



Middle East Spotlight

Aiding an Ally

During and following Operation Cast Lead the United States demonstrated her special bond with Israel in a series of comments by influential politicians and diplomatic actions that explicitly declared America's support for Israel.

America repeatedly announced her support for Israel reaffirming Israel's right to defend her citizens. Asked about Israel's operation in Gaza during an interview on ABC's This Week with George Stephanopoulos, President Obama said, "I think that's a basic principle of any country is that they've got to protect their citizens."

In addition to the President's comments Congress passed two resolutions, introduced by the bipartisan leadership of both houses, which called for a durable and sustainable diplomatic outcome to the crisis.

These resolutions sought to ensure an end to the smuggling of arms into Gaza and an end to Hamas terror attacks on Israel. The resolutions were approved by overwhelming margins, 390-5 in the House of Representatives and by unanimous consent in the Senate.

Further, in January the United States and Israel signed a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) pledging joint efforts to stem the flow of weapons to Hamas and other Iranian-backed terrorists in Gaza.

This MOU not only called for greater cooperation to halt smuggling, but it also recognized that Hamas' acquisition and use of arms against Israel were "the direct causes of recent hostilities" and that a durable cessation of hostilities depends on denying weapons to terrorist groups and countering Iran's destructive activities.

The language of the MOU goes even further to express the United States' support for Israel by "unequivocally condemning all acts, methods, and practices of terrorism as unjustifiable, wherever and by whomever committed and whatever the motivation, in particular, the recent rocket and mortar attacks and other hostile activity perpetrated against Israel from Gaza by terrorist organizations."

The actions of the U.S. government during Operation Cast Lead underscore the special relationship between the U.S. and Israel, countries which have once again affirmed their relationship as steadfast partners for the causes of peace, security and freedom. This relationship is the basis for the scores of statements of support from American politicians as well as the MOU. This valuable American support continues to give Israel the strength to defend freedom, even in the face of global pressure to capitulate to terrorists.