

Worthy of Our Thanksgiving

This Thanksgiving season, families and friends across the United States will reflect upon their personal blessings and express gratitude. On such an occasion, it may be difficult to conjure a broader sense of optimism when considering recent developments in the Middle East, American political divisions or the numerous threats facing the State of Israel.

Yet, beyond the headlines, there exist countless inspirational stories which underscore the vitality, importance and global impact of the U.S.-Israel relationship. Consider just a few examples in which the United States and the world are benefiting from a strong and secure Jewish state:

WATER CONSERVATION: Among the most dangerous environmental threats facing Americans today is the ongoing drought in California, where state officials can no longer rely on nature to provide a sufficient water supply. To address this severe challenge, Californians are turning to Israeli expertise in water conservation and desalination. In an agreement signed this past September, Los Angeles County—with nearly 10 million residents—announced plans to work with Israel to study its leading water preservation technologies. In addition, this fall, the city of Beverly Hills announced its own formal partnership with Israel, which will include an exchange of ideas and resources in the areas of water conservation and management.

CARE FOR VETERANS: Earlier this year, Israeli company SoftWheel announced that U.S. veterans would be among the first users of its revolutionary Acrobat Wheel wheelchair—a patented selective suspension mechanism that allows handicapped wheelchair users to ride over rocky terrain, traverse down stairs or roll easily over a curb. The Acrobat Wheel is just one of the many new Israeli innovations helping Americans across the country.

INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE: This past Rosh Hashanah, Israeli volunteers from IsraAID: The Israel Forum for International Humanitarian Aid provided their services to effect a dramatic rescue aid operation on behalf of more than 400,000 refugees flooding Europe from war-torn Syria. “Some of the women, children and babies didn’t know how to swim and our staff immediately jumped into the water to help them, preventing them from drowning,” said IsraAID Director Shachar Zahavi.

On this Thanksgiving, while much of the Middle East remains mired in conflict, violence and unrest, let us give thanks for our ability as American citizens to strengthen the unique and vital bond between the United States and Israel—a relationship which in turn offers hope to the world for a brighter future.