

## *Chuck Hagel's Record: Myths and Facts*

### **Myth # 1: Senator Hagel is not supportive of Israel**

**Fact:** Senator Hagel is a strong supporter of Israel, and he has worked throughout his career to strengthen Israel's security and the U.S.-Israel relationship. Hagel's support has been well documented in his Senate floor speeches, opinion pieces, interviews, public speeches and 2008 book.

- In January 2013, Danny Ayalon, the Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister and former Israeli Ambassador to the United States, told a meeting of the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations that, "I know Hagel personally. When I was ambassador in Washington, we had many meetings. I cannot say that we agreed on everything, but he was a decent and fair interlocutor and you can reason with him. I think he believes in the relationship, in the natural partnership between Israel and the United States."
- As a senior member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Hagel voted consistently to support Israel – including voting to provide nearly \$40 billion in military and security assistance over the 12 years he served in the Senate.
- In his 2008 book, Hagel wrote that "there will always be a special and historic bond with Israel exemplified by our continued commitment to Israel's defense." Hagel also wrote that there can be no compromise on Israel's identity as a Jewish state.
- He has said the United States is committed to Israel's security, that Israel has an "undeniable" right to defend itself against aggression, and that the security of its borders is non-negotiable.
- He has strongly supported a two-state solution and has opposed any unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state.

### **Myth #2: Senator Hagel is soft on Iran**

**Facts:** Senator Hagel is committed to President Obama's goal of preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. He believes that all options must be on the table – including military options – to achieve that goal. Hagel strongly supports the unprecedented sanctions the international community has imposed on Iran under the leadership of the Obama administration – the toughest sanctions ever put on the regime.

- In September 2012, Senator Hagel wrote in a joint op-ed with Admiral William Fallon, Congressman Lee Hamilton, Ambassador Thomas Pickering and General Anthony Zinni that, "Our position is fully consistent with the policy of presidents for more than a decade of keeping all options on the table, including the use of military force, thereby increasing pressure on Iran while working toward a political solution."

- Hagel recently called on the United States to “keep ratcheting up sanctions” on Iran to further increase pressure, while keeping the military option on the table.
- While in the Senate, Hagel supported tough sanctions on Iran through the Iran Missile Proliferation Sanctions Act of 1997, the Iran Nonproliferation Act of 2000, and the Iran Freedom Support Act of 2006. These measures punished entities that assist Iran in developing or acquiring nuclear, biological, chemical weapons, or ballistic missiles.
- Hagel is clear-eyed about the Iranian government’s destabilizing activities in the region. He has said that Iran is a state sponsor of terrorism and that it provides material support to the terrorist groups Hezbollah and Hamas.
- He also co-sponsored legislation in the Senate condemning Iran’s arrest of members of its Jewish community and called for their release.

### **Myth # 3: Senator Hagel has been soft on Hezbollah and Hamas**

**Facts:** Senator Hagel has been clear that Hezbollah and Hamas are terrorist organizations that pose a threat to Israel, the stability of the Middle East, and the United States.

- Hagel has condemned Iran’s support of the terrorist group Hezbollah and has said that Hezbollah poses a direct threat to Israel, Lebanon, and to peace in the Middle East.
- Hagel co-sponsored resolutions in the Senate calling on Hamas to recognize Israel’s right to exist.
- He also co-sponsored the Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act of 2006, which urged the international community to withhold support from Hamas until it agreed to recognize Israel, renounce violence, disarm and accept prior agreements. The lead sponsor of that legislation was Senator Mitch McConnell, and other co-sponsors included Senators Harry Reid and Joe Biden.
- As an active member of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Senator Hagel helped bolster U.S. counterterrorism efforts in the Middle East.

### **Myth #4: Senator Hagel would weaken our nuclear deterrent**

**Facts:** Senator Hagel believes it is in the interest of the United States and mankind to work towards a world free of nuclear weapons – a goal that is squarely in line with the vision President Obama outlined in his 2009 speech in Prague. At the same time, Senator Hagel has always believed that as long as nuclear threats exist, the United States must maintain a strong and ready nuclear arsenal.

- In his 2008 book, Hagel wrote that “the world would be far more secure if no one had nuclear weapons, or, at the very least, no new nations joined the nuclear club. We must work closely with our allies and world institutions to make every effort to ensure that this club does not grow.”

- As a Senator from Nebraska, where headquarters of U.S. Strategic Command is located, he developed a keen understanding of the critical importance of fielding a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent.
- Hagel joined President Obama in strongly supporting Senate ratification of the New START Treaty, which had the unanimous support of America’s military leadership and was endorsed by six former secretaries of state, five former secretaries of defense, and three former national security advisers – both Republicans and Democrats.
- In a 2010 *Washington Post* op-ed, Hagel, along with former Secretaries of State George Shultz and Madeleine Albright and Senator Gary Hart, argued that New START “strengthens international efforts to prevent nuclear terrorism, and it opens the door to progress on further critical nonproliferation efforts, such as reducing Russian tactical nuclear weapons.”
- Hagel understands the complexities of nuclear security issues. He served on the Secretary of Energy’s Blue Ribbon Commission on America’s Nuclear Future co-chaired by General Brent Scowcroft and Congressman Lee Hamilton.

#### **Myth #5: Senator Hagel would gut the defense budget**

**Facts:** Senator Hagel has always believed that we should never take any steps that would weaken America’s national security, and he strongly opposes the automatic, across-the-board defense cuts that would be imposed under sequestration. His entire career has been predicated on the belief that the security of this nation is the government’s highest priority.

- Senator Hagel consistently voted for increases in the defense budget and the size of the armed forces in order to meet the demands of the post-9/11 conflicts.
- Like Secretaries of Defense Panetta and Gates, Hagel believes that the Department of Defense must do its part to help the nation address its deficit problem, while at the same time maintaining our military as the strongest fighting force in the world.
- In a 2011 interview, Senator Hagel said that the Pentagon needed to reduce excess spending and look at itself critically and strategically – which is exactly the process the Department undertook in developing the new defense strategy, announced by President Obama with the full support of the civilian and military leadership at the Pentagon in January 2012.

#### **Myth #6: Senator Hagel lacks management experience**

**Facts:** Senator Hagel has extensive government, corporate and non-profit experience that has prepared him well to be Secretary of Defense and to lead a large and complex organization.

- He served in the United States Army in 1967 and 1968, volunteering for service in Vietnam in 1968.

- In the Reagan administration, Hagel was the number two official in the federal government's second largest agency when he served as Deputy Administrator of the Veterans Administration – helping to lead and manage 250,000 VA employees.
- Hagel co-founded Vanguard Cellular Systems, which became a publicly traded company and was one of the largest independent cellular systems in the country.
- Hagel served as President and CEO of the World United Service Organizations (USO), which supports military service members and military families worldwide, and led two nonprofit organizations as President and CEO of the Private Sector Council and Chairman of the Atlantic Council.
- Additional business, nonprofit and government management positions include serving as Co-Chair of President Obama's Intelligence Advisory Board; Chairman of the U.S. Vietnam War Commemoration Advisory Committee; Chief Operating Officer of the 1990 Economic Summit of Industrialized Nations (G-7 Summit) in Houston, Texas; Manager of Government Affairs for Firestone Tire and Rubber Company; and President of an Omaha investment bank.

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