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### **(Neb.)-Hagel Defends Record In Senate**

By: Chris Fankhauser Posted at: 01/31/2013 07:43 AM

WASHINGTON (AP) - President Barack Obama's nominee for defense secretary is defending himself against critics who have seized on his past statements about Israel, Iran and nuclear weapons.

Chuck Hagel says he cannot be defined by a single vote or quote. He insists that his worldview hasn't changed and the United States must maintain the strongest military in the world and lead internationally.

He made his comments Thursday at his confirmation hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee.

The former two-term Republican senator has faced a barrage of criticism about his past remarks on the Middle East.

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