

Resounding Vote

CONGRESS REAFFIRMS STRENGTH OF
U.S.-ISRAEL ALLIANCE

In a historic display of support for America's special relationship with the Jewish state, the House and the Senate overwhelmingly passed resolutions celebrating the 60th anniversary of Israel's birth and reaffirming the close ties between the two nations.

With the entire 100 member body cosponsoring the legislation (S. Res. 522), the measure passed the Senate by unanimous consent, while the House approved its version (H. Res. 322) by a resounding vote of 417-0. The Speaker of the House, who traditionally does not cosponsor legislation, joined Democratic and Republican House leaders as a lead sponsor of the bill.

Both chambers of Congress praised "the people of Israel for their remarkable achievements in building a new state and a pluralistic, democratic society in the face of terrorism, as well as hostility, ostracism, and belligerence from many of their neighbors."

The resolution also noted that "Israel has developed an advanced, entrepreneurial economy" and "is at the forefront of research and development in the field of renewable energy sources."

The House and Senate "extended the warmest congratulations and best wishes to the State of Israel and the Israeli people for a peaceful, prosperous, and successful future."

The resolutions were introduced in the House by Speaker NANCY PELOSI (D-CA), Majority Leader STENY HOYER (D-MD), Republican Leader JOHN BOEHNER (R-OH) and Republican Whip ROY BLUNT (R-MO), and in the Senate by Majority Leader HARRY REID (D-NV) and Republican Leader MITCH MCCONNELL (R-KY).

The passage of the resolutions comes as the Democratic Israel Working Group and the House Republican Israel Caucus are spearheading a series of weekly floor speeches in order to honor Israel's 60th anniversary. •NER•

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NEAR EAST

Report

MAY 1-15, 2008

AIPAC'S BIWEEKLY ON AMERICAN
MIDDLE EAST POLICY

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

Israel at 60

"In order to be a realist," said David Ben-Gurion, "you must believe in miracles."

Sixty years have passed since the miracle of Israel's birth, six decades since the realization of the Jewish people's 2,000-year-old dream of an independent state in the Land of Israel. What Ben-Gurion called the "redemption" of the Jewish people is now an established fact: The ancient Hebrew language has been revived, and Jews from around the world have returned to live in the land of their ancestors as masters of their own destiny.

At its birth in 1948, Israel was a tiny and fragile country of only about 600,000 people. Since that time, nearly three million Jews from all corners of the earth have immigrated to Israel, including more than one million from the former Soviet Union. Today, the Jewish state's population has grown to more than seven million, some 20 percent of whom are Arabs—mostly Muslims—equal under the law.

One cannot take for granted that Israel—a country that has never had secure borders—exists as a free and democratic state. Israel's liberal values are enshrined in its Declaration of ...see *Editor's Comments cont'd on pg. 24*

Nuclear Drive

IRAN BRAGS OF FIVEFOLD INCREASE
IN ITS NUCLEAR ABILITIES

In a fiery speech marking Iran's National Day of Nuclear Technology, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad announced that the Islamic Republic had accelerated its illicit atomic program by starting to install 6,000 new, more advanced IR-2 centrifuges at its primary nuclear facility in Natanz.

"The capacity of these new machines is five times greater than the current machines," Ahmadinejad said, boasting that Tehran's achievement marked the "beginning of a speedy trend to eliminate the big powers'" dominance in the field of nuclear technology.



Photo by the Associated Press

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad says Tehran is accelerating its illicit nuclear program.

The IR-2 centrifuge is a massive leap over the unreliable P-1 version that makes up the bulk of Iran's fully functioning 3,000 unit enrichment facility. (The "P" reflects a Pakistani origin, whereas "IR" notes an Iranian model.) Proliferation experts have warned that by advancing its enrichment capabilities, Iran is potentially cutting in half the time it needs to enrich enough fuel for a nuclear weapon.

The United States condemned Ahmadinejad's proclamations. "The Iranian government continues to be in violation of multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions," White House spokesman Gordon Johndroe said. "And with each step it takes, it continues to isolate its people and risk further international financial and ...see *Nuclear Drive cont'd on pg. 24*

Strong Alliance

OVER SIX DECADES, THE U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP HAS GROWN FROM A PARTNERSHIP BASED ON SHARED VALUES INTO A DEEP STRATEGIC ALLIANCE AIMED AT CONFRONTING GLOBAL THREATS

Seated behind a sign on his desk that read, “The buck stops here,” President Harry Truman was faced with a historic choice—one that only a president could make. Should he recognize the newly created State of Israel?

The day was May 14, 1948, and the American people were waiting for his decision. Truman’s top advisors had all warned him that recognizing the Jewish state would lead to a global catastrophe.

But 11 minutes after Israel declared its independence, Harry Truman made the United States the first nation on earth to recognize Israel. In the years following that historic decision, the U.S.-Israel alliance would become the cornerstone of American policy in the Middle East, and Israel would emerge as one of America’s greatest strategic assets.

The United States Maintains Israel’s Qualitative Military Edge

Three years after President Truman recognized Israel, Congress approved the first aid package to Israel—\$65 million to help the Jewish state absorb Holocaust survivors and Jewish refugees from Arab countries.

However, the United States did not sell Israel any arms until 1961, when President John F. Kennedy lifted the embargo and sold Israel crucial Hawk missiles—the only effective defense against Soviet-made bombers. Kennedy’s decision established an important precedent: The United States would act to maintain Israel’s qualitative military edge over its potential adversaries.

Following the 1967 Six-Day War, when Israel routed its enemies and captured advanced Soviet weaponry, the strategic relationship deepened. The United States became the chief supplier of weaponry to Israel and began providing significant amounts of foreign aid.

President Lyndon Johnson followed Kennedy’s example by selling Phantom fighter jets to Israel in 1968. Similarly, during the 1973 Yom Kippur War, President Richard Nixon provided Israel with a massive airlift, helping the Jewish state overcome initial setbacks on the battlefield.

As a result of strong U.S. influence in the region after the Yom Kippur War, Egypt—long Israel’s strongest enemy—left the Soviet sphere of influence, aligned itself with the United States and signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1979. Israel withdrew

from the entire Sinai Peninsula—an area three times its size—after receiving U.S. security guarantees.

The United States and Israel Face Common Threats

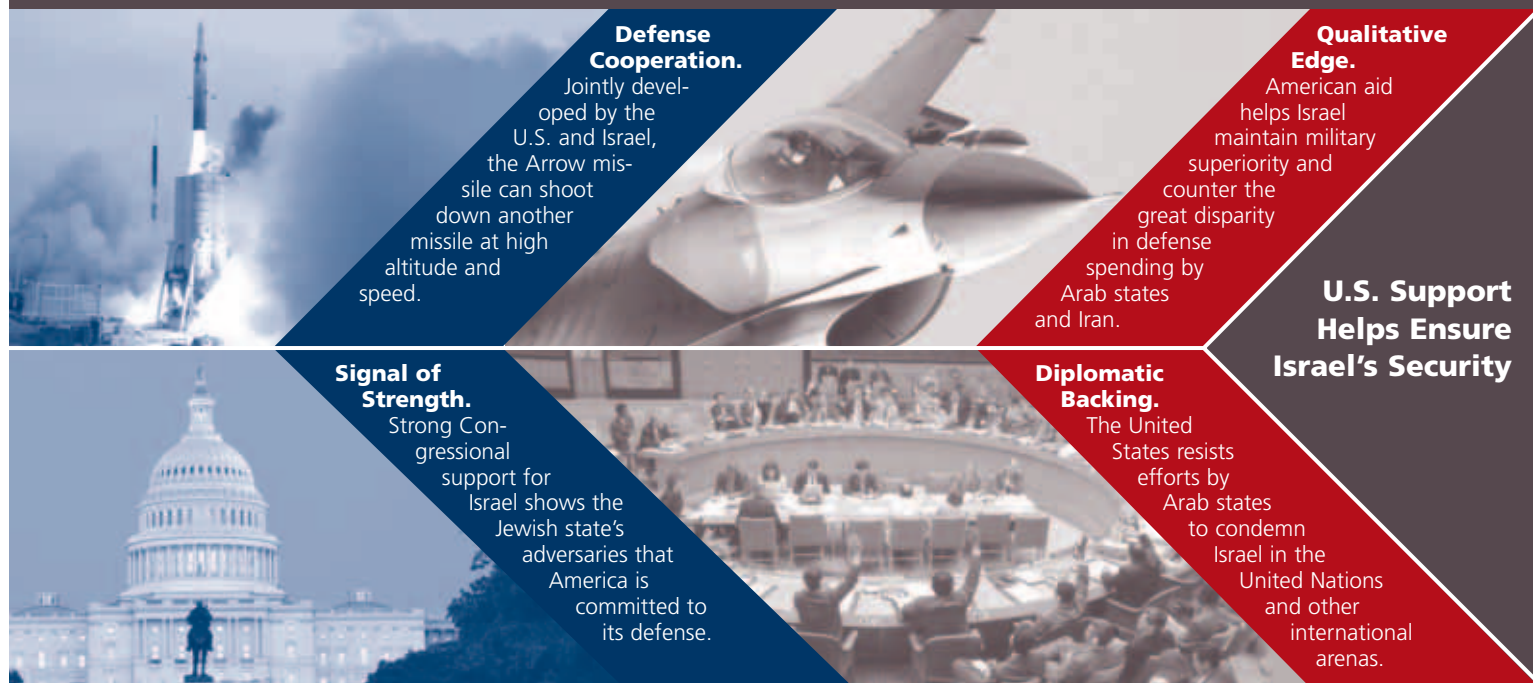
At the end of the 1970s and into the beginning of the 1980s, the United States was faced with an increasingly volatile Middle East. It was during this decade that the danger of radical Islam and terrorism emerged.

In Iran in 1979, radical Islamists overthrew the Shah, a key U.S. ally in the region. The same year, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, threatening Pakistan, a U.S. ally. A few years later in 1983, Hizballah killed more than 240 U.S. marines in Lebanon.

Due to the growing regional instability, the United States sought a stable regional ally; it found one in Israel. The Jewish state had both the willingness and the necessary infrastructure to provide American troops with a safe base of operations in the event of a regional crisis.

Furthermore, Israel was proving that its military could strike far from its borders. For example, in 1981, Israel destroyed Saddam Hussein’s nuclear reac-

MUTUAL BENEFITS: HOW THE U.S.-ISRAEL



tor, enabling the United States, ten years later, to expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait without having to confront a nuclear-armed Iraq. Israel further demonstrated its military prowess when its U.S.-equipped air force downed 82 Soviet-made Syrian jet fighters without losing a single plane.

As a result of Israel's accomplishments, the United States began to view Israel as a vital strategic partner. The alliance was hardened in 1988 when President Ronald Reagan and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir signed an agreement designating Israel as "a major non-NATO ally of the United States." The memorandum cemented Israel's position as an anchor for U.S. influence in the Middle East.

While the U.S. originally viewed Israel as an asset because of its strategic location in an unstable region, America would also grow to rely on the Jewish state for its many talents.

Israeli Ingenuity Saves U.S. Lives

The U.S.-Israel relationship has evolved into a mutually beneficial alliance. The close partnership between the two nations has yielded military technologies, helping to protect American and Israeli lives.

The most important of these technologies is the Arrow, a missile defense system that is currently deployed in Israel. Jointly developed by the two allies, it is the only

operational system that has consistently proven that one missile can shoot down another at high altitude and speed.

Strategic cooperation has made important Israeli military innovations available to the United States, which uses them in real combat. For example, the U.S. military regularly uses Israeli-developed Hunter unmanned arial vehicles to gather critical intelligence and kill terrorists—all without endangering pilots.

In addition, U.S. planes have been equipped with the Litening targeting pod, an Israeli-made system with infrared sensors that identifies ground targets and enables pilots to fly at night and in bad weather. The Litening made it possible for American fighter pilots to deliver the munitions that killed al-Qaeda's leader in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.

Furthermore, U.S. armored personnel carriers are protected by Israeli-developed reactive armor tiles, which explode outward upon impact, diffusing the force of incoming fire. So far, more than 800 U.S. troops have avoided injury or death as a result of the reactive tiles. The United States and Israel continue to work together to reduce the threat of improvised explosive devices, which have been responsible for the majority of U.S. casualties in Iraq.

On top of all of this, Israel regularly shares intelligence on American adversaries

that has proven extremely useful for the United States. No other U.S. ally has developed such extensive intelligence on Middle Eastern regimes as Israel has been forced to do for 60 years, and no other nation has shared such intelligence with the United States more frequently than has Israel.

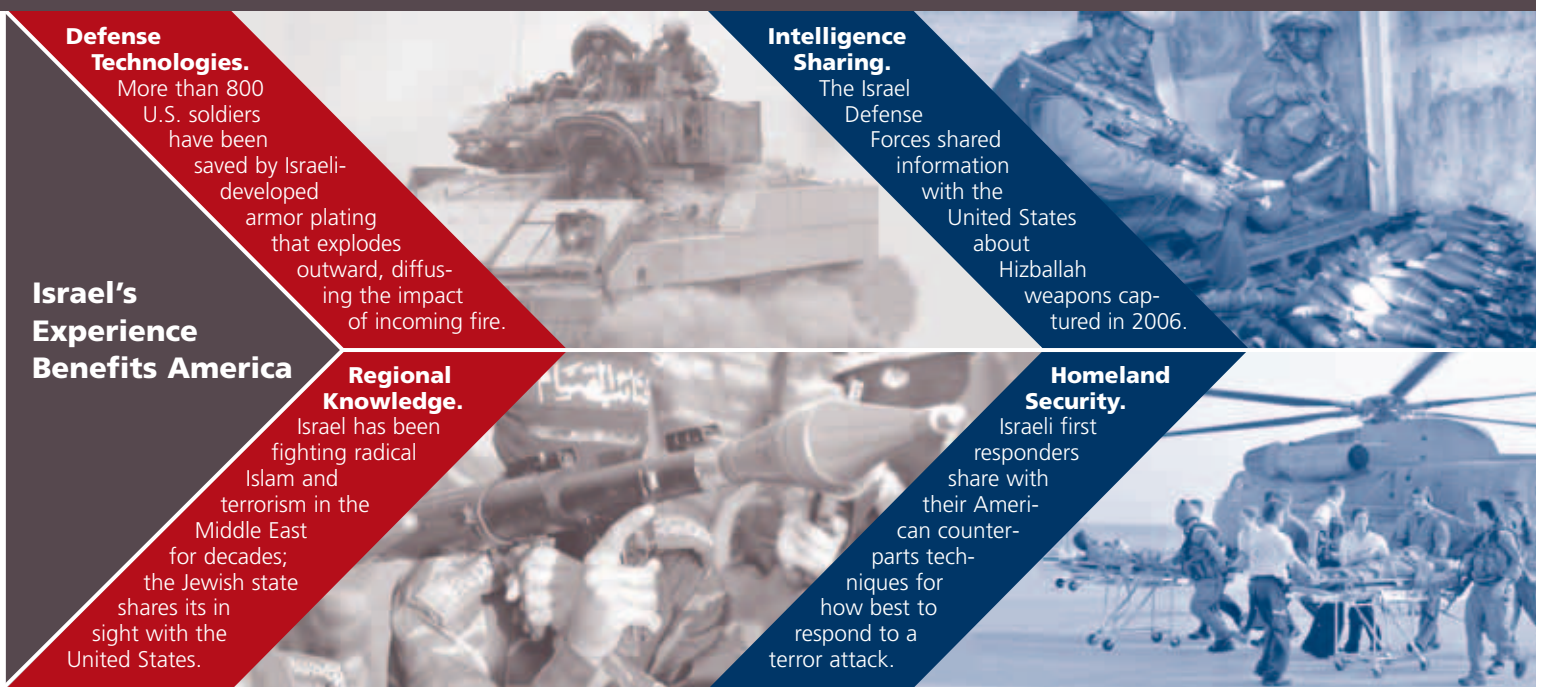
The Two Nations Cooperate on Homeland Security

Since the 9/11 attacks, the United States and Israel have intensified their cooperation in the field of homeland security. Israel is one of five countries participating in the U.S. Counterterrorism Technical Support Working Group, whose experts collaborate to develop anti-terrorism technology.

American law enforcement agencies are increasingly studying Israel's battle against terrorism. Israel frequently hosts delegations of American police chiefs, sheriffs and emergency responders. These U.S. lawmen have returned to infuse their departments' training with lessons on how Israeli security forces prevent terrorist attacks such as suicide bombings.

Washington and Jerusalem have come a long way together since Truman first recognized the Jewish state in 1948. Today, the alliance is built to last. In the years ahead, the two nations will continue their joint efforts to counter global threats as they work together to seek peace. •NER•

RELATIONSHIP STRENGTHENS BOTH NATIONS



Independence, which promises that the state “will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture.”

With its strong commitment to human liberty, Israel is a natural friend of the United States. America sees in Israel the values it holds most sacred. Indeed, Israel is a country worth celebrating, but one must not forget that the Jewish state's successes have come at a tremendous cost.

By now we can all recite the familiar years of Israel's many wars—'48, '56, '67, '73, '82 and so on—but we must not become desensitized to the toll that these wars have taken on Israeli society. In its War of Independence, for example, Israel lost about 6,000 people—one percent of its population at the time. Were this same percentage of the U.S. population to die in battle, there would be three million American dead.

Since 1948, thousands of Israelis have been killed or wounded in battle and from terrorist attacks. Having known the horrors of war, the Israeli people yearn for peace more than any other people. They sing songs of peace, pray for peace and teach their children the virtues of peace.

As we mark Israel's 60th, we must be proud of America's long friendship with the Jewish state and continue to do all we can to work for peace. •NER•

Bold Letter

SENATORS URGE THE UNITED STATES TO PRESS SAUDI ARABIA TO FULFILL ITS COMMITMENT TO END ITS 60-YEAR BOYCOTT OF ISRAEL

Last November's high-profile Middle East meeting in Annapolis raised hopes that Saudi Arabia would begin to normalize relations with Israel. Since that time, however, Riyadh has done nothing to ease its 60-year boycott of the Jewish state, as required by the terms of its membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO).

In response, the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Finance Committee's International Trade Subcommittee have sent a letter to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and U.S. Trade Representative Susan Schwab, urging them to do more to convince Saudi Arabia to end its isolation of Israel.

The letter, written by Sens. Blanche Lincoln (D-AR) and Gordon Smith (R-OR), notes that Riyadh committed to end its participation in the Arab League boycott of Israel upon entering the WTO in 2005.

Expressing concern that the Administration's annual National Trade Estimate report minimizes Saudi Arabia's role in the boycott and downplays its failure to meet

its WTO commitments, the senators call on the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) to be more candid in future assessments of Saudi compliance. However, the 2008 edition of USTR's report, which was released shortly after Lincoln and Smith sent their letter, commends Riyadh for taking its WTO responsibilities “seriously” and omits any mention of its continuing ban on trade with Israel and attendance of boycott conferences in Syria.

Sens. Lincoln and Smith also point out the hypocrisy of Saudi Arabia demanding unilateral concessions from Israel while refusing to have any contacts with it.

President Bush said at Annapolis that Arab states should “reach out to Israel, work toward the normalization of relations and demonstrate in both word and deed that they believe that Israel and its people have a permanent home in the Middle East.” Lincoln and Smith used their letter to point out that more work needs to be done to see this through. •NER•

Nuclear Drive....cont'd from pg. 21

diplomatic sanctions.”


Iran's self-proclaimed nuclear progress comes just weeks after U.N. nuclear experts obtained documents detailing a years-long, clandestine effort by Iran to use civilian experts as cover for nuclear warhead research.

In addition, new satellite photographs have revealed a secret site where Iran is suspected of developing long-range ballistic

missiles capable of reaching targets as far away as Europe. The photographs suggest Iran is disguising its missile development as a space program, much like North Korea did over the last decade.

In light of these recent developments, the permanent five members of the U.N. Security Council, plus Germany, have agreed to meet again to discuss how to press Iran to halt its pursuit of nuclear weapons. •NER•

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