

Op-Ed: Top 6 Ways Obama Has Made Israel Safer

The following op-ed appeared in The Los Angeles Jewish Journal on June 18, 2010. A version of this piece also ran in Politico.

By Rep. Steve Rothman (D-NJ)

There are six hugely important developments that have happened in the last month that will provide extraordinary help to protect Israel's security. Unfortunately, these events have been underreported in the media.

1. On June 9, 2010, the U.N. Security Council passed a set of new sanctions against Iran with Russia, China, the U.S. and nine others voting in favor, with Brazil and Turkey voting no, and Lebanon abstaining. While these sanctions will have some additional effects, and are expected to result in even greater sanctions from the Europeans and the U.S., the most immediate, as well as long term benefit of the sanctions is that Russia has agreed not to sell its S-300 anti-aircraft system to Iran! The S-300 system is extremely difficult to overcome, according to all knowledgeable military experts. If delivered to Iran, it would be a game-changer in Iran's military position vis-a-vis Israel. (Russia now says Iran sanctions ban S-300 missiles)

2. On June 12, 2010, Saudi Arabia agreed to permit Israel to over fly a portion of its territory, should Israel feel it necessary to undertake military actions against Iran. (Saudi Arabia Gives Israel Clear Skies to Attack Iranian Nuclear Sites)

3. On June 10, 2010, the Palestinian Authority President, Mahmoud Abbas, publically stated that Israel should not be forced to end its blockade of Gaza. (Abbas to Obama: I'm against lifting the Gaza naval blockade)

4. On June 9, 2010, Palestinian Authority President, Mahmoud Abbas publically declared in Washington, D.C. that he and the Palestinians were ready to recognize that the Jewish people have a right to some portion of Israel and the territories. (Washington - Abbas Tells U.S. Jews: I Would Never Deny Jewish Right to The Land of Israel)

5. On May 10, 2010, Israel was admitted, unanimously, to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). This enables Israel to join the world's fellow economic powers as a co-equal, first class citizen for the first time. (The State of Israel Joins the OECD)

6. On May 13, 2010, President Barack Obama announced his intention to give the state of Israel \$205 million so that Israel might purchase additional Iron Dome anti-missile defense batteries for deployment throughout the State of Israel. On May 20, 2010, the House of Representatives voted 410 - 4 to affirm President Obama's decision. The Iron Dome Short Range Artillery Rocket Defense System is designed to intercept short-range rockets, missiles, and mortars launched by terrorists in Gaza and southern Lebanon. It can protect Israel from rockets within a range of 2.5 - 45 miles. (Obama authorizes \$205 million for Iron Dome)

All these six items have a major, positive impact on the security of the State of Israel! Each of these six accomplishments was only made possible with the direct, powerful, and demanding insistence of President Barack Obama. In my opinion, the big picture for Israel's security has improved! There is, obviously, a long way to go, but progress such as this is important not to overlook, ignore, or belittle.

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