



Middle East Spotlight

Israel: A Story Worth Telling

Israel's story is one of survival, heroism and self-defense. Its chapters describe the manifold facets of a vibrant contemporary democracy and a pioneering nation—all making Israel, as her adversaries rightly point out, a “Western outpost in the Middle East.”

Today, Israel is home to the third highest number of companies listed on NASDAQ, ahead of Germany and China. Israel has more registered U.S. patents than Russia, India and China combined—and the highest number of medical device patents in the world. Israel has more high-tech start-ups than anywhere on Earth, except for California. Israel sends disaster relief to hundreds of thousands of people across the continents, from Asia to South America.

One of Israel's many stories is of a brave Nigerian boy born with a life-threatening hole in his heart. With little money and Third World medical care, his parents had only their prayers as solace. Israel's Ambassador in Abuja, Nigeria, read of the boy's condition in a local newspaper and knew all too well that, sadly, this illness is common among the poorest children of Africa. With the assistance of an Israeli non-governmental organization (NGO), the embassy arranged to fly the boy and his family to Israel so that the child could receive a life-saving heart operation. Last year, more than 200 children with congenital heart defects received treatment in Israel.

In addition, this past winter, the Israeli government signed an agreement with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to provide technological aid to some of Africa's poorest and driest countries. Israel will assist governments, towns and farmers, from Benin to Cameroon, in managing and developing food, water, education and health care in desert environs.

Israel also represents the story of a vibrant democracy. In a region of the world where women are often treated as second-class citizens, Israel is known for the many strong and talented women who help lead the tiny nation. Dorit Beinisch is Israel's first female Supreme Court President—a woman whose passion for democracy, the rule of law and her country personifies Israel's longstanding judicial commitment to balancing national security and human rights.

A little known Israeli robot called “ViRob” epitomizes Israel's technological story. Seen as a major breakthrough in biomedical technology, ViRob is the latest brainchild of the Israel Institute of Technology (Technion). This tiny Israeli robot can crawl within small crevices of the human body, reaching blood vessels, veins, tumors and other previously inoperable areas. The genius of ViRob is that it can actually perform surgery and potentially treat life-threatening lung cancer.

Time and again, Israel ranks top among the world's most scientifically advanced countries. This is the story of a remarkable country, one that is still being written. When you meet with your elected officials and tell them that Israel's survival is dependent on strong U.S. support, remind them of what Israel means not only to you, but also to the progress and evolution of our world. You can ensure that this story never has an ending.