

Prepared Testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee

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Hearing: "U.S. Diplomatic Strategies for a Dynamic Middle East"

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Chairman McCormick, Ranking Member Rosen, and Distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the invitation to testify today.

The old order in the Middle East is passing away and a new, better order is coming into view. We have too much proof of a better order to return to the failed strategies that perpetuated the old order. American diplomacy should support the new and dynamic Middle East, which is the subject of today's hearing.

In broad strokes, this means diplomacy that stands by our allies, in good times and in bad. It means deterring our adversaries. And it means sustaining the incredible gains made over the last two years, especially during the recent 12-day war against the Iranian regime. I have never been more optimistic about the future of the Middle East than I am at present.

In the aftermath of October 7, Iran's imperial, expansionist project has come undone. The U.S. and Israel are systematically dismantling the architecture of Iran's malign influence. We are no longer managing the nuclear threat; we are resolving it. Unprecedented joint actions against Iran's nuclear facilities as well as its missile program and its proxies have changed the balance of power in the region. If we continue the current strategy of deterrence and diplomacy, a new and better Middle East will follow.

The United States can help midwife a regional dynamic of sovereign states, anchored by Israel and Arab Gulf nations, who counter extremism, invest in their own citizens, and recognize the right of the Jewish people to live in peace alongside their neighbors.

President Trump described this vision in his 2017 Riyadh speech. He deserves great credit for realizing this vision across his first term and into the second term. He recognizes that peace is helped by maintaining escalation dominance, and diplomacy is helped by focusing on common interests with our allies -- instead of well-intentioned but naïve deals with our adversaries. We should help organize our allies around shared interests. For example, countering Iran's threats to the U.S. and the region, advancing the peace process through the Abraham Accords, and deepening economic and cultural ties.

But continued success in the region is not inevitable. American leadership coupled with burden sharing by our partners is essential for this vision to become reality. We should convert the recent military gains into an enduring balance of power that favors America and her regional allies.

The U.S. and its partners should continue resisting Iran's expansionist, antisemitic designs in the region. We must ensure Iran's proxy, Hamas, is uprooted from Gaza. I very much hope this can

be conducted by Israel in a way to maintain support here in the United States and that Israel will continue to ensure the safe delivery of humanitarian assistance to the Gazans who are suffering under Hamas control.

We should ensure Hezbollah remains degraded in Lebanon. The United States should continue enforcing oil sanctions against Iran, including by implementing the SHIP Act, which I encouraged Congress to pass last year when I testified before this Committee. Easing pressure now would allow Iran's oil revenue to fund terrorism and finance the reconstitution of its nuclear program.

I will close by noting that the combined efforts of the US and Israel against the Iranian regime have deeply weakened an engine of antisemitism in the region. Regrettably, this evil is not confined to the Middle East. We hear echoes here at home of the antisemitism that animates Iran's regime. It is on college campuses, in online echo chambers, and increasingly in mainstream discourse. It was seen tragically in Pittsburgh in 2018 at the Tree of Life Synagogue, blocks from the home of Senator McCormick. Those who traffic in antisemitism often present themselves as bold or provocative contrarians. But they perpetuate an ancient hatred. In every form antisemitism takes and in every place it emerges, we must continue to confront it with moral clarity and principled opposition. Thank you.

