Allegation: The United States Government Supports Israel Because of the Powerful “Jewish Lobby.”

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

As citizens of the United States, advocacy by American Jews 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 community-based constituencies, such as Chinese Americans, Arab Americans, Irish Americans, Sikh Americans and others.

The United States is a longstanding strong ally of Israel based on shared democratic values and strategic interests including the rejection of terrorism and extremism. America also stands by the moral importance of Israel being able to serve as a safe haven for Jews fleeing persecution, particularly because of the legacy of the Holocaust and the history of two thousand years of violence and persecution wherever Jews lived.

The United States has a great interest in the stability of the Middle East, a region that is often affected by extremists who violently oppose the U.S., Israel and democratic governance, as well as by rogue states with large military arsenals which include non-conventional weaponry. Bolstering and supporting peace, stability and democracy in the region through relations with its democratic ally Israel is in America’s strategic interest.
Indeed, public opinion polls taken over decades have demonstrated that a majority of Americans support strong U.S.-Israeli relations and view Israel as a key ally of the United States.

There is also no shortage of voices in American policy circles 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, with different organizations often advocating for divergent policies. There are similarly advocates and professional lobbyists for Palestinian interests too. There is lively debate on U.S. policy towards Israel on op-ed pages, radio and television talk shows and social media 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,” can have the effect of delegitimizing pro-Israel activists and may at times include elements of age-old anti-Semitic conspiracy theories alleging insidious Jewish efforts to dominate seats of power.