

RELEASE IN PART B6

From: Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, September 20, 2011 10:08 AM
To: H
Subject: Fw: (WSJ- Letter to editor) The Obama Administration Is a Good Friend to Israel

Fyi

From: Nides, Thomas R
Sent: Tuesday, September 20, 2011 09:34 AM
To: [redacted]; Burns, William J; Sullivan, Jacob J
Subject: Re: (WSJ- Letter to editor) The Obama Administration Is a Good Friend to Israel

Nice. [redacted]

B6

From: Blinken, Antony J. [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, September 20, 2011 09:25 AM
To: Burns, William J; Sullivan, Jacob J; Nides, Thomas R
Subject: FW: (WSJ- Letter to editor) The Obama Administration Is a Good Friend to Israel

From today's WSJ. tony

Antony Blinken
Deputy Assistant to the President
National Security Advisor to the Vice President
[redacted]

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The Wall Street Journal September 20, 2011

The Obama Administration Is a Good Friend to Israel

Regarding Dan Senor's "Why Obama Is Losing the Jewish Vote" (op-ed, Sept. 14): For more than 60 years since Israel's founding—during periods of war and peace, calm and crisis—U.S. administrations of all stripes have worked to safeguard Israel's security, a cornerstone of our foreign policy that should be beyond the reach of partisan politics.

That is why commentary that has re-emerged in recent days is so troubling: misleading analyses and outright falsehoods that have festered for far too long about the Obama administration's policy toward one of our closest friends and allies.

These charges came just days after President Obama's personal intervention helped avert catastrophe when a violent mob stormed the Israeli Embassy in Cairo. Afterward, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said of the president:

"I requested his assistance at a decisive—I would even say fateful—moment. He said he would do everything possible, and this is what he did. He activated all of the United States' means and influence—which are certainly considerable. I believe we owe him a special debt of gratitude."

That influence was only the most recent manifestation of our administration's iron-clad commitment to Israel's security, a commitment that has led to a level of cooperation that Mr. Netanyahu himself has rightly called "unprecedented." Simply put, no American administration has done as much as ours with Israel and for Israel's security.

Our dedication to maintaining Israel's qualitative military edge is not talk; we are walking the walk. Since coming to office, we have launched the most comprehensive and meaningful strategic and operational consultations, across all levels of our governments, in the history of this relationship. These interactions, from our heads-of-state on down, are what averted tragedy in Cairo—and they only exist between the closest of allies.

In October 2009, our nations' armed forces conducted their largest ever joint military exercise, Juniper Cobra. In 2010, nearly 200 senior-level Department of Defense officials visited Israel, and senior Israeli officials visit the U.S. just as often.

And this year, despite tough fiscal times, President Obama fought for and secured full funding for Israel in our 2011 budget, including \$3 billion in military assistance—the most ever.

We secured an additional \$205 million to help produce Iron Dome. This short-range rocket defense system has been a godsend for besieged communities along Israel's border with Gaza, and it has now been installed in the north, along the Lebanon border, as well. Already it has intercepted dozens of rockets that might otherwise have struck homes, schools or hospitals, providing peace of mind for people, like the residents of Sderot whom President Obama visited in 2008, living perpetually in the line of fire.

To guard against more distant, but also more dangerous threats, we have worked with the Israelis on the Arrow weapons system, to intercept medium-range ballistic missiles, and David's Sling, for shorter-range missiles. And we have collaborated on a powerful radar system linked to U.S. early warning satellites that could buy Israel valuable time in the event of a missile attack.

We know that Israel sees the threat posed by Iran as existential. And make no mistake: An Iran armed with nuclear weapons on long-range missiles would pose a direct and serious threat to the security of the U.S. as well.

That is why we are determined to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. And we have backed up that commitment by building an unprecedented coalition to impose the most far-reaching sanctions Iran has ever faced. As a result, Iran finds itself increasingly isolated from the international community. It finds it harder than ever to acquire materials for its nuclear and weapons programs and to conduct transactions in dollars and euros. And it has struggled to buy refined petroleum and the goods it needs to modernize its oil and gas sector.

Already close to \$60 billion in Iranian energy-related projects have been put on hold or discontinued. And world-leading companies are deciding to stop doing business there, including: Shell, Total, ENI, Statoil, Repsol, Lukoil, Kia, Toyota, Siemens and foreign subsidiaries of U.S. firms such as GE, Honeywell and Caterpillar, among many others.

Standing up for Israel's security also means remaining ever vigilant against attempts to delegitimize Israel in the international arena. As President Obama has said, including in the speech he gave in Cairo, the heart of the Arab world, Israel's legitimacy is not a matter for debate.

That is why we stood up strongly for Israel's right to defend itself after the Goldstone Report on the 2009 Gaza War was issued, and why we refuse to attend events that endorse or commemorate the flawed 2001 World Conference Against Racism, which outrageously singled out Israel for criticism.

That is also why we are working literally around the clock and around the world to try to prevent steps taken at this month's U.N. General Assembly meeting from further isolating Israel or undermining efforts to reach a secure, negotiated peace with the Palestinians.

Our administration is justifiably proud of this record. And we are confident that none of our predecessors has done more for Israel's security than we have.

That does not mean we will always see eye to eye on everything. Even the closest of allies disagree, and when we do, we make our views clear. That is a sign of our mutual respect and of a relationship robust and mature enough to overcome our differences.

What could actually harm U.S.-Israeli relations, and the security of the Jewish state, is subjecting either to the vagaries of partisan politics or turning them into election-year talking points. For generations, Israel has been a bastion of bipartisan consensus, an issue off-limits to those seeking to score cheap points. The stakes are too high—for us, and for Israel—to let that change now.

Antony J. Blinken

Washington

Mr. Blinken is deputy assistant to the president and national security adviser to the vice president.