

The Best of Times or the Worst of Times? American Attitudes Towards Israel and Implications for the Peace Process

Alistair Burt MP

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Foreign & Commonwealth Office (2010-13)

Dr Jonathan Rynhold

Director, Argov Center for the Study of Israel and the Jewish People, Bar-Ilan University; Author, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict in American Political Culture*

Professor Colin Shindler

Pears Senior Research Fellow in Israel Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

Chair: Jane Kinninmont

Deputy Head and Senior Research Fellow, Middle East and North Africa Programme, Chatham House

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Jane Kinninmont

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for joining us for today's panel discussion, 'The Best of Times or the Worst of Times? American Attitudes Towards Israel and Implications for the Peace Process'. We're delighted to be joined today by Dr Jonathan Rynhold, Director of the Argov Center for the Study of Israel and the Jewish People at Bar-Ilan University in Israel. He's the author of a forthcoming book, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict in American Political Culture*, which is due to be published in March of this year. So we are privileged to have a preview of some of his insights today.

We'll also be hearing from Professor Colin Shindler, the Pears Senior Research Fellow in Israel Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London, who happens to be the UK's first professor of Israel studies, and who has also just completed a book on the rise of the Israeli right.

To provide us with some context about the broader implications for the peace process (which should perhaps be in quotation marks, with not much of a process, let alone peace, around at the moment), we're joined by Alistair Burt MP, former under secretary of state responsible for the Middle East and other areas at the Foreign Office, and a member of Parliament and of the Privy Council.

Just a little bit of housekeeping before we get started. Today's event is on the record. You are welcome to tweet about it using #CHEvents. We'll be hearing from each of the speakers for about eight to ten minutes, so that we'll have half the time for discussion and questions and answers. I'm Jane Kinninmont, deputy head of the Middle East and North Africa Programme here at Chatham House. Delighted to be handing over to Jonathan to kick us off. Thank you.

Jonathan Rynhold

Thank you very much. The best of times, the worst of times, for Israel-US relations? The worst of times, you all know about, presumably. You've followed the public insults that go back and forth between Washington and Jerusalem, between President Obama and his team and between the Netanyahu government and the members of the cabinet, including the defence minister. But it's also the best of times: \$3 billion a year in military aid, an American commitment to Israel's qualitative edge in defence, extremely close defence cooperation – closer than ever before. The people saying that are the people at the very top, both in Israel and in the United States.

So what's behind all of this? One favourite explanation is the pro-Israel lobby but you should think of the pro-Israel lobby as plumbing, as pipes. It doesn't matter how good your pipes are, if there's no water, it won't get you anywhere. The real basis of American support for Israel is American beliefs, American attitudes and American public opinion – or, American political culture. What I want to do is take you a little bit behind the scenes and see what are those foundations, what is going on.

Here there's a paradox, because on the one hand, Americans identify with Israel. They don't just support Israel, they identify with Israel. Sympathy is widespread and it has actually surged to new heights in the last 15 years. Americans have never been more supportive, as a whole, of Israel than they are right now. But on the other hand, Americans are increasingly divided, not about Israel but about the Arab-Israeli conflict. That division among Americans about what to do with the Arab-Israeli conflict/peace process aligns with the major political, ideological and religious divides in American society. What's more than that, these divisions are mutually reinforcing. So Republicans are increasingly conservative and

evangelicals are increasingly conservative, and Republican and orthodox Jews are increasingly Republican and conservative. They tend to be more supportive of America supporting Israel in the peace process and other things we will come onto. On the other hand, non-orthodox Jews, mainline Protestant Christians, Democrats, identify with the Democratic Party. They are more liberal and they tend to be more critical of Israeli policies. So let's go into this a little bit more.

The first thing we have to understand is Americans identify with Israel in a deep way that predates the large Jewish community existing in the United States. In the 1820s, President-to-be of the United States John [Quincy] Adams said: I've got a good idea, we should create a Jewish state in the land of Israel. George Bush's great-great-grandfather, in the middle of the 19th century, before there was a Jewish Zionist movement, was in favour of the creation of a Jewish state in the land of Israel. So what's going on? Ronald Reagan said: there is no country like us, except Israel. President Obama said: why does the United States stand so strongly, so firmly, with Israel? Because we share a common story.

What is this common story? There's two parts to it. The first is that America is a Puritan, Protestant country. That is its cultural foundation. Even if you're not a Puritan and even if you're not a Protestant religiously, culturally you are. What does this mean? In England, if you went to Oxford or Cambridge, you had to learn Latin or Greek. In America, if you went to Harvard or Yale, Hebrew was compulsory. At the time of the American Revolution, the president of Yale University gave his presidential address in Hebrew. Over a thousand places in the United States are named after places in the Old Testament. A majority of Americans believe that God gave the land of Israel to the Jewish people, and that includes a majority of black Protestants, a majority of the general public, but of course only 40 per cent of American Jews, who are the most secular element of American society. So it just gives you a sense, it's not about American Jews. Even one-third of American Catholics believe what I just said. That's significant because if you ask the pope, he says it's irrelevant what's written in the Bible. Catholic theology gives no role to what's written in the Bible, it's what the pope says. It's what doctrine is. But a third of American Catholics are culturally Protestant when it comes to Israel.

The other reason Americans identify with Israel is because of the American creed. American identity is based on democracy and liberalism. Democracy and liberalism are not a system of government, as they are in many countries, they are who we are. The American constitution is how Americans define themselves. They look at Israel and say: we Americans are a country of immigrants who fled Europe because of religious persecution and set up a democracy. So are the Israelis. We are the same. We are immigrants, we are pioneering, we flee persecution and we're a democracy. Now we tend to take democracy for granted but if you looked at the world in 1948 when Israel was created, there were very few democracies: twenty-something, many of whom just a few years earlier had been under fascist control. Of the countries that received independence since the Second World War, only two have been democratic all the way through: Israel and India. India was neutral in the Cold War. That leaves Israel. Israel has a special place for Americans. Now, that doesn't mean it's above criticism, but it means Americans identify in a deep way.

But why has support for Israel increased? That's the foundations. Why has it increased? It's increased because of the rise of terrorism and Islamic radicalism. Americans identified with Israel always but why has it gone up? It's gone up because of 9/11. Americans see Israel as the front line in a war against Islamic radicalism and terrorism. So you had 9/11 and then you had a spate of suicide bombings against Israeli civilians in 2002. America's facing Islamic radicalism, and who are Israel's enemies in the second Lebanon war and in Gaza? Hezbollah and Hamas. That's why Americans tend to feel, as a whole, a defeat for Israel is ultimately a defeat for America and for the values that America stands for. Just to give you

some idea: outside of the English-speaking countries (Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand), Americans see Israel as its most important ally. That wasn't always the case.

So that's why it's so good. How come it's so bad? What's so difficult now?

What's happened is that there is a partisan divide, a party and ideological divide, over the Arab-Israeli conflict, and that has grown. Until about 10 to 15 years ago, Republicans and Democrats supported Israel by the same margins. There is now a 40-percentage-point gap between the amount of Republicans that sympathize with Israel over the Palestinians, and Democrats. Now, don't get me wrong: if Democrats were in the UK, they would be far and away the most pro-Israel demographic. Even the least pro-Israel demographic in America – there is no anti-Israel demographic in America, there is no single group which doesn't support Israel more than the Palestinians – even the least is more pro-Israel than the most pro-Israel demographic in the UK. But there is a growing gap.

If it was just a case of, well, we support Israel more or we support Israel less, that would be irrelevant. But there's a divide over policy. Republicans are divided. They don't know what they think about Palestinian statehood and about settlements. They're divided about it, they're ambivalent. Democrats increasingly support a Palestinian state in stronger and stronger terms, by larger amounts. They're increasingly negative about settlements. Republicans tend to think that the United States should side with Israel in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Democrats tend to think, even if they sympathize personally more with Israel, that the United States should be even-handed. And here's the interesting thing: when you ask them where America should put the pressure, where should it put the onus, Republicans overwhelmingly say on the Palestinians and Democrats say, by a smaller margin, on Israel. What's interesting is they said that when Ehud Olmert was leading a centre-left coalition. In other words, this is not so much to do with Israel. It's more to do with America.

This divide is not just something that exists at the public level. If one looks at the elite magazines, political magazines like *The New Republic* and things like that, one sees the same things. If one talks to the people in the conservative and liberal think tanks, one hears the same things. It runs very deep.

Because we don't have a lot of time, I'm not going to go into the way different Christian groups deal with this. I'm going to briefly mention Jewish groups and then I'm going to go to the end of my remarks.

If we look at the Jewish community, people often say American Jews are distancing from Israel, they no longer sympathize with Israel. This is not the case. About the same number of American Jews identify, sympathize with Israel as they did 10 or 15 years ago. The internal demographics of those numbers have changed. Things are happening, but it all balances out in the end.

What has changed is the way they relate to the Arab-Israeli conflict as a political body. Abe Foxman, who is the head of the Anti-Defamation League, said: Israeli democracy decides, American Jews support. We're just here to support, we don't vote. That norm is eroding. So on the one hand, AIPAC is much more powerful and bigger and has more funds than it's ever had. To give you some idea: in the 1970s, 500 people went to AIPAC's annual conference; last year, it was more than 13,000. There is no room big enough in Washington to have a sit-down dinner for AIPAC, it's got to be a buffet. That gives you some idea.

But there are now other groups who say: look, I sympathize with Israel and I support the Israeli left (J Street). I support Israel but I support the Israeli right (Zionist Organization of America). So in the old days, there might have only been five people in the room, but four and a half of them were saying the

same thing. Now there are ten people in the room and AIPAC may have six or seven of them, but what you hear is an unclear message.

So what's going on and what does this all mean? First of all, the main reason for the polarization on Israel has nothing to do with Israel. It has to do with the fact that American politics and society are polarizing. The gap between Republicans and Democrats on ideology and values and beliefs is wider than it has ever been. Israel, which had been away and aside from that, is now a part of it. Not Israel itself, not the sympathy, but policy to the Arab-Israeli conflict, because the biggest divide between Republicans and Democrats is on foreign policy, and the focus of the debate about foreign policy is the Middle East: Iran, Iraq, radical Islam.

So 20 years ago, the gap on the question, if you asked the American public, 'Do you agree with peace through strength?', the gap between Republicans and Democrats was about 7 or 8 percentage points. It's now over 30. Republicans have become more hawkish, they believe more strongly in using force to obtain peace; Democrats have become more dovish, they are much more cautious about that. You see that reflected in the different approaches of the Bush administration and the Obama administration.

So what does all this mean for the US-Israeli relationship? The first thing to say is that American sympathy for Israel and support for Israeli security, understood in brass-tack terms of making sure Israelis don't get blown up, is rock solid. That is not going to change. But American support for Israel in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict, that is up for grabs. As one of AIPAC's political directors said in the past: AIPAC's great success derives from its capacity to define what it means to be pro-Israel. They have lost control of what it means to be pro-Israel in the context of the peace process and policy toward the Middle East. Thank you very much.

Colin Shindler

Thank you very much. Thank you for inviting me. I'd like to look at the third side of this triangle, this relationship between Israel and America, and that's the attitude of American Jews. The whole idea, as Jonathan just mentioned, of American-Israeli relations goes back a long way. After all, both countries sought to build a new state – indeed, a new world – and a different sort of society from the ones that they had inhabited, by fighting against the same enemy (the British). Therefore, you find that the message of 1776 is extremely important for many Israelis. The Israeli right tends to look towards 1776. For example, Menachem Begin, when he was actually fighting the British, wrote many articles extolling the virtues of 1776.

The Israeli left, on the other hand, tends to look toward the French Revolution. The French Revolution gave birth to European nationalism, which in turn gave birth to Zionism. Indeed, you find people like Herzl's second in command, Max Nordau, at the first Zionist Congress would talk about the great men of 1792, of the French Revolution. Anita Shapira, one of Israel's leading historians, in her current biography of Ben-Gurion describes Ben-Gurion as a Jacobin. So the Israeli left relates to the French revolutionary tradition.

What about the other side, the Americans? US Democrats prefer to look towards the ideals of 1776, whereas perhaps US Republicans talk in terms of more the Judeo-Christian heritage. American Democrats therefore expect Israel to live up to those ideals not only of 1776 but of 1948. As we all know, for decades American Jews have voted in their droves for the Democratic Party, up to 75 per cent on

average. The American Jews are perhaps the most liberal community in the United States; 71 per cent, in a recent poll, believed in same-sex marriage, for example. Therefore, it's only a short step to understand the thinking in broad terms of American Jews: that they are liberals; that they are against any illiberal policies; that they would be critical of right-wing governments such as Netanyahu; and they expect Israel to be a democracy, in the sense that they understand the United States to be a democracy, in the sense of the ideals of 1776.

The Pew survey of American Jews in October 2013: 48 per cent of American Jews thought that the incumbent Israel government (this is the outgoing one now of Netanyahu) was not trying enough to bring about a peace settlement, and 44 per cent thought the expansion of the settlements in the West Bank hurts Israel's security. Of course, there was criticism of Obama's somewhat zigzag and incoherent policies on resolving the Israel-Palestine conflict. Indeed, you can argue that Obama was certainly less popular than Clinton and other Democratic presidents. Yet according to the American Jewish Committee's *Review of American Jewish Attitudes towards Israel* in 2013, 59 per cent approved of Obama's approach toward Israel and 62 per cent approved his Iran policy. Of course, it should be worthwhile noting that Netanyahu opposed the Clinton-Obama approach of a settlement based on the 1967 borders (with alterations, land swaps, etc.).

As Jonathan has mentioned, there's certainly a generational gap within American Jewry. I'm not sure whether I agree with him that not too much is happening. The over-65s certainly relate very strongly towards Israel, because they see Israel in terms of 1948. They have the memory, or the memory of their parents, of the fight against fascism, the defeat of Nazism and the rise of a Hebrew republic in the land of Israel in 1948. They certainly relate to that. But you find the under-35s are distancing themselves from that. Why? Because they relate to the Israel of post-1967, which deals with the settlement drive. Therefore the Palestinians can be put in the box of other peoples fighting for their independence. Therefore you find American Jewish commentators like Peter Beinart, for example, who is suggesting that young American Jews are dropping off the edge. Being more critical in a different way from older liberal commentators like Tom Friedman, Michael Walzer. So again, there's a generational gap emerging there.

Jewish attitudes are also predicated, I would suggest, on what can be achieved immediately and what can be achieved in the context of a peace settlement. So for example, during the negotiations at Camp David between Ehud Barak and Yasser Arafat in 2000, which was obviously the precursor to the Al-Aqsa intifada, because they failed – when they were going on, 44 per cent of American Jews were willing to divide Jerusalem. If you look at that question again a little bit later, when the whole thing had fallen apart, of course a much smaller number agreed with that sentiment. They would not divide Jerusalem. Indeed, you find time and again in American opinion polls and analyses that American Jews would agree with withdrawal from the West Bank and evacuation of settlements on the West Bank, in the context of peace and security for Israel.

So the point that is being made here is that it's not ideological. It's not ideological in a nationalist, religious or indeed the Marxist sense that Israel should remain in the territories. Therefore, one could certainly argue that American Jews see the future of the territories more in the sense as Sharon saw it than more ideological leaders of Israel, such as Begin and Shamir and (to a lesser extent) Netanyahu.

I read Jonathan Rynhold's – at least a proof of it – new book, which is really very good. There's a couple of chapters on American Jewish attitudes towards Israel. There's one phrase that you use which I thought was excellent, that there's been over the past couple of decades in the United States a movement from consensual solidarity to pluralistic solidarity. In a sense, there's been a greater tolerance for critics of a specific Israel government. There have been critics from the right and indeed critics from the left. So one

can see, for example, as you said, the Zionist Organization of America opposed the withdrawal from Gaza in 2005. Even so, last year in 2014, the presidents' conference of major Jewish organizations refused membership to J Street. So you still have a more conservative establishment there which is still closing its doors to other, different, more critical organizations. So this degree of tolerance is not absolute.

Finally, there's a difference between the interests of the Israeli public, the Israeli Jewish public, and American Jews. I believe it was in 2004, when John Kerry was the Democratic candidate for president, something like 78 per cent of American Jews voted for Kerry. I came across an opinion poll in Israel which suggested exactly the same percentage (78 per cent) wanted Bush, because their national interests were different. Moreover, the recent controversy which has led to the election of recognition of Israel as a Jewish state was frowned upon by several American Jewish organizations. Abe Foxman of the ADL, for example, who as you intimated would always defend Israel, Israel's elected government, said it's not a good idea. Publicly, he came out against that.

These differences, for example, can be manifested – let me give you an example: the Russian annexation of Crimea. Israel failed to turn up to support a US motion condemning Russia, because Israel's national interests were in keeping good terms with Putin, with Russia. Yet you find that many American Jews and American Jewish organizations strongly supported Obama's condemnation of what was happening there. Indeed, Yair Shamir, the son of Yitzhak Shamir, who is minister of agriculture, said: this might be a business opportunity, if there's sanctions between the EU and Moscow. In fact, he said he wouldn't honour the EU boycott of Russia as long as the EU boycotted produce produced on the West Bank.

So what I'm saying is there are differences, clear differences, in terms of national and community interests. How this will pan out is an open question because there are many variable and contradictory factors in this. But it's certainly going to be of interest. But one thing I do believe is that things are changing from a generational point of view in the United States. Thank you.

Alistair Burt

Firstly, to Jane and Chatham House, thank you again, as always, for providing the background and the opportunity to talk about important subjects amongst an informed audience. I'm sure much appreciated by all three of us up here. Secondly, to say to the other speakers, I find a lot of resonance in what I'm going to say backed up by what you said. I'm going to say things that are different, but your perspective on Jewish opinion in the United States coincides with my thoughts about it, both things that are good news and slightly less good news. But let me extrapolate that into policy areas, because that's what I've been involved in.

Let me talk about a couple of personal experiences related to this, which I hope puts it into the context of a minister trying to deal with these issues. I became minister for the Middle East in May 2010. I've been involved with Israel and Middle East issues for over 30 years as a member of parliament. Regular visits to the area. The peace process matters to me. I asked for a reading from Number 10 very early on in my time, saying: what view will we take to the encouragement of the Middle East peace process, particularly if in a couple of years' time there is a re-elected, second-term American president, with all that that means usually in a Middle East peace process? I didn't get much encouragement.

The first thing I want to talk about is both timidity and low expectations, because the expectations are stunningly low. I wonder if anyone really expects this to succeed. If that's the case, then I worry about it. I

got the sense, which I know was reflected in other places (not least in parts of the United States), that it's all very well to talk about the Middle East peace process but really it isn't going to happen. People, after all the experiences of the years, are not sure how much they want to invest in it and be seen to invest in it. It matters to me. It matters to American public opinion quite a bit, where they put the Middle East peace process quite high on the list of things they think the United States should be engaged upon. That sense of low expectation and timidity seem to me to characterize the three and a half years that I was involved with this business, with occasional spikes.

Certainly the accession of John Kerry to secretary of state – not that Mrs Clinton didn't care about it, I think she did. I think she was a very good secretary of state. But there was no doubt that the personal commitment to the Middle East peace process was very much associated with John Kerry, for his work as a leading senator and a Senate foreign policy leader on this. Everyone assumed that when he became secretary of state, he would make this a major issue – as indeed he did. Then, of course, you confront the dilemma between State Department and White House. Again, I think it's clear from all the observations that the White House remains much more tentative about engagement in the peace process, simply because the president doesn't necessarily want to commit his personality to something that might not turn out to be successful.

In the end, I think, John Kerry did succeed in getting a better speech than it was somehow received, when President Obama came and spoke in Israel some 18 months ago. I thought he did make some very serious remarks. I remember him talking to the young people of Israel about imagining what it was like to be your age but living in the West Bank under occupation. He put things very directly that I hadn't heard put quite that way before. I thought that was very interesting.

But nonetheless, the realistic interpretation of what might happen governed the way in which the talks began. Again, no one can doubt Martin Indyk's commitment to this. Here again is someone who knows it intimately from decades of involvement. But I felt that no one ever quite got into a position of sufficiently believing in the process as to make it happen, and I think that covered both the prime minister of the state of Israel and indeed the president of the Palestinian Authority. As we know, the talks crawled along a bit and eventually petered out for all sorts of reasons, and accusations on both sides of who had led to the collapse.

But I worry that unless that timidity is replaced by something, we will sleepwalk into a non-answer on this. I'm not one who believes that this is a problem to be managed. The Middle East peace process needs to succeed. I don't agree that this can be managed ad infinitum. I think on that, that is a view shared by a number of others, but there's no momentum yet to make it happen.

I think part of it is some reluctance in the United States to use their position to the full. What else surrounds that? Reference has been made to the fact that the Israel that the United States is now dealing with is a different one from the Israel of the past. It's a bigger state. It's got growing confidence in itself, as demonstrated by – whatever may be the appropriate Jewish term; *chutzpah* may not quite be right – but the prime minister in his visit to Washington, where he circumvented the president and spoke directly to Congress in his own way, which I thought was quite remarkable. But it reflected a growing confidence and a sense that when push came to shove, perhaps Israel could do without the United States. I think that's a false interpretation but it's certainly one that seems to be there.

There is certainly an understanding that because of recent events in the region, Israel has more alliances available to it than it might have done in the past. I think that's a very shrewd observation, and talking about the Ukraine is the most recent example. But if you look at the intelligence relationships between the

Israelis and some of the other states in the region that are clearly, for obvious reasons, a little bit more quiet than publicly trumpeted, there are clearly other enemies that people fear in the region rather more than a failure to get on with the Middle East peace process. Israel's ability to participate in dealing with the appalling threat from extreme Islamic forces is clearly putting them in the same camp as a number of their Arab neighbours. It's not surprising, therefore, that Israel is able to say American support is helpful but there are other people out there who value us and recognize the importance of what we're doing in other respects. No one is going to break us on the wheel, that unless you get a Middle East peace process, all bets are off. That isn't going to happen. But that reflection of growing confidence and alliances elsewhere is also being reflected in some slight coolness toward the United States, and an ability of the Israelis to be able to handle this very important relationship in a slightly different way.

Can I reflect on a second personal observation which very much is in support of what Colin and Jonathan have already said? That is a greater diversity amongst Jewish opinion in the United States and amongst the bodies that represent them. I've been going to the United States and the Middle East for quite a long time. Some years ago, it was not exactly synonymous but in speaking to Jewish representative groups, it wasn't quite 'my Israel, right or wrong', but it was pretty close. The actions of the state of Israel were assumed to be right and any criticism of the state of Israel, particularly coming from an outside source (particularly the British), could be held at arm's length – because we would say that, wouldn't we?

My visits, however, as minister were slightly different. There was a regular pattern when I went to see groups both in New York and Washington. New York ones were fun. There would be 20 minutes of ritual beating up of me for whatever had come out in the British press most recently that could be characterized as anti-Jewish, anti-Israeli or anything else. I was done over, whether it was an act of parliament that hadn't been repealed, an act of parliament that should be repealed, an attitude that someone had expressed. I weathered this for about 20 minutes until it finally sank to the level, of course: this is all inspired by the BBC. Then I knew they were done and we could start talking about something serious.

I was in a different position to some ministers. My background in support of Israel was very clear. They had all done their research. I started as a Conservative Friend of Israel when I was in my twenties. I defended Israel right the way through my parliamentary career. This was no pinko lefty Arabist from the Foreign Office. Not that there are any, of course. That's a gross denigration. But they knew they were dealing with somebody who they could not easily pin down and say, well, you would say what you're saying but we all know where you're coming from.

Then I got into really good discussions over the last three years. Jewish opinion in America is worried about Israel and worried about its direction. The sort of Israel that they have grown up with, that my generation grew up with – kibbutzim, a socialist element – was being squeezed away. The change in demographic in Israel, the introduction of a greater nationalist, right-of-centre population from other places, was having an effect on its politics, and they were worried. The underlying sense you both expressed, that there is a bottom line of support for the state of Israel, is absolutely true. I never doubted that for a moment. The moment Israel's security is threatened, everyone will come together, as indeed we all would. But there was a worry about where the political discourse was going. There is a worry about how the Arab population in Israel is being treated. There is a worry about the fact that the occupation or disputed territories, whatever the characterization is, is not seen as the threat that sometimes people outside perceive it to be to the future of Israel. I find my conversations with Jewish opinion-formers in the United States much more open than they have been before.

I think that's something that needs to be reflected in the relationships. As we all know, it doesn't really penetrate Congress. Congress remains, for the reasons that you've stated, more for American political

reasons perhaps than a real care and concern for Israel, stuck in this position of almost an acceptance of whatever it is that the state of Israel wants to do must be supported. That's a worry.

I worry if this is not solved. A growing number of people are beginning to see that a two-state solution is not going to be the answer, so it's a one-state solution. That immediately leads you into a discussion of what sort of state. Is it a Jewish state, is it a democratic state? Because it won't be both. When Jonathan said earlier: democracy and liberalism, this is who we are (say the American people), and that's why we stand with Israel – is that true when democracy and liberalism will not be the characteristic of a Jewish state, if it's absorbed an Arab population to whom it may not give the same rights?

So the concern that I have, as a firm believer and supporter of the two-state solution, is it's got to be gone on with. I rarely speak to anyone in Israel from a security or intelligence background, who is retired, who does not worry that long-term, if this isn't settled, there is a problem. So what I would like to see is that concern in American opinion for Israel, as opposed to their domestic political agenda of right and left now becoming so polarized that they are using it as a battleground, to have a real concern for the future of Israel and the region, and to work with others – including Arab states, who still have the Arab peace initiative as part of the process – to say: we dare not leave this. In a volatile region, if this is not settled, it will become yet another focus for more trouble – which it's avoided by and large up to now, as bad people have done things around them, but if left unsettled, at some stage when the extremists are pushed back in another place, they will look for another reason and another excuse. It will be terrible if Israel-Palestine were to provide that, because there are so many opportunities to do something about it. I just hope that America's continuing influence on Israel will help to push everyone in the right direction, to get to the conclusion most of us wish to see. Thank you.

Jane Kinninmont

Thank you. We now have an opportunity for questions.