

President Obama and Israel: The Facts

Throughout his presidency, President Barack Obama has made strengthening the U.S.-Israel relationship a top foreign policy priority. His work to strengthen that relationship places him among Israel's strongest supporters ever; the facts, with citations, follow below.

“We stand with Israel as a Jewish democratic state because we know that Israel is born of firmly held values that we, as Americans, share: a culture committed to justice, a land that welcomes the weary, a people devoted to tikkun olam.... So America’s commitment ... and my commitment to Israel and Israel’s security is unshakeable. It is unshakeable.... I am proud to say that no U.S. administration has done more in support of Israel’s security than ours. None. Don’t let anybody else tell you otherwise. It is a fact.”

[Obama, December 16, 2011]

AIPAC issued a statement shortly before Rosh Hashanah thanking US leaders – President Obama and House Speaker John Boehner by name – for the “close and unshakeable partnership” between the United States and Israel. **The statement said President Obama and Congress have “deepened America’s support for Israel” and taken US-Israel security cooperation to “unprecedented levels.”**

[AIPAC - September 17, 2012]

Obama provided Israel with the largest amount of American military aid in U.S. history, including:

- Over \$3 billion per year to assist Israel’s military to ensure it has the latest and most efficient technologies and weapons available; and
- \$275 million in supplemental funding to develop the Iron Dome missile system, praised by Israel’s defense leaders for its “exceptional” success at saving the lives of Israelis who live under threat from Hamas’ rockets.
- Additional funding for the Arrow and David’s Sling missile systems, bringing the total funding for missile defense to \$650 million -- double the amount spent by the Bush Administration.

Obama restored Israel’s Qualitative Military Edge (QME) with advanced weaponry by:

- Signing the U.S.-Israel Enhanced Security Act;
- Selling Israel bunker busting bombs and F-35 fighter planes while fast-tracking arms sales;
- Committing American troops to the 2009 Juniper Cobra and 2012 Austere Challenge joint military exercises -- the largest and most extensive exercises ever with Israel;
- Authorizing Israel to use American weapons stored in Israel during an emergency; and
- Working with Israel to combat smuggling into Gaza.

Obama’s diplomatic support for Israel is unparalleled. President Obama:

- Forcefully opposed the Palestinians’ attempt to unilaterally declare a state;
- Rallied the world against a nuclear-armed Iran and continues to lead the sanctions effort by example;
- Voted with Israel 100% of the time at the United Nations, a first in modern history;
- Defended Israel’s legitimacy on the world stage, and vocally protested efforts to isolate Israel at the United Nations and in UN bodies;
- Consistently affirmed the U.S.-Israel bond; and
- Asserted Israel’s right to self-defense repeatedly – including against the Gaza flotilla.

Obama personally came to Israel’s aid immediately when it needed it most. President Obama:

- Answered Israel’s “3 am phone call” and personally intervened to rescue Israel’s diplomats in Cairo; and
- Personally ordered that Israel receive “whatever it need[ed]” to put out the Carmel fire.

Israeli Leaders on President Obama

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu:

PM Benjamin Netanyahu endorsed President Obama's strategy on Iran in a speech before the U.N. General Assembly. "Two days ago President Obama reiterated that the threat of a nuclear Iran cannot be contained," Netanyahu said. "We thank and support President Obama for his position. I believe Democrats and Republicans alike share his position, and it is shared by leaders around the world ... Israel is in discussions with the United States on this issue, and I am confident that we can chart a path forward together." [September 27, 2012]

"Two days ago President Obama reiterated that the threat of a nuclear Iran cannot be contained," PM Netanyahu said. "We thank and support President Obama for his position." [September 27, 2012]

"Americans know that Israel and the United States share common values, that we defend common interests, that we face common enemies. ... We are you, and you are us. We're together." [March 5, 2012]

"I think that standing your ground, taking this position of principle... I think this is a badge of honor and I want to thank you for wearing that badge of honor." [September 22, 2011]

"I would like to express my gratitude to the President of the United States, Barack Obama. I asked for his help. ... He said, 'I will do everything I can.' And so he did. ... We owe him a special measure of gratitude." [September 10, 2011]

"I trust Barack Obama, President of the United States to carry out with me the policies that have joined Israel and the United States." [July 7, 2010]

President Shimon Peres:

"Mr. President, I know your commitment to Israel is deep and profound. Under your leadership, security cooperation between the US and Israel has reached its highest level. Ladies and Gentlemen, we have a friend in the White House." [March 4, 2012]

Defense Minister and former Prime Minister Ehud Barak:

"I should tell you honestly that this Administration under President Obama is doing in regard to our security more than anything that I can remember in the past." [July 30, 2012]

"The unshakable bonds between Israel and America and their respective defense establishments under the guiding hand of President Barack Obama are stronger and deeper than ever and we are very thankful and appreciative of that." [December 16, 2011]

"Our countries are good friends. ... I can hardly remember a better period of support, American support and backing and cooperation and similar strategic understanding of events around us than what we have right now." [August 3, 2011]

Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon:

"I can tell you in a very categorical way I believe also in an authoritative way that we have not had a better friend than President Obama and we will continue to work together because not only it's our ideal it's also our interests ... cooperation has never been better while issues which are of the most sensitive and of most importance to our collective security and wellbeing." [August 28, 2011]

Ambassador to the United States Michael Oren:

"We see things very much eye-to-eye on how to move forward. ... The President's speech here at the General Assembly was quite strong in his support for Israel in its security needs, in its sympathy for the Israeli people and the situation they find themselves in the Middle East and I think the most important thing was the strong emphasis placed on the connection between the Jewish people of Israel and the Land of Israel." [September 26, 2011]