

Israel Connection

AN AIPAC HOLIDAY PUBLICATION FOR SYNAGOGUES

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Sukkot: Hosting Honored Guests

THE ZOHAR, the foremost book of Jewish mysticism, teaches us that when we sit in the *sukkah*, seven *ushpizin* (the Aramaic word for “guests”) visit us. According to the tradition, the guests we welcome into our *sukkah* are the souls of the seven “shepherds of Israel”—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joseph and David. What a remarkable group of visitors to have at our homes! From this tradition, we are reminded of the importance of *hachnasat orchim* (the mitzvah of welcoming guests).

But Sukkot is not just about welcoming the great and noble to our tables. According to Maimonides’ Mishne Torah, we are obligated to welcome the stranger, the orphan, the widow and those less fortunate than ourselves into our *sukkah*. In this way, all Israel—rich and poor, past and present, scholar and lay-person, great and small—is united under the protective cover of the *sukkah*. This true and enduring unity of Israel is another lesson of Sukkot.

As much as at any time in our people’s long history, we need to be united now.

The president of Iran, the world’s leading state sponsor of terrorism, has



Meeting with members of Congress is one of the best ways to help secure a strong U.S.-Israel relationship.

frequently expressed his desire to destroy Israel and has been caught illegally seeking the means to do so. Israel faces well-financed, organized terrorist threats on her northern and southern borders. The Gaza Strip has been taken over by terrorists who kidnap Israelis, rain rockets on peaceful towns and turn children’s TV programming into jihadist training.

During this sacred time, we can demonstrate solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Israel and elsewhere by practicing—as a community—*hachnasat orchim*. In addition to our traditional guests and those in need, we should invite into our midst the leaders and policy makers who will help our people and our world overcome these dire threats.

We should meet with our members of Congress and ask them to stand with us. Working together and within our political system, we can ensure the continued strength and future security not only of our individual dwelling places, but of the shelter that unites us as *am Yisrael*—the people of Israel.

Aid to Israel: A Critical Investment



FOR DECADES, the United States has been committed to maintaining Israel’s qualitative military edge. Because Israel cannot possibly overcome the quantitative military advantage enjoyed by its more populous neighbors, the U.S. ensures that Israel has superior weapons, technologies and personnel. U.S. support counters the great disparity in defense spending between Israel and its potential adversaries.

Direct military aid provided in the annual foreign-aid bill is the most tangible way that the U.S. helps Israel maintain its military superiority. The FY2008 foreign aid bill includes \$2.4 billion in assistance to help Israel preserve its qualitative military edge at a time of growing threats in the region. Israel uses 75 percent of this aid to purchase advanced weapons from American companies.

U.S. military aid, along with the numerous cooperative defense programs co-funded by the U.S. government, help give Israel the wherewithal to counter the totality of threats from all of its hostile neighbors. Please take the opportunity to remind members of Congress that American support enables Israel to maintain its essential qualitative edge, thereby reducing the chances of war.

Be An Effective Advocate

ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO LOBBY members of Congress is to meet with them face to face either in their district office or in Washington, D.C. Inviting a member of Congress to your home, synagogue or community center offers another opportunity for candid conversation and the chance to get to know one another better.

Regardless of the specific setting, following some simple guidelines can help ensure that your meetings are productive.

PREPARE: Meet with your group ahead of time to ensure that everyone agrees on the purpose and goal of the meeting. (Given that the time for the meeting may be limited, be sure to agree to stay on message and keep to one main topic or one particular piece of legislation.)

PRACTICE: Draft an outline, including what you want to say to the member of Congress and what critical points you want to be sure to weave into your discussion.



REVIEW INFORMATION:

Have a few materials available for members of your group to read in the days prior to the meeting to refresh their memory and give them pertinent facts to include when they speak.

CHOOSE LEADERS:

Designate a couple of spokespeople from within your group to lead the initial discussion.

TAILOR YOUR MESSAGE:

Make sure you've taken

the time to get to know your member's voting record, opinions and unique interests.

LISTEN: During the meeting, remember that listening will be just as important as covering the points in your outline. What the congressperson or staff member says can give you an important understanding of their perspective that will help you in future conversations.

VOICE APPRECIATION: When appropriate, be sure to thank your member for his or her past support or hard work on the issue at hand.

RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF STAFF: Meetings with congressional staff offer important opportunities to establish or strengthen relationships with the people who help keep the member of Congress informed and ultimately help shape his or her opinions and votes.

BE CLEAR: If you are asking a member of Congress to support a specific piece of legislation, be sure to say exactly that.

SHARE INFORMATION: At the conclusion of a meeting, offer the member a concise memo or article connected with the issue you discussed.

FOR THE MOST UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION, DAILY NEWS UPDATES AND WORD ON PENDING LEGISLATION REGARDING THE U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP, VISIT WWW.AIPAC.ORG.

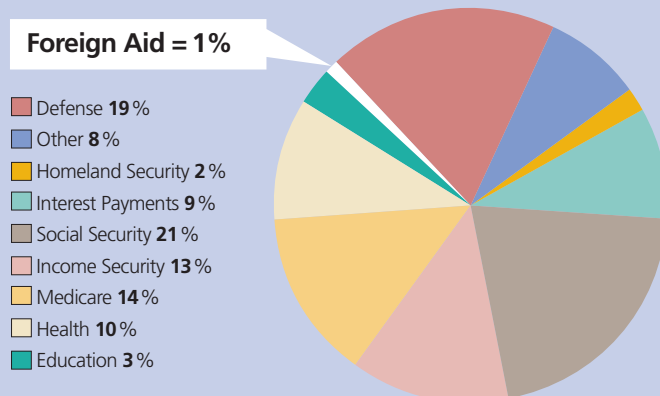
Facts About Foreign Aid

AID TO ISRAEL SIGNALS UNSHAKABLE U.S. SUPPORT

- The FY2008 foreign aid bill includes \$2.4 billion in security assistance for Israel. The bill also provides \$40 million to help Israel absorb refugees from the former Soviet Union and other countries.
- Foreign aid to Israel is the most tangible indicator of ongoing U.S. support for the Jewish state and is a key factor in helping Israel remain strong and vibrant.
- U.S. aid is vital in helping Israel with its defense modernization needs as it balances the ongoing threat of Palestinian terrorism, the risk of renewed conflict with Hizballah and Syria and the looming danger of a nuclear Iran.
- Strengthening America's ally through foreign aid also serves as one of the driving forces in shaping a region—dominated by unstable, non-democratic regimes—that remains of vital strategic importance to the United States.
- Israel, in turn, shares its expertise and technology with the United States, contributing to our efforts to protect our troops and homeland. Israel also helps counter the proliferation of dangerous weapons that threaten both nations.
- More than 75 percent of American military aid to Israel is spent by the Jewish state within the United States, helping create jobs across the country, boosting American exports and opening overseas markets to U.S. businesses.
- American assistance helps increase prospects for peace by deterring Arab states from attacking Israel. Two Arab states (Egypt and Jordan) signed peace treaties with Israel after becoming convinced that conflict with Israel was doomed to failure.
- The United States also pre-positions hundreds of millions of dollars worth of military equipment, including spare parts, trucks, ammunition and armor in Israel. This equipment can be used by U.S. or Israeli forces in times of crisis, and was utilized during the 2006 Lebanon war.

FOREIGN AID: AN AFFORDABLE INVESTMENT

(Percentage of Federal Budget)



Values for the Next 60 Years

Rabbi Daniel Landes



SUKKOT, named for its observance of dwelling in booths, represents three core Jewish values for Israel's next sixty years.

The first is historical memory. We sit, eat and sleep in the *sukkah*, remembering that “in booths I caused Israel to dwell when I took them out of Egypt,” during the forty-year desert sojourn. As at the seder, we don't only recount, we reenact. What we recount and reenact is the second value.

The second value is that the *sukkah* reminds us of our people's existential vulnerability. Our dwelling in the *sukkah* is a ritual that warns us that security is a perennial concern of the highest order for our people. A *sukkah* can be made from even two and a half walls and still be kosher. Its roof is a mere pile of loose wood, and the like. It's amazing that it holds together at all.

What keeps our contemporary *sukkah* that is Israel together? “Every citizen of the Israelites shall dwell in *sukkot*.” This demonstrates our solidarity. From Israeli soldiers in a lonely outpost on Mt. Hermon, to the “at home” New York Jew, to the Jewish family in a small South Dakota town—we are together in the fight for Israel's survival. No serious Jew can feel safe when Israel is imperiled. We're in it together.

With a son entering the IDF and a daughter who just finished her service, I deeply appreciate AIPAC for its historical memory, realistic assessment of Israel's vulnerability and solidarity with its future. But I love AIPAC for its enduring optimism in getting the job done to help ensure Israeli security for the next sixty years. It is this optimism that allows us to pitch our *sukkah* in the high and hot desert winds of the Middle East. We couldn't do it without AIPAC.

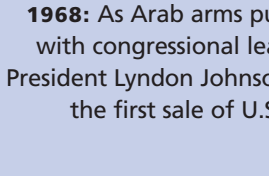
Rabbi Daniel Landes is the Director and Rosh HaYeshiva of The Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem.

60 Years of Friendship

From the moment of Israel's inception, America's friendship has been crucial to the Jewish state. From the first aid package to Israel to current day efforts to ensure the country's qualitative edge, from emergency support in times of war to helping to lay the ground work for the principles of peace-making, pro-Israel Americans continue to play a critical role in ensuring that the U.S.-Israel relationship grows stronger over time.



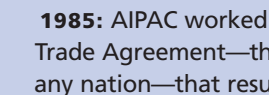
1951: AIPAC's lobbying and informational efforts were crucial to Congress' approval of the first package of American aid to Israel—\$65 million, which helped the Jewish state absorb Holocaust survivors and Jewish refugees who were expelled from Arab countries.



1968: As Arab arms purchases soared, AIPAC worked with congressional leaders to pass legislation urging President Lyndon Johnson to sell fighter jets to Israel—the first sale of U.S. arms to Israel for deterrence.



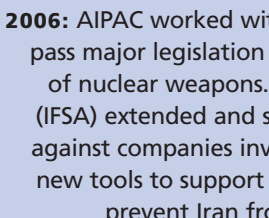
1973: In the wake of the devastating Yom Kippur War, AIPAC's efforts helped secure support for aid to Israel from 269 representatives and 70 senators even as threats loomed of an Arab oil embargo against the Jewish state's allies.



1985: AIPAC worked for the passage of the U.S.-Israel Free Trade Agreement—the first between the United States and any nation—that resulted in a doubling of U.S.-Israel trade.



1994: AIPAC worked with Congress to support the Israeli-Jordanian peace treaty—only the second between Israel and an Arab state—by backing U.S. assistance for proposed Israeli-Jordanian water, transportation and cultural projects.



2006: AIPAC worked with Congress to overwhelmingly pass major legislation aimed at slowing Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons. The Iran Freedom Support Act (IFSA) extended and strengthened existing sanctions against companies investing in Tehran, and provided new tools to support American diplomatic efforts to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

TAKE A VIRTUAL TOUR THROUGH THE LAST 60 YEARS OF OUR HISTORY. VISIT WWW.AIPAC.ORG/ABOUT_AIPAC TO VIEW THE FULL SLIDESHOW OF EVENTS.

What They Say About US



"For more than fifty years, the United States and Israel have been steadfast allies. AIPAC is one of the reasons why."

President George W. Bush



"Thank God we have AIPAC—the greatest supporter and friend that we have in the whole world..."

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert



"AIPAC has done a magnificent job, better than anybody else lobbying in this town...You have been stunningly effective."

Former President Bill Clinton



"The special relationship between the United States and Israel is as strong as it is because of your [AIPAC's] fidelity to that partnership..."

Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA)



"I can't think of a policy organization in the country as well-organized or respected, and the subject for which you advocate, the security of Israel, could not be more important."

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV)



"For over half a century, AIPAC has strengthened the religious, cultural and political bonds that unite our two great nations, and I thank you for that."

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice

TO HEAR OTHER PROMINENT LEADERS TALK ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF AIPAC'S WORK, VISIT WWW.AIPAC.ORG/ABOUT_AIPAC.



www.aipac.org



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About AIPAC

THE AMERICAN ISRAEL PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

is an American organization whose principal mission is to lobby the U.S. government about legislation that strengthens the relationship between the United States and Israel. *The New York Times* calls AIPAC "the most important organization affecting America's relationship with Israel."

Every day the professional staff and members of AIPAC are hard at work helping to educate members of Congress, candidates for public office, policy makers, media professionals, synagogue leaders and students on college campuses about the importance of the U.S.-Israel friendship. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the organization has ten regional offices focused on bringing our message to legislators throughout the country.

Rabbis and their congregants come to trust and rely on AIPAC as the best resource for relevant, factual information and analysis on the situation in Israel and the Middle East. The AIPAC Synagogue Initiative works to increase the number of pro-Israel activists in the American Jewish community by organizing within synagogues across the country.

Today, AIPAC is broadening and deepening the U.S.-Israel bond by working to secure vital aid for Israel to help ensure Israel remains strong and secure. AIPAC is working to promote strategic cooperation between the two nations, to develop sound U.S. anti-terrorist policies and to stop rogue nations such as Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

For close to 60 years, AIPAC has worked to make a difference. With your commitment to AIPAC, together we can continue to make a difference.

TO WATCH CURRENT VIDEOS ABOUT OUR WORK, VISIT WWW.AIPAC.ORG.

SAVE THE DATE

AIPAC's Annual Policy Conference

June 2-4, 2008 • Washington, D.C.