

Here's What Bernie Sanders Would've Told AIPAC

U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders (D-Vt.) is the only presidential candidate who didn't speak at this year's American Israel Public Affairs Committee spring policy conference in Washington, D.C.

He's also the only Jewish candidate among the two major parties.

Tuesday, *The Jerusalem Post* reported that Sanders didn't turn down an invitation to speak, as had been widely reported by mainstream media outlets. Rather, he had requested to speak via a video uplink, but that request was rejected by the conference organizers.

The Jerusalem Post also got its hands on the speech Sanders would've given, if he had been allowed to do so. It would have been controversial, to say the least.

"I will work tirelessly to advance the cause of peace as a partner and as a friend to Israel," he reportedly would've said. "[But] we have also got to be a friend not only to Israel, but to the Palestinian people, where in Gaza unemployment today is 44 percent and we have there a poverty rate which is almost as high."

Sanders was equally firm on his stance about what the Palestinian Authority and Hamas must do to secure peace:

"Peace requires the unconditional recognition by all people of Israel's right to exist ... and an end to attacks of all kinds against Israel. Peace will require that organizations like Hamas and Hezbollah renounce their efforts to undermine the security of Israel. It will require the entire world to recognize Israel."

He also would've voiced his support for the Iran nuclear deal, another position that would likely have put him at odds with the rank-and-file AIPAC participants. He said he doesn't agree that a pro-Israel position opposes the agreement.

"Preventing Iran from getting a nuclear weapon will strengthen not only America's security, but Israel's security as well," he reportedly would've said. "And I am not alone in that idea. While Prime Minister Netanyahu is vocally opposed to the accord, his is hardly a consensus opinion in Israel. Dozens of former security officials, including retired Army generals and chiefs of the Shin Bet and Mossad intelligence agencies support the agreement."

With regard to ISIS, Sanders said the fight against the Islamist group had been hampered by the Syrian civil war, and he argued other nations in the region should take a leadership role in resolving the matter. He also said a negotiated settlement would only succeed if those who take land back from ISIS demonstrate an ability to govern.

The Democrat senator has been openly criticized for not doing more to reach out to American Jews. It is likely this speech, had it been given, wouldn't have done much to improve that relationship.