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The triumph of Israel

Josh Reinstein discusses his new book and the US election



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The triumph of Israel

Israel Allies Foundation head Josh Reinstein discusses his new book and the US election

By Steve Linde

NO LEADER in US history has been as supportive of Israel as Donald Trump, according to Josh Reinstein, director of the Knesset Christian Allies Caucus (KCAC) and president of the Israel Allies Foundation (IAF).

“Donald Trump is the most pro-Israel president that we’ve ever had,” Reinstein tells *The Jerusalem Report*, tipping Trump to sweep the November 3 presidential election. “If I had a prediction, and this is in no official capacity, this is just Josh Reinstein speaking, I think that Donald Trump’s going to win it, and he’s going to win it pretty big.”

Reinstein recently published a book titled *Titus, Trump and the Triumph of Israel – The Power of Faith-Based Diplomacy*, which broke the pre-sale record of its Jerusalem publisher, Gefen Publishing House. Released on September 1, the book chronicles changing attitudes toward Israel from the time of Titus, the Roman emperor who destroyed the Second Temple in the year 70, to Trump, who moved the US Embassy to Jerusalem in 2018. Ilan Greenfield, the owner of Israel’s leading English-language publishing house which publishes more than 30 original titles annually, hailed Reinstein’s book as a “global phenomenon.”

Reinstein has served as director of the KCAC since its inception in January 2004, as well as president of the IAF, an organization formed in January 2007 by former tourism minister Rabbi Benny Elon to encourage faith-based support for Israel among elected members of legislatures worldwide. Today, it coordinates the efforts of 45 Israel Allies Caucuses, with more than 1,000 members in parliaments across the globe, to garner political support for Israel.

Born in Toronto, Reinstein grew up in Texas, graduated from the University of Western Ontario with a degree in political science, and made aliyah in 1999. In 2000, he enlisted in the IDF and served as a tank



BRAM REINSTEIN

Josh Reinstein: This idea of faith-based diplomacy is here to stay, and I believe it is the most important weapon that Israel has in its diplomatic arsenal

gunner in the 188th Armored Brigade.

He is the owner and operator of JSR International Marketing, an international marketing and public relations firm based in Israel. And he is the founder and producer of Israel Now News, a 30-minute weekly TV show broadcast to millions of Christians around the world. Reinstein lives in Mevaseret Zion, near Jerusalem, with his wife, Rebekah, and four children – three sons and a daughter. I interviewed him on Zoom.

Tell us about your new book and what motivated you to write it.

The book is really the culmination of the last 16 years of my life after, in 2004, MK Yuri Shtern and I started the Knesset Christian Allies Caucus. It tracks the importance of faith-based diplomacy and how it affects political circumstances today in the 21st century. I started with Titus, the emperor who destroyed the Second Temple and declared victory over the God of Israel. He was

so excited that he built the Arch of Titus, which was the biggest infrastructure project of its time. He was convinced he won, but for people who believe in the Bible, this was actually the beginning of prophecy. This was the time that the Jewish people were kicked out of the land of Israel and they always held on to the belief that one day we would be gathered in Israel, and Israel would once again be a light unto the nations. If you know the Bible, you realize that the destruction of the Second Temple wasn't the end of our story, but if you didn't know the Bible, you'd think that was the end of the Jewish people.

The same thing is happening today. If you don't look at Israel through a biblical lens, you miss the real story. So all the predictions of what is supposed to happen in the Middle East, from the State Department and past administrations, have been flawed because they haven't been looking at it from a biblical point of view. Christians are better equipped to support Israel because they do look at it from a biblical point of view. So it's important not only to talk about the importance of faith-based diplomacy but also to describe why Christians are in a position to understand better what is happening in the Middle East and also to show who's standing against people who believe in the Bible and where that's coming from. Basically it is an overview of the last 16 years of my life, developing what we call faith-based diplomacy.

How do you view President Trump and his relationship with Israel?

I think if you look at it objectively, Don-



COURTESY

Reinstein and MK Sharren Haskel, chair of the Knesset Christian Allies Caucus, at a meeting of the KCAC with political leaders from across the world at the Knesset

ald Trump is the most pro-Israel president that we've ever had. And there's been a long line of pro-Israel presidents, from [Harry S.] Truman and [Ronald] Reagan, of course. But none of them did anything compared to what Donald Trump has done. My organization, the Israel Allies Foundation, made a list in 2015 of the top 10 things that America could do for Israel, and our goal was in the next five years to get one of them done. Donald Trump, over the last three-and-a-half years, has done nine of them.

It's really unbelievable the amount of support we have seen from Washington DC. We've never seen anything like this before. He does such big things and so fast that a lot of people miss some of them.

What do you think are the top things he's done?

He moved the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. He stopped the Iran deal, which was allowing Iran to get nuclear weapons within 10 years and gave them billions of dollars in cash to promote terrorism around the world. He recognized Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, which is something that we've been working on for a very long time. He passed the Taylor Force Act, which made it illegal for US funding to go to Palestinian terrorists. He defunded UNRWA [United Nations Relief and Works Agency] – the organization that was formed to perpetuate the Palestinian refugee problem around the world – by executive order. He legislated against antisemitism on campuses, adopting the international definition of antisemitism to also include anti-Zionism. He stopped the ordinance that anytime you mentioned Judea and Samaria you'd have to say "illegal settlements." Now it's "disputed settlements" or just "settlements." He has overseen a sea change in Washington's policy on Israel.

US officials talk about suspending Israel's sovereignty plans, popularly known as annexation, in favor of the Abraham Accords. How do you see this in terms of the Trump administration's promises?

I think this is a question of strategy, rather than substance. I don't think it's mutually exclusive. I think that you can have both the Abraham Accords and sovereignty. I don't think that sovereignty is



AVI HAYUN

Christian allies from around the world with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

Cover Story

off the table. Diplomacy always happens behind the scenes and not in front of the cameras. But what's being reported in the media is not necessarily what's happening. This president understands that his base is Bible-believing Christians, and if he wants to embolden his base and get their support, he's got to do things that they want him to do in Israel. And one of the most important things is recognizing Israeli sovereignty in Judea and Samaria. If President Trump doesn't declare support for sovereignty before the election, I believe it'll be made very soon after.

How do you view the Democratic presidential contender, Joe Biden, and his relationship with Israel?

I view him with caution. I think one of the biggest threats to Israel, the only existential threat, really, is a nuclear Iran. He was a proponent of the Iran nuclear deal, and he even went on record saying that he would re-sign that deal. For me, on top of all the other rhetoric and issues, that's the most important when it comes to Israel's safety. The idea that a Biden administration would give more money to Iran and let them develop nuclear weapons within six years, not 10, and go back to that deal, which we know Iran won't honor, is a very scary prospect for Israel. Just on that one issue alone there is a lot of reason for concern and cause to say, is this really what's best for Israel?

As we draw closer to the US election, what is your prediction?

If I had a prediction, and this is in no official capacity, this is just Josh Reinstein speaking, I think that Donald Trump's going to win it, and he's going to win it pretty big. I think he's done enough to embolden his base. I think there's a real silent majority out there of Christians and others who care about Israel, but for those who don't care, he's also done enough on the economy to show that it's going in the right direction after the coronavirus destruction, and I believe that the majority of Americans vote on economic issues.

What do you make of the recent peace deals with the UAE and Bahrain, and which Arab states do you see following suit?

I think it's an incredible victory for both Benjamin Netanyahu and Donald Trump. This proves what they call the Bibi-Trump Doctrine of peace through strength. When



Reinstein presents a copy of his book to KCAC member MK Michal Cotler-Wunsh at the Israel Now News studio in Jerusalem

Israel's strong, anything's possible, and when Israel's weak, everything kind of fades away. I believe the real lesson of what we're seeing right now is that peace through strength works in the Middle East. When Israel is strong, other countries then flock to that strength and that power. We were ranked the eighth most powerful country in the world this year, which is unbelievable when you consider that just 10 years ago, we were number 57, and that's because we're seeing a strengthening of support for Israel. This proves not only that peace is possible through strength, but also shows that when Israel's weak, we don't have an opportunity to make peace. I think what's incredible about these deals, aptly named the Abraham Accords, is that Donald Trump did what was biblically correct, not what was politically correct, and that leads to real peace. I think we are going to see a lot of countries follow suit, including Sudan, African countries and Arab countries. We're seeing so many people standing with Israel, especially in Christian countries, and that support is leading to political success, and that's really what faith-based diplomacy is – taking biblical support and turning it into real political action.

What do you say to Christians who don't support Israel?

I know there are a lot of Christians who are on the fence about Israel, and there are a lot of people who support Israel who aren't Christians. I think that people need to understand that we're the only free democracy in the Middle East, and that if you don't

support us from a biblical point of view, we also have the legal, political and archeological rights to the land. We are the only place in the Middle East that has gender equality and full rights for women, the only country with religious freedoms, the only democracy with media rights. I just believe as someone who believes in the Bible myself that these pale in comparison with the biblical rights to Israel, and that's what I tried to show in the book. People who believe in the Bible almost always stand with Israel.

What kind of reception has your book had?

We've had an incredible reception. We broke the pre-sales record of Gefen Publishing House, which has been in the business for some 40 years. We're currently running out of books on Amazon, so we're seeing a really positive response from people around the world. I mailed the first copies via a friend of mine to President Trump and members of his administration, and the president mailed back a copy of the book signed by him. This book is not an endorsement of Trump, and does not say, "Vote Trump!" It just shows the facts and uses Trump as a test case of when Bible-believing Christians get involved in the discourse, this is what could happen. And I think it's important not just for the Christian community but for the Jewish community to say thank you to Donald Trump for doing things that no one has had the courage to do before.

What's your message to the majority of American Jews and others who don't support Trump?



COURTESY

Josh Reinstein with his wife, Rebekah, at the official opening of the US Embassy in Jerusalem in 2018

I try to make the case for why Donald Trump is good for the Jewish people. Unfortunately, about 70% of American Jews don't like Trump, and the reason is that what he's done for Israel is not high on their list. They have other issues that are more important to them. But I think anyone who puts Israel high on their list of priorities is more likely to support Donald Trump. I think these smear campaigns about him being antisemitic make no sense. He's done more for Israel than any president before. He's the only president who has a Jewish child and Jewish grandchildren. There are more people with kippot on their heads invited to the White House than in any previous administration. A recent Ruderman Family Foundation report found that only 4% of American Jews put Israel high on their list of important issues coming up to the election. But we're also seeing that among 60 million Evangelical Americans, Israel is a top issue. It's a biblical issue for them, and because of that, we're seeing incredible support for Israel, like never before.

On a personal note, tell us a bit about yourself and your family, and how you are coping with the pandemic.

It's been a very interesting time for the Reinsteins. We've been shut off more than usual because of the coronavirus. We're used to having a lot of guests in our home, and of course we've stopped all of that. My oldest son, Bram, had his bar mitzvah in August, and it was a very small family af-



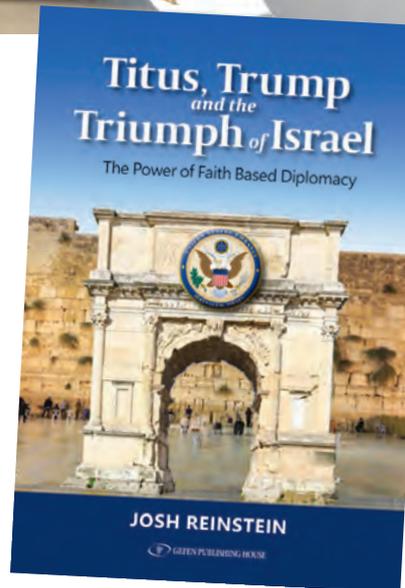
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The Reinstein family celebrating Bram Reinstein's bar mitzvah at home due to coronavirus regulations

fair. On the flip side, it's been fairly nice for my family. I have traveled abroad at least once a month for the last 20 years, and I haven't traveled since February, so it's given me a lot more family time. Having time together with my wife and four children is really priceless.

You end your book by saying, "The best is yet to come." What do you mean by that?

Well, I believe that the story of the Jewish people, its past, its present and its future, has been foretold, and I take great solace in the fact that there will be peace in Jerusalem, and the question is how we're going to get there. I think faith-based diplomacy has exploded and you can't put it back into the box. Regardless of what happens in the American presidential election, we're seeing more and more support out of Latin America, Africa, Eastern Europe and Asian countries, and among political leaders in places from Australia to Brazil and Canada. This idea of faith-based diplomacy is here to stay, and I believe today it is the most important weapon that Israel has in its diplomatic arsenal. I think we've just seen the beginning of this process and not the end. The book is not just about the history of Christian support for Israel and what Christians are doing now, but it lays out a road map of what Christians can do in the future for Isra-



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The Power of Faith-Based Diplomacy**

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el, and what this new relationship between Jews and Christians in the 21st century is going to look like in years to come. I implore people to read the book and find out how they can stand with Israel. At this time when tourists can't come to the holy land, it is a great opportunity to learn about the history of Israel and what is happening here now so they can prepare themselves for the next chapter in faith-based diplomacy. ■