

Republicans Show Strong Support for Israel at Second Debate

Republican presidential candidates offered their views on Israel, the Middle East, and Iran during the second GOP primary debate on Wednesday night.

A first and second-tier debates were held one after the other, with the first-tier debate including the three leading candidates in the polls—business mogul Donald Trump, neurosurgeon Dr. Ben Carson, and former Hewlett-Packard CEO Carly Fiorina. Recent polls indicate that those three candidates hold a combined 51 percent of the Republican public's vote.

"On day one in the Oval Office, I will make two phone calls, the first to my good friend to Bibi Netanyahu," Fiorina said in the debate. Former Florida governor Jeb Bush said the U.S. must make sure that Israel has "the most sophisticated weapons to send a signal to Iran that we have Israel's back."

U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio, R-FL, said President Barack Obama is "more respectful to the ayatollah in Iran than he is to the prime minister of Israel." With regard to the Iran nuclear deal, U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) said he would cancel the accord on his first day in office as president. Ohio Governor John Kasich called the deal a "bad agreement," but did not advocate its cancelation.

"I would never have done it, but canceling it would be playing to a crowd," he said.

U.S. Sen. Rand Paul, R-KY, said it would be "absurd" to "cut it [the Iran deal] up without looking to see whether or not Iran has complied."

Former Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee said the nuclear deal “threatens Israel immediately, this threatens the entire Middle East, but it threatens the United States of America. And we can’t treat a nuclear Iranian government as they have sponsored terrorist groups, Hamas and Hezbollah, and they threaten the very essence of Western civilization.”

Trump addressed Russian President Vladimir Putin, whose military forces have recently entered Syria, saying that Putin “has absolutely no respect for President Obama. Zero.”

“I will get along—I think—with Putin, and I will get along with others, and we will have a much more stable world,” said Trump.

Putin is “trying to reverse the fall of the Soviet Union, and exploiting a vacuum that this administration has left in the Middle East,” added Rubio.

Cruz promised to move the U.S. Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem if he is elected.

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