



## The Importance and Mutual Benefits of the US – Israel Relationship

“Israel is America’s most reliable ally in the Middle East.” – Commander Demetries Grimes, US Navy Ret.

Israel is a proven great friend and a strong and dependable ally of the United States. The robust relationship between the United States and Israel is continually strengthened through unmatched trust and cooperation, enhancing the security and economic prosperity of both countries. It is based on common interests and a commonality of purpose and, more importantly, upon common core values. It is a relationship that must be protected from enemies - from without and within - and nurtured to provide the maximum benefits possible to the citizens of both nations.

Throughout the three intense years in which I was privileged to serve as the United States Naval Attaché to Israel, I became intimately familiar with every aspect of the US-Israel strategic cooperation and the key role that Israel plays in providing a cornerstone of stability in this most volatile and strategically significant region. It was an honor to work shoulder-to-shoulder with men and women who share the core values that serve as the foundation of our democratic societies.

**Mutual Benefits of US-Israel Special Relationship:** The 10-year \$38 billion security assistance package provides Israel with the ability to defend itself in the face of numerous threats, while simultaneously providing a tremendous stimulus to American industries that benefit from the R&D and direct sale of systems produced in the USA. Moreover, Israeli support and cooperation with the US military enhances the security of both countries. Israel has traditionally served as a de facto proving ground for cutting-edge technologies and innovation that improves these systems and enhances their effectiveness. A recent example includes Israeli F-35 operational employment, which follows in the tradition of the F-15 and F-16 fighters, which saw their first tests in combat in aerial engagements over Syria, and in Israel’s 1981 successful destruction of Saddam Hussein’s nuclear reactor. Cooperation in missile defense systems has similarly advanced our countries’ capabilities in this realm, resulting in successful development of the Arrow ballistic missile defense and Iron Dome systems. Replenishing Iron Dome is a recent example of a policy imperative that protects lives.

**The Iranian Nuclear Threat:** Iran must never be permitted to achieve its nuclear ambitions. The long-term goal of its program is to allow it to enjoy the protection of a nuclear umbrella. The Iranians need only look at the relative impunity with which Putin has brazenly brought massive destruction upon the Ukrainian people. Iran seeks to achieve regional hegemony to threaten not only America’s friends in the region, but to threaten US and European interests while employing terrorism globally. The US must show leadership in thwarting these aims by opposing deals that provide a path to an Iranian bomb and that do not preclude development of ballistic delivery systems. Similarly, clear messaging and international action must be rallied regarding Iranian Human Rights abuse.



**Fighting Terrorism:** My experience as a military prosecutor and judge in the trials of Al Qaida, Taliban, and other terrorists enabled me to look into the eyes of evil and see its ambition. The scourge of international terrorism is an area that has grown exponentially. US-Israel Cooperation must continue to grow in the field of Intelligence, law-enforcement, collaborative R&D, and legal remedies (e.g., employing the Taylor Force Act). Similarly, the IDF and the Israeli Supreme Court have provided a blueprint for fighting terror while respecting Human Rights and the Laws of War, and calling attention to Arab leaders' abuses against their own civilian populations in Gaza and Lebanon, by utilizing them as Human Shields.

**Abraham Accords:** The historic Abraham Accords, normalizing relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan, has increased the prospects for peace in the region and laid the foundation for economic cooperation and prosperity. From a security viewpoint, the partnering states have quickly recognized the clear advantage of standing together with Israel and the United States against common threats like Iran. No less important are the people-to-people relationships that foster greater benefits to be enjoyed by all. The Accords provide a blueprint for further agreements, and the United States, which brokered this breakthrough, must do everything possible to encourage other nations to join. The Accords flipped the conventional (and failed) paradigm that reinforced and empowered those who preferred to blame Israel rather than move ahead. As US Ambassador David Friedman has often said: "Israel is the solution - not the problem."

**Energy Independence:** Energy independence is vital to the national security of both the United States and Israel. Long plagued by lack of energy resources, Israel has become an exporter of natural gas. This growing capability should be enhanced to include the proposed East Med Natural-Gas pipeline from Israel to Europe, recently killed by the Biden administration. This project fostered unprecedented cooperation between Israel, Greece, Cyprus, and the Arab partners financing the endeavor; a worthy endeavor aimed to eliminate European dependence on Russian energy resources while undermining Iran's ability to finance its nuclear ambitions.

**BDS:** The BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) movement is an anti-Israel initiative dedicated to de-legitimizing and isolating Israel and its supporters. The BDS movement, which incites anti-Semitic activity on campuses and against Jews everywhere, was originated by anti-Israel forces in the Middle East and is promoted by countries, NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations), activists, and entities who oppose the very existence of the Jewish state. The United States must be vigilant in combating BDS through enforceable legislation.

**Anti-Zionism = Anti-Semitism:** A falsehood used by those who seek to disguise their anti-Semitism is the claim that it is different from anti-Zionism. Criticism of Israel can be legitimate, but not when it is the product of a double-standard. The scourge of anti-Semitism must be confronted without compromise.



**Judea and Samaria:** Jews have the clear right to settle anywhere in their ancestral homeland.

**Peace Process:** Efforts must continue to promote a permanent, sustainable peace between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Direct, bilateral negotiations are key to advancing towards this goal. Great care must be taken to preclude empowering those who seek to undermine those efforts.

**Enhancing Florida - Israel Cooperation:** Israel is known as “the Start-up Nation. “Proportionate to its size, it is unmatched in the number of patents, biotech innovations, and hi-tech companies that create viable business opportunities. The recent Memorandum of Understanding in the field of Space between Israel and the State of Florida is just one example of the promising cooperation praised by Israel’s Innovation Authority. Florida offers boundless opportunities to grow, innovate, discover, and explore, fueled by a world-class infrastructure, talented workforce, global gateways, state-of-the-art high-speed technology, and one of the most business-friendly environments in the country. Similar cooperation initiatives should be furthered to create jobs and infuse capital into Florida.

***Commander Demetries Grimes, US Navy Ret.***