



Policy Paper on the US-Israeli Alliance
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The US-Israeli Alliance

Diplomatic ties between the United States stem back to its mandate by the British government. This mandate was supported by Woodrow Wilson, the president at the time, to uphold the Idea of self-determination. Stronger ties between the nations did not take hold until after the Second World War when the Palestine mandate received an influx of new Jewish immigrants. By 1965, the US and Israel had signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) acknowledging its support for Israel in the Middle East. This along with the sale of military equipment including tanks, aircraft, and fighter jets solidified an alliance between the two for decades to come.¹

This alliance between the US and Israel has only strengthened over time, and for good reason. The Middle East remains one of the few stable democracies in the region and has fought to maintain that. However, the relationship is also in America's self-interest granting benefits for both countries. For Israel, there is a large influx of military equipment and financial support. The most recent MoU passed in 2018 guaranteed Israel \$3.9 billion in military spending every year for 10 years.² This heavy military spending props up Israel's army and maintains its position as one of the strongest in the region. This army has been found quite necessary by both parties as historically Israel has been surrounded by hostile nations in the Middle East. Having a strong allied presence in the Middle East also allows the US to

¹ jewishvirtuallibrary.org

² foreignpolicy.com

commit fewer military personnel to the region knowing that it is in safe hands. They often cooperate in the region sharing intelligence on Middle Eastern politics and terrorism to carry out drone surveillance and air strikes. Cooperation in their defense industries had led to the development of new military technology including the missile systems and fighter jets that Israel uses to defend themselves.³

Efforts to tie these countries closer together have also led to economic benefits. Israel is not only a strategic ally to the US, but a customer. In 2011, 25% of all US exports to the Middle East went to Israel despite it only making up 3% of the region's population.⁴ This large amount of exports allows for creation of job opportunities in America's defense industries and profit from the sales. Many other industries get involved in business with Israel too. Around 10,000 American companies including all major high-tech companies do business with Israel.⁵ One of Israel's main exports to the US comes in the form of high-tech processors made by their innovative tech engineers. An Intel firm in Israel said that in 2011, their microprocessors made up 40% of all their revenues.⁶ Israel also considers the US as a generally good investment for their capital. As a trusted ally, the US is a perfect place for Israeli companies to put their products on the global market. The economic relationship between Israel and the US remains mutualistic allowing both countries to profit from their trade.

There are many upsides to a US alliance with Israel that make both countries better in the end, but what are the downsides? For starters, because of the large number of dealings with Israel, a group of Israeli lobbyists called the American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee hold influential sway over American politics. They are considered the most powerful foreign interest lobby in America and help maintain its strong pro-Israel stance especially among the Republican Party.⁷ But, the main factor that often puts Israel at odds with the rest of the international committee is its conflict with Palestine.

³ jewishvirtuallibrary.com

⁴ washingtoninstitute.org

⁵ jewishvirtuallibrary.com

⁶ washingtoninstitute.org

⁷ jewishvirtuallibrary.com

Palestine is a set of territories within Israel that are home to ethnic Palestinians. It is considered by many, including the United Nations, that Palestine is a sovereign state and is deserving of such rights. Israel has had a historically hostile attitude towards Palestine. One of the most recent escalations of tensions occurred at a border crossing protected by a fence in the Gaza Strip. Protestors had gathered to oppose Israel's aggressive action towards Gaza. There were some questions as to if the protestors were affiliated with Hamas, the leading government of Gaza and considered by Israel as a terrorist organization. Israeli authorities stated there was clear evidence of its involvement, but later investigation suggested that it was unclear whether or not they were.⁸ In response to some protestors throwing rocks at the Israeli soldiers, they fired upon the crowd. The ensuing violence resulted in 4 wounded soldiers and more than 60 killed protestors. Violence continued for a few days after, the Gaza Ministry of Health put the total Palestinians wounded at 530.⁹ Cases like these have brought condemnation upon Israel for its failure of accountability and acknowledge this event as a war crime. Similar instances of violence have occurred throughout Israel's history dating back to 1948. Not all were directed at Gaza, but they were directed at Arab nations. There have been a reported 10 "massacres" throughout Israel's history against Lebanon and Palestine.¹⁰

Among Israel's other controversial moves have been the breaking of several cease-fires¹¹, illegal settlements in the West Bank,¹² attacking utility services of civilians,¹³ and failure to prosecute hate crimes.¹⁴ However, as an ally of Israel, the US goes out of its way to protect them from criticism with its position on the UN Security Council. Half of all US Security Council vetoes have been to block resolutions critical of Israel.¹⁵ Recent moves by the US have also directly favored Israel by redrawing the Palestinian territory map, moving the US embassy to Jerusalem, and not recognizing the West Bank settlements as illegal. This position has put the US apart from most of the international community and is often considered the main reason for Israel's lack of accountability in their human rights violations.

⁸ hrw.org

⁹ hrw.org

¹⁰ wikipedia.org

¹¹ *Who Rules the World*, Pg. 191-192

¹² theconversation.com

¹³ *Who Rules the World*, Pg. 167

¹⁴ rt.com

¹⁵ vox.com

The strategic benefits that Israel brings to the table are crucial in maintaining a strong presence in the and the economic benefits are a positive for jobs and trade. However, an alliance with Israel brings with it the burden of a morally inconsistent nation we protect out of self-interest. The benefits of this alliance should not be overlooked, but neither should the downsides. If the US wants to maintain the positives of this alliance it might be beneficial to address the negatives and remain accountable.

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