

President-elect Donald Trump is not wavering in his support for Israel

by Alexander Murinson



Dr Walid Phares, who was a President-elect Donald Trump's adviser in Foreign Policy and on the Middle East during the campaign, gave an interview to BBC Radio on Thursday. In that interview Dr Phares provided an in-depth interpretation of President Trump's stand on issues of high relevance to Israel, namely the Iran nuclear deal, moving the American Embassy to Jerusalem and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Walid Phares, born in Lebanon and emigrated to the US in 1990 has been a professor, a provost and an expert on the Middle East in Congress for a decade. He is a prominent expert on Islamism and jihadism and cannot be suspected of sympathies towards Iran and other movements in the region, who are known as representing Radical Islamic extremism. For two decades, Walid Phares was labelled as an "Israeli surrogate" by Lebanese Hezbollah propaganda.

So, when his comments on President Trump's agenda were reported as wavering on his support for Israel in Israeli press, this journalistic misrepresentation needs to be corrected. Firstly, Donald Trump will be the first American president who is committed to moving the American embassy to

Jerusalem. But what Phares clarified in the BBC interview was that the new President will need to convince the American foreign policy establishment that this dramatic move is in American national interest. In American political system "consensus" is the name of the game. That is why Walid Phares used this expression in describing how Trump is going to proceed.

As a Realpolitik statesman and author of "The Art of the Deal," Trump will be seeking to make diplomatic deals and political deals with all sides, but he will stick to his electoral commitments. Israelis should not worry that he will deviate from his promises to the Israeli people. As Trump himself testified on many occasions, he considers Israel the main ally of the United States in the Middle East.

In a sharp departure from Obama's White House, Jason Greenblatt, co-chairman of the Trump campaign's Israel Advisory Committee, said: "It is certainly not Mr. Trump's view that settlement activities should be condemned and that it is an obstacle for peace, because it is not an obstacle for peace." It is widely believed that Greenblatt may be appointed Trump's envoy to the Middle East. These are clear indicators of Trump's position on the Arab-Israeli conflict, so Israelis should expect a drastic improvement in atmospherics and substance of US-Israeli relationship with an incoming administration, who will lend a willing ear to Israel's concerns.

Dr. Alexander Murinson is Faculty Member at BAU International University, Team Member Bahçesehir University Global Policy Institute, Vize Leiter des Österreichischen Instituts für Kaukasusstudien.