conditions set forth in the Arms Export Control Act and the Foreign Assistance Act. Israel must be held to the same standards as any other country receiving US aid and weapons, and US laws and policies should be consistently and impartially enforced across the board.

Moreover, as has been the case with many partners, US policies should link the provision of American military support to Israeli actions, and incentivize Israel to pursue policy that aligns with US laws, interests, and values. If Israel is pursuing policies in the West Bank and Gaza that are inconsistent with

US laws, interests and values, then the US should prohibit the use of American weapons in Gaza and the West Bank. As has been the case with Israel and other security partners, ensuring compliance with such laws and policies has at times necessitated appropriate enforcement action including suspension, withholding, or increased auditing of specific deliveries of aid or arms.

Finally, in line with recent statements by Prime Minister Netanyahu, we support winding down the subsidy of nearly \$4 billion a year that the United States provides Israel to purchase weapons as Israel is now a self-sufficient economic power. We support continuing joint research and cooperation on systems as long as they are consistent with American laws, interests and values.

## **Advocate for American and Israeli democracy and democratic institutions.**

The US-Israel relationship is strongest when both allies maintain their shared values of democracy, pluralism, and a system of checks and balances. It becomes weaker when democratic institutions are undermined or threatened in either the United States or Israel. Unfortunately, both Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Trump have a long track record of undermining the institutions of both Israeli and American democracy. Therefore, J Street will continue to advocate against actions that undermine these values and weaken the relationship, whether it be politicization of law enforcement institutions and intimidation of the media in the US or attacks on the judiciary and the media in Israel.

## **Counter antisemitism in the United States while supporting free speech.**

Since October 7th and throughout the Gaza war, there has been a disturbing surge in antisemitic incidents in the United States and across the globe. This has come from both the far right, where Donald Trump has enabled extremists and created a permission structure for antisemitic dialogue and action, but also from the far left, where legitimate criticism of Israeli government policies has at times crossed into antisemitism. Criticism of policies is part of a healthy democracy and should be protected as free speech. However, when rhetoric crosses into violence, support for violence, targeting and excluding American Jews for actions taken by the Israeli government, or supporting terrorist organizations, it must be condemned and addressed. At the same time, the US government should not enact policies and legislative actions that present almost any criticism of Israeli government action as antisemitic, limit free speech, and make it harder to distinguish between genuinely problematic and harmful behavior and legitimate political disagreement.

## **Preserve the international liberal order and work through international institutions when possible.**

J Street believes that the network of international institutions established after World War II have been central to maintaining global stability and establishing important global norms over the past 80 years and should be preserved. There are venues, such as at the UN Human Rights Council or the UN General Assembly, where these organizations disproportionately criticize Israel. When those criticisms are unfair, the United States should call this behavior out and oppose it. But, like all countries, Israel should appropriately be held to account when its actions violate international law or decisions of the UN Security Council. When draft resolutions at the United Nations or other international bodies align with US policies, interests and principles, the United States should support them instead of reflexively opposing them for fear they might isolate Israel. And the US should not sanction or otherwise attack international institutions that are seeking to hold Israel appropriately accountable for violations of international law.