



Middle East Spotlight

Innovative Partnerships

As evidence of spring begins to show more clearly and buds turn to blooms, there are two “buds” in particular whose friendship is blooming stronger than ever—the United States and Israel. Following Prime Minister Netanyahu’s March visit with President Obama in Washington, he traveled to California to enhance Israel’s partnerships with Silicon Valley.

The Israeli leader met with Governor Jerry Brown, and together, the two signed a new Memorandum of Understanding that calls for increased partnerships in high-tech, the environment and cyber-security. During his trip to the West Coast, Netanyahu called Israel and California “the most powerful innovation hubs on the planet.”

In recent years, Israeli and Californian entrepreneurs have developed close ties in the public sector and through private companies partnering on an array of groundbreaking technological innovations. The new agreement reached this spring will provide Israeli companies with access to Californian universities and federal laboratories that partner venture capitalists with high-tech researchers.

In addition to expanding the existing partnerships within the high-tech and cybersecurity sectors, Netanyahu and officials in California have focused their attention on the need to implement Israeli expertise in irrigation technology. According to algorithms developed by the federal U.S. Drought Monitor, a majority of California currently experiences the worst possible drought conditions in the modern history of the state, leading California officials to declare a state of emergency.

“We in Israel don’t have a water problem,” said Netanyahu in an interview with Bloomberg television. He continued, “We use technology to solve it, in recycling, in desalination, in deep drip irrigation and so on. And these technologies could be used by the state of California to eliminate its chronic drought problem.” Governor Brown agreed. “Israel has demonstrated how efficient a country can be, and there is a great opportunity for collaboration,” he said.

Actually, the Jewish state has already begun implementing these technologies in California. Israel’s IDE Technologies Ltd. is working in cooperation with a California company, Poseidon Resources Corp., to develop a seawater desalination plant north of San Diego. Once finished in 2016, the Carlsbad facility will be the largest of its kind in the Western Hemisphere, and will be able to provide 50 million gallons of potable water a day.

Israel’s growing partnerships with California, and continued relationship with the United States showcase the many ways in which the United States and its strongest ally in the Middle East are deepening their alliance through public and private sector collaboration.