



David Axelrod on U.S. – Israel Relations April 22, 2010

On Thursday, April 22, David Axelrod, Senior Advisor to President Barack Obama, addressed guests at a dinner held by the National Jewish Democratic Council in Washington, DC. Axelrod discussed President Obama's commitment to Israel's security, his work to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran, and the United States' role in achieving peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

On Concerns about U.S. – Israel Relations in the Jewish Community:

“...I acknowledge there is considerable concern in our community on this issue. But I’m here to say that while I understand those concerns, they are predicated on a misconception. As someone who has known the President for nearly 20 years, as someone who has worked closely with him for ten years, and as someone who sits twenty feet from him and works with him every day, I know what’s in his heart, I know what’s in his head, and I know that his commitment to Israel is a bedrock principle.

The President understands that the special relationship between the United States and Israel is based on common values, interwoven cultures, and mutual interests. These are unbreakable bonds. They are bonds that endure.”

On President Obama’s Commitment to Israel’s Security:

“The President’s commitment to Israel’s security is reflected in more than words. He has given them meaning by ensuring Israel’s continued qualitative military edge in the region, by expanding cooperation on joint military exercises and missile defense, by reinvigorated defense consultations, particularly on the most vital issues, by fighting any attempt to de-legitimize Israel around the world, and of course, by working to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.”

On Preventing a Nuclear-Armed Iran:

“When the President took office, Iran was united, and the world was divided in its approach to the nuclear threat there. Today, Iran is bitterly divided and the world is united as never before in its determination to stop Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons. And I believe that determination will soon express itself through credible sanctions in the United Nations.”

On Fostering a Negotiated Two-State Solution:

“It is that very commitment that has caused the President to work so vigorously to re-start peace talks toward the two-state solution both we and the Israelis agree is the only way to achieve sustained peace and security for Israel, the Palestinians and their neighbors. Without a two-state solution, it will become increasingly difficult for Israel to remain both a Jewish homeland and a democracy. And the President knows that any agreement must ensure Israel’s continued security.”

On Disagreements between the United States and Israel:

“As we work towards this common goal, there will inevitably be disagreements, as there are between any two friends and allies. When they occur, the United States and Israel will work through them together, as friends do. But let’s not confuse these occasional disagreements over policy with the fundamental partnership that has guided our two nations for so long, and will continue.”