



Middle East Spotlight

A Friendship that Matters

As we here in America put on our sunglasses and slather on the sunscreen this summer, Iran is creeping closer and closer towards a nuclear weapons capability. Fortunately, this spring the United States took numerous steps to demonstrate its commitment to Israel's security.

In the House of Representatives, lawmakers introduced the Nuclear Iran Prevention Act (H.R. 850), designed to strengthen enforcement of current U.S. sanctions on Iran, expand sanctions targeting Iran's human rights violations, and, for the first time, specifically authorize the president to impose sanctions on any entity that maintains significant commercial ties to Iran. The bill was introduced by House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce (R-CA) and Ranking Member Eliot Engel (D-NY).

In the Senate, lawmakers introduced a resolution (S. Res. 65) declaring that: (1) prevention of an Iranian nuclear weapon remains American policy; (2) it is essential to step up enforcement of sanctions against Iran; and (3) the United States will stand by Israel should the Jewish state feel compelled to take military action in its own defense against Iran. The resolution was co-authored by Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Robert Menendez (D-NJ) and Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC).

A further testament of American support for the Jewish state this spring was the U.S. arms sale to Israel, which was primarily negotiated under the tenures of Former Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta and Former Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak. The sale is designed to ensure that Israel has the strength and capability to deter and counter the Iranian threat and other security risks such as the ongoing civil war in Syria.

In this sale, Israel will purchase and receive advanced military tools designed to maintain its qualitative military edge. Included in the package are advanced radar systems for F-15 fighter jets; KC-135 tankers: aircraft that can refuel other planes midair; and HARM anti-radiation missiles, which fired from a fighter jet can destroy opposition air-defense missiles. In addition, Israel is the first country America has authorized to receive the V-22 Osprey, a military plane that can take off, land and fly as either a plane or a helicopter. These will be particularly valuable in special operations.

Though Iran has proven that it remains determined to develop nuclear weapons, we can also be certain that the support and partnership between the United States and Israel is stronger and more powerful than ever before. Together, these two great nations will continue to work together to prevent the Islamic Republic from attaining the most dangerous weapons known to man.