

A Complicated Matter: America's Support for Israel

A retired Army general and former high-ranking official in the Obama administration recently spoke at a well-known American university. During the questions following his remarks, he was asked by a student why 25 percent of U.S. foreign aid goes to Israel.

The general stumbled around and gave no real answer other than, "It's complicated."

What he did not say was that the premise of the question was wrong to start with because the percentage of U.S. foreign aid to Israel is nowhere near 25 percent. He also failed to list the numerous reasons that America's financial assistance to Israel is important not only to Israel, but to the USA. As a result of his lack of response, the students left the auditorium thinking that 25 percent of U.S. foreign aid goes to Israel and that there is no good explanation for it.

Whether the general's less-than-positive response was deliberate or not, this exchange is a perfect example of the effect of misinformation. One student in attendance was deeply troubled by the exchange and the reality that he, too, did not know how to adequately answer the question. He immediately began preparing himself to be able to explain the importance of American support for Israel in the future.

The fact is that only 6 percent of U.S. foreign aid goes to Israel. By law, 75 percent of that money is spent in the United States, thus creating jobs and boosting America's defense industry.

In return for the remaining foreign aid that is not spent in the U.S., one could argue that the United States' military, intelligence and homeland defense benefit in substantial ways.

Israeli battlefield innovations have helped the United States dramatically improve both its equipment and tactics. Increasingly, U.S. homeland security and military agencies are turning to Israeli technology to solve some of their most vexing technical problems. Israel has also provided invaluable intelligence and training to U.S. forces in the region.

A Stable Ally in a Turbulent Region

Some skeptics might ask why Israel has this special relationship with the U.S. and not some other country in the Middle East. The answer is simple: No other country in the Middle East advances America's interests like Israel. While the rest of the Middle East vacillates between dictatorships and revolution, Israel has proven to be our most stable and vital ally in the region.

Though America clearly faces a tough budgetary environment, America's foreign aid to Israel helps us to confront major threats abroad. It is vital in helping Israel meet the growing challenges of a region in turmoil, a potential nuclear Iran, Hamas rocket attacks from Gaza, and a resurgent Hezbollah in Lebanon armed with more than 55,000 rockets and missiles. These growing challenges are also threats to the United States, another sworn enemy of the radical elements seeking Israel's destruction.

America also supports Israel because of the two nations' shared values. Commitment to democracy and human rights, the rule of law, freedom of religion, freedom of the press and freedom of assembly are all fundamental values shared by the two countries. Like the United States, Israel has an independent judicial system that safeguards the rights of individuals. No other Middle Eastern country has that degree of democracy and freedom.

And last but not least, the people of Israel love and support the United States. They weep with us when we weep, and they

celebrate our achievements. This stands in strong contrast to the rejoicing that took place in many Arab streets on 9/11 judgment on America as the “big Satan” when disasters strike.

The case for American support for Israel is strong. But it does not stop with geopolitical arguments.

Spiritual Blessings

When God initiated His plan of world redemption, the first thing He did was to establish a people through whom He would carry out His plan and through whom He would bless “all the families” of the world. This nation was created miraculously, as Sarah was well beyond childbearing years, and would be His special people, chosen to be the vehicle of His redemptive plan.

For that reason, God promised Abraham that He would bless those who blessed this chosen people. He knew that if we blessed the people of Israel, we were siding with God and His plan.

To oppose them was to oppose God Himself.

We can be certain that the United States has been blessed because of its financial assistance and close partnership with Israel. This blessing is at risk, due to some actions and policies by the current American administration. But the real challenge is how the next generation of American leaders will come to understand the strategic, financial and spiritual benefits of our support of Israel, given the misinformation on many college campuses.

It will only happen if someone gives them the answer before the question is asked.

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