Response To Common Inaccuracy: Jewish Lobby

Inaccuracy: The only reason the United States supports Israel is because of the powerful “Jewish lobby.”

Response

U.S. foreign policy on Israel involves many complex issues, actors and considerations and cannot be ascribed to a “powerful Jewish lobby.”

The United States is a longstanding strong ally of Israel based on shared democratic values and strategic interests including the rejection of terrorism and violence. The United States has a great interest in the stability of the Middle East, a region that is afflicted by extremists who violently oppose the U.S., Israel and democracy, by rogue states with large military arsenals which include non-conventional weaponry, and other authoritarian regimes. Bolstering and supporting peace, stability and democracy in the region through relations with Israel is in America's strategic interest.

Indeed, public opinion polls taken over decades have consistently demonstrated that Americans of all backgrounds support strong U.S.-Israeli relations and view Israel as a key ally of the United States.

As citizens of the United States, American Jewish advocacy is an appropriate exercise of American democracy and reflective of the Jewish community's commitment to American democratic ideals. The American Jewish community’s active engagement in the political process is mirrored in the activism of other
minority constituencies, such as Chinese Americans, Arab Americans, Irish Americans, Indian Americans and others.

Indeed, there is no shortage of voices who are critical of U.S. policy towards Israel. Even within the Jewish community there is a diversity of opinion on U.S. policy towards Israel. There are strong lobbyists for Arab and Palestinian interests, there is lively debate on U.S. policy daily on op-ed pages, radio and television talk shows, and by speakers on college campuses, where the viewpoint is at times harshly critical of Israel and of U.S. policy.

The exaggeration of the power of the “Jewish lobby,” the disregard for the consistently broad-based American public support for Israel, the omission of the very many interests that the U.S. has in a strong and safe Israel, and the overriding theme that policymakers are controlled by this so-called “lobby,” adds up to an effort to delegitimize pro-Israel activists and has elements of age-old anti-Semitic conspiracy theories alleging insidious Jewish efforts to dominate seats of power.