



## United States – Israel Relationship

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The Middle East is a region of unparalleled geopolitical tension. Radical Islamic extremism suppresses liberty and basic human rights while promoting a culture of anti-American resentment. Governments across the region harbor and aid terrorist activity. As evidenced by the “Arab Spring,” well intentioned efforts to embrace democracy struggle to gain traction – often being eclipsed by tyranny and military coup. Deeply rooted religious differences create further instability. Iran’s burgeoning nuclear program poses a threat to the entire free world.

Amidst this turmoil stands Israel – a true friend to America and our best ally in the region. One would then think that America’s support of Israel would be unwavering, but our actions repeatedly call into question the strength of this commitment. The recent nuclear “treaty” President Obama and John Kerry negotiated with Iran highlights the erosion of our once unbreakable alliance with Israel.

In the deal struck, the United States bailed out the mullahs and Iranian economy while getting almost nothing in return. Not a single one of Iran’s 19,000 centrifuges will be destroyed, and none of Iran’s enriched uranium will be irreversibly deactivated. Most troubling, the deal tacitly recognizes the existence of an Iranian nuclear program in the future – a precedent contradictory to all prior rhetoric. It should be no surprise that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu described the deal as a “historic mistake.”

Said Netanyahu in a recent speech to the U.N. General Assembly, “I want there to be no confusion on this point. Israel will not allow Iran to get nuclear weapons. If Israel is forced to stand alone, Israel will stand alone.”

I believe that Israel shouldn’t have to stand alone. As a Congressman, I will call for a renewed American commitment to our ally. America should do the following to strengthen the alliance between our nations and promote stability in the region:



## Stopping a Nuclear Iran

Benjamin Netanyahu has correctly identified Iranian President Hasan Rouhani as a “wolf in sheep’s clothing.” As a former U.S. Attorney and Chief of Anti-Terrorism and National Security for East Texas, I know firsthand the resourcefulness of terrorists. Standing idle while our enemies develop dangerous weapons is both reckless and irresponsible. By acquiescing to Iranian desires to pursue a nuclear program, the United States has neglected its own interests, those of Israel and the rest of the free world.

Tough economic sanctions should remain in place until the threat from Iran is totally dismantled. This should be non-negotiable. With construction of the Arak reactor over 80% complete, there is little room for error. Iran’s isolation from the international banking system has prompted runaway inflation and a two thirds devaluation of its currency against the USD. After contracting almost 2% in 2012, the IMF predicts Iran’s economy to shrink again in 2013.

Simply put, decades of international sanctions have left Iranian leadership with minimal leverage. To offer \$7 billion in economic relief over the next six months while centrifuges continue to spin is simply nonsensical. In addition to sanctions, Congress should pass legislation compelling the United States to take military action to support Israeli self-defense against Iranian nuclear attacks.

## Supporting Israeli Self Defense

Israel’s ability to defend herself from surrounding threats is critical to the continued existence of a free and prosperous Israeli state. Prime Minister Netanyahu has said in no uncertain terms that the, “The defense of Israel requires an Israeli military presence along the Jordan River.” Unfortunately, the Obama Administration feels otherwise. “The full and phased withdrawal of Israeli military forces should be coordinated with the assumption of Palestinian security responsibility in a sovereign, non-militarized state,” said President Obama. This is not the message the United States should be sending. We should instead embrace Israel’s right to defend herself and continue to provide robust military aid.

Fiscal crises like the one facing the United States require prioritizing some spending over others. Supporting Israeli self-defense should absolutely be a priority. The United States gives too much money to countries which don’t embrace shared Israeli-American values. While the hundreds of millions of dollars of annual aid given to the Palestinian Authority is humanitarian in nature, strict oversight is necessary to ensure that these funds aren’t improperly used to incite anti American hatred and condemnation of Israel’s right to exist.

Under the 2007 Memorandum of Understanding with Israel, the United States provides Israel with \$3 billion in annual aid. Almost three quarters of this aid flows through the American defense industry, with Texas as the biggest benefactor. This is a win-win for both Israel and the United States.



## Supporting Israeli Interests in Peace Talks

President Obama has declared that, "The borders of Israel and Palestine should be based on the 1967 lines with mutually agreed swaps so that secure and recognized borders are established for both states." This public abomination of Israeli settlement in the West Bank, Gaza and Golan Heights marks an unprecedented departure from an American position previously much friendlier to Israeli interests.

Our relationship with Israel is one between two sovereign nations. We must have confidence in Israel's ability to determine what is best for her own security and well-being. Our Declaration of Independence states, "And that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do." In a similar vein, The United States should not infringe upon Israel's sovereign right to pursue peace accords best aligned with her national interests. The United States has a role to facilitate peace talks, but not dictate them.

## Defeating Terrorism

As a former terrorism prosecutor, I helped the Department of Justice formulate domestic and international terrorism strategies. While I am generally against nation building, access I had to classified information as a terrorism prosecutor showed me that American involvement in the Middle East has in some cases directly led to the prevention of future terrorist attacks.

Decisions regarding ongoing American involvement in the region should be based upon careful analysis of the best intelligence available. If it is deemed that American involvement is critical to defeat terrorism and protect Israel, we have no choice but to continue our efforts. Conversely, if it is deemed that our involvement amounts to little more than an expensive nation building experiment, we should safely remove our forces and reallocate resources where they can be more effective.

Contrary to one President Obama's favorite talking points, terrorist activity in the Middle East is not on the verge of extinction. Hamas, the radical Islamic group which governs Gaza, has been rightfully classified as a terrorist organization by both the United States and European Union. With a significant portion of their funding coming from Iran, they should not be given moral equivalence on the international stage comparable to that of legitimate nation states.

Throughout the Middle East, groups like Hezbollah and the Taliban garner significant political influence. These organizations will stop at nothing to compromise the shared Israeli-American values. Defeating terrorism in a stump speech is easy, but much harder in practice. The United States has an obligation to live up to our words. With a renewed American commitment to this important alliance, Israel can remain a bastion of hope in a region desperately lacking political and economic freedom.