

# The Washington Times

## [PENCE & BAUER: Defending Israel takes more than hugs](#)

*17 months of damage can't be erased with one friendly meeting*

By Mike Pence and Gary Bauer

The alliance between our nation and Israel has deep and enduring roots, yet since taking office, President Obama has torn apart the ties that bind. Despite a meeting this week with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that by many accounts was cordial, much still remains to be done to restore the friendship between our two countries.

The modern nation of Israel was established as the clock struck midnight in Jerusalem on May 14, 1948. Eleven minutes later, President Harry Truman, rejecting the advice of Secretary of State George Marshall and most of the foreign-policy establishment, recognized the newly restored Israeli nation. The next day, Arab states declared war on Israel in an effort to kill the new nation in its crib.

Since then, under Israeli prime ministers and American presidents of both parties, the friendship has endured. Both countries believe in the dignity of every human being. Both nations believe in fundamental human rights - freedom of speech, assembly and dissent. We share values rooted in the rich soil of Judeo-Christian civilization; we face hatred from similar enemies.

The Israeli people are overwhelmingly pro-American, and Americans express affection for Israel at levels that are rivaled only by our feelings toward Great Britain. In the wake of the Sept. 11 attack, Americans were shocked to see street celebrations break out in parts of the Middle East, with dancing crowds celebrating the pain inflicted on us. But we were comforted to see Israelis cry along with us, lower their flag and declare a day of mourning as we buried our dead. Israelis understood very well what had happened to America. Proportionately, more Israelis were killed by Palestinian jihadists during the intifada than we lost on Sept. 11.

It is against the backdrop of this cherished alliance that the realization is slowly taking shape in both Israel and the U.S. that Mr. Obama is the most anti-Israel president ever to occupy the Oval Office.

In the 17 months since taking the oath of office, the president methodically has moved the United States away from our friend Israel while reaching out to the most thuggish regimes in the Middle East. He sends letters offering friendship to Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a

man who says Israel will be "wiped off the map," while at the same time disrespecting Mr. Netanyahu.

Mr. Obama protests that nothing has changed and that he is committed to the U.S.-Israel relationship. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton went to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) convention to reassure the audience that we are committed to Israel's security. Other administration functionaries use the same talking points, but public policy tells a different story. The administration shows a disturbing pattern of currying favor with enemies like Iran while pushing aside the concerns and interests of allies like Israel.

Iran's government is responsible for the deaths of U.S. troops in Iraq. Yet the White House offers the Iranian regime friendship, diplomacy and dialogue. The president has displayed infinite patience with Mr. Ahmadinejad. Iran's deception has been overlooked. Mr. Obama has eagerly sought talks while promising no preconditions even as Iran insists that its nuclear program will not be negotiated. A year ago, when Iranian reformers were beaten and murdered in the streets of Tehran, the Obama administration was slow and tepid in its condemnation for fear it would damage the administration's outreach to the oppressive Iranian government.

Compare this indulgent treatment of Iran to the bullying Israel has received from the Obama administration. There was unprecedented outrage when the administration heard that the Jerusalem municipal authority had allowed building permits to go forward in a well-established, undisputed Jewish neighborhood. White House officials made sure to "leak" to the media that Mr. Obama was livid with Israel. The White House publicly demanded that all building stop in East Jerusalem, a demand to which no Israeli prime minister could ever agree.

The American people have been left to wonder how an American administration could denounce the Jewish state of Israel for rebuilding Jerusalem. What should a reasonable observer conclude when Israelis building homes in their own capital elicit more White House anger than does Mr. Ahmadinejad, who promises a second genocide and urges the Iranian people to imagine a world without Israel and the U.S.?

When the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference met in May, it was widely assumed that the Obama administration would use the opportunity to rally support against the Iranian nuclear program. Instead, the conference, with the support of the Obama administration, issued a statement demanding that Israel, which is not a signatory to the treaty, open its nuclear program to outside supervision. It's unprecedented for a U.S. president to sign on to a resolution that singles out Israel and ignores Iran, Syria and North Korea.

The most recent browbeating of Israel came when the president criticized Israel's blockade of Gaza as "unsustainable." This administration does not understand the critical importance of the Gaza blockade. The terrorist organization Hamas has used Gaza as a launching pad for thousands of rockets that killed innocent civilians in Israel. The blockade helps keep weapons away from Hamas, saving lives in Gaza and Israel. Yet the American president sees fit to join the anti-Israel international chorus, which seeks little more than to tear down Israel's right and ability of self-defense.

Time and time again, the pattern is the same. The world is being sent a clear and unmistakable signal: This administration will not stand with Israel against the circling vultures. The Obama administration's policies are undermining our ally, emboldening Israel's enemies and making a Middle East war more, not less, likely. By endangering Israeli security, Mr. Obama is also making America less safe. Our alliance with Israel is not a liability; it is an asset. Together with other free nations, we are defending our shared values.

A group of respected world leaders and academic figures, including former Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar and former Peruvian President Alejandro Toledo, met in Paris recently. They boldly asserted, "There is no West without Israel." They are right. Israel is the "tip of the spear" of Western democratic values in a dangerous neighborhood of thugs, jihadists and dictators. The weakening of the Israeli nation does not help America. It puts us more at risk. Undermining a 62-year alliance with Israel doesn't win friends for the U.S. - it makes every nation question the value of aligning with America. After all, if America will break with its most cherished ally, what other nation could rely on our promises?

We are entering dangerous waters. Iran is marching forward with its nuclear program. NATO member Turkey appears to have realigned against U.S. interests and toward a new alliance with Iran and Syria. The president's policies toward Israel are damaging an alliance that now more than ever needs to be strong. Meeting with Mr. Netanyahu and treating him with respect this week was a good start. But much work still remains to be done.

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