

# Kirk Report: The Future of Israel's Security and the U.S.-Israel Relationship

## Overview

From May 31, 2011 through June 4, 2011, we joined the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago in an intense fact-finding mission to Israel, the Palestinian Authority and Jordan to review current security, political and diplomatic challenges facing the State of Israel and the broader Middle East.



**Senator Kirk and Prime Minister Netanyahu**

This report contains critical analysis and policy recommendations based on a range of meetings and site visits including: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Salam Fayyad in Ramallah, Jordanian King Abdullah in Amman, Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak, IDF Chief of Staff Benjamin Gantz, Mossad Chief Tamir Pardo, Senior Adviser to the Israeli Prime Minister Ron Dermer, Israeli Navy Commander in Chief Vice Admiral Eliezer Marum, Israeli Ministry of Defense Political-Military Bureau Director Amos Gilead, Haifa Naval Base Director of Intelligence Commander Alon,

Haifa Naval Base, Hatzor Air Force Base Iron Dome Command Headquarters, Deputy Israeli Prime Minister and Minister for Strategic Affairs Moshe Ya'alon, Israeli Prime Minister's Office Spokesman Mark Regev, Israeli Opposition Leader Tzipi Livni, Jewish Agency Chairman Natan Sharansky and Jerusalem Post Palestinian Affairs Correspondent Khaled Abu Toameh.

## Emerging Opportunities for the U.S.-Israel Relationship

### 1) *Bringing Israel into U.S.-Led Anti-Piracy Operations*



**Senator Kirk and JUF Delegation  
aboard an Israeli Navy Sa'ar V**

With U.S. and coalition assets stretched due to Operations New Dawn, Enduring Freedom and Odyssey Dawn, the United States should welcome Israel's participation in the U.S.-led Combined Task Force 151 anti-piracy coalition effort.

The Government of Israel maintains commercial and strategic interests in the international fight against piracy. Given the growing defense relationship between Israel and India – supported by the United States – an Israeli commitment to counter-piracy operations in the Indian Ocean would allow Israel to

help protect India's west coast against piracy and contribute to overall Combined Task Force 151 operations.

At a time when anti-Israel political actors seek to isolate and delegitimize Israel in the international arena, Israeli participation in counter-piracy operations would demonstrate its contributions to the international community and fulfill a strategic communications priority.

## 2) *Exploring U.S.-Israel Cyber Cooperation*

As Iran accelerates its nuclear and ballistic missile programs, the regime continues to expand its efforts to emerge as a cyber-power in the Middle East. Future Iranian cyber-attacks would pose direct threats to the global economy and America's national security. At the same time, cyber capabilities like the Stuxnet worm may continue to play an important role in preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. The United States and Israel should explore areas of potential cooperation on both offensive and defensive cyber capabilities to strengthen the security of both countries and achieve common objectives.

## 3) *Exporting the Iron Dome's Success to Defend U.S. and NATO Forces*



**Senator Kirk and JUF Delegation in front of an Iron Dome launcher at Hatzor AFB**

The resounding success of the Iron Dome missile defense system has already changed Israel's security dynamic vis-à-vis Hamas in Gaza and, once fully operational across the country, will help Israel regain its strategic offensive flexibility. As the system's primary foreign sponsor, the United States should explore the potential benefits of securing the Iron Dome system to defend U.S. and NATO forces.

The Joint Staff should conduct a review of U.S. and NATO casualties suffered as a result of short-range rockets and 155 mm artillery shells fired from a range of up to 70

kilometers to better identify whether a future U.S. purchase of Iron Dome batteries would benefit the United States or our allies.

## **U.S. Policy toward the Palestinians and Assistance to the PA**

As the Palestinian Authority moves forward with a Fatah-Hamas unity government and pledges to pursue a unilateral declaration of independence in September, the United States should:

- 1) reaffirm the commitments made by President Bush to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in 2004, including U.S. policy regarding security, borders, refugees and the future of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process;

- 2) end taxpayer assistance to the Palestinian Authority so long as a Hamas-approved government exists;
- 3) prohibit future assistance to the Palestinian Authority or any follow-on government should Palestinian leaders unilaterally declare statehood in September outside of a negotiated peace settlement with Israel;
- 4) prepare for the transition of UNRWA services in the West Bank to the Palestinian Authority to promote true Palestinian statehood building; and
- 5) condition future assistance to the Palestinian Authority on an end to government-sponsored incitement against Israel and Jews, and education sector reforms that promote reconciliation with Israel;



***Senator Kirk and PA Prime Minister Fayyad***

First, President Obama's recent remarks regarding the Israeli-Palestinian peace process raised a number of questions and concerns about U.S. policy toward key issues like Israel's right to security arrangements in the Jordan Valley and along the Jordan River; secure and defensible borders agreed to via direct negotiations rather than imposed pre-conditions; and the return of Palestinian refugees to a future Palestinian state rather than the State of Israel. To put these questions to rest, both the President and the Congress should clearly reaffirm all commitments made in the April 2004 letter President Bush sent to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

Second, Hamas is a designated terrorist organization responsible for the murders of at least 26 American citizens. While Palestinian leaders will attempt to avoid the effects of current U.S. law by claiming the Fatah-Hamas coalition government is "technocratic" in nature and not a true unity government, they cannot change the fact that a designated terrorist organization maintains approval/veto authority over that government. No further assistance should be provided to the Palestinian Authority in FY 2011 and the Congress should not provide any of the Administration's budget request for FY 2012 Palestinian Authority assistance.

Third, the last opportunity for the United States Congress to send a message to the Palestinian Authority before the September meeting of the U.N. General Assembly will be the House of Representatives' markup and possible floor consideration of FY 2012 State-Foreign Operations Appropriations bill. House leaders should include a provision that prohibits future assistance to the Palestinian Authority or any follow-on government should Palestinian leaders unilaterally declare statehood in September outside of a negotiated peace settlement with Israel.



**Senator Kirk and Khaled Abu Toameh**

Fourth, if Palestinian leaders are serious about “statehood building,” they must be prepared to provide the most basic services of a state to all of its population. In the West Bank alone, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) – not the Palestinian Authority (PA) – cares for nearly 800,000 Palestinians. Instead of the PA providing education for all Palestinians, UNRWA runs 97 schools in the West Bank alone. Instead of the PA providing health care for all Palestinians, UNRWA runs 41 primary health care facilities in the West Bank alone. If the Palestinian leadership is serious about preparing its government for statehood, they must be able to demonstrate a willingness and ability to provide the basic social services of a state to the Palestinians living within its territory.

Last, Israeli-Palestinian peace will only last if it is based on two criteria: security *and* reconciliation. Most of the public debate focuses on the former but the latter, reconciliation, is equally important. The continuing incitement directed against Jews and Israel within the Palestinian media, mosques and schools, and even by individuals or institutions affiliated with the Palestinian Authority (PA) must come to an end. Palestinian schools must teach the next generation to accept the State of Israel’s right to exist as a Jewish State. Future U.S. assistance to a non-Hamas affiliated Palestinian Authority committed to a negotiated peace settlement should be tied to an end to incitement and reconciliation-focused education sector reforms.

### **Expanding Israel’s Military Deterrence**

As Iran continues its pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability and works to expand its sphere of influence in the region, we must find ways to expand Israel’s military deterrence.

First, the U.S. should continue strong support for Israel’s multi-layered missile defense strategy, including the Iron Dome, David’s Sling and Arrow-3 missile defense programs.



**Aerial photo of Haifa Naval Base**

Second, the U.S. should demonstrate its commitment to developing Israel’s boost phase missile defense capability with a temporary deployment of the Airborne Laser to Israel. Iran must know that, in the future, Israel will be able to bring down an Iranian missile at the beginning of flight while still over Iranian territory – not just at the end of flight.

Third, in the wake of Iran’s submarine deployment to the Red Sea, the United States should assist the Israeli Government in pursuing sustained naval operations in the Indian Ocean. This would include U.S. Navy underway replenishment support to the Israeli Navy (something the U.S. already does in the Mediterranean), expanded bilateral special

operations cooperation, a sustained Israeli submarine presence beyond the Red Sea and the eventual lease of a U.S. oiler to the Israeli Navy to independently sustain such deployments.

### **Promoting Human Rights and Democracy in Iran**

Last month, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and I introduced the Iran Human Rights and Democracy Promotion Act of 2011 (S. 879). This legislation, which was incorporated into the recently introduced Iran, North Korea and Syria Sanctions Consolidation Act (S. 1048), would make it the policy of the United States to deny the Iranian regime the ability to oppress the people of Iran; to fully support democratic activists inside Iran; and to help the Iranian people freely and safely access and share information. The legislation would impose new sanctions on companies that provide the “tools of repression” to the Iranian government; force the Administration to investigate individual human rights abusers like President Ahmadinejad; mandate a comprehensive strategy to promote Internet freedom and access to information inside Iran; and create a new Special Representative on Human Rights and Democracy in Iran to coordinate all U.S. funding on this issue.

Separately, my office launched the Iranian Dissident Awareness Program. Our goal is to put faces with names – to tell the stories of the persecuted, the dissidents and the political prisoners.



*Senator Kirk and Natan Sharansky*

In the darkest days of Soviet human rights abuse, the odds looked long but the dignity of individuals and cause of liberty prevailed. We should bring this same resolve to our dealings with Iran.

During our mission, I was honored to discuss this issue with one of my personal heroes: Natan Sharansky. [In this short video, Mr. Sharansky speaks about the importance of pushing for human rights and democracy inside Iran and specifically names several dissidents.](#)

### **The IHH and the Impending Second Flotilla**

Last year, the Turkish-based Insan Hak ve Hurriyetleri ve Insani Yardim Vakfi (IHH) was a leading sponsor of the flotilla of vessels that violently attempted to breach Israel’s coastal security. The IHH is a member of the “Union of Good,” a Saudi Arabia-based coalition formed to provide material support to the Hamas terrorist organization that was designated by the Treasury Department under Executive Order 13224 on November 12, 2008. The United States first designated Hamas as a foreign terrorist organization in 1997 and recertified this status on November 24, 2010. Hamas is responsible for the murder of at least 26 American citizens.

[This video produced by the Israeli Government demonstrates the danger posed by the first Gaza Flotilla to Israeli forces.](#)

The IHH plans to send a second flotilla to breach Israel's coastal security later this month. To prevent further violence, the United States should:

- 1) immediately designate the IHH as a terrorist entity under Executive Order 13224, which targets "terrorists, terrorist organizations, and those providing financial, technological, or material support to terrorists, terrorist organizations, or acts of terrorism";
- 2) make available all necessary special operations and naval support to the Israeli Navy to effectively disable flotilla vessels before they can pose a threat to Israeli coastal security or put Israeli lives at risk; and
- 3) make it clear to Turkish President Erdogan that Turkey will be held accountable for any actions that support or enable the IHH to launch its flotilla.



***The MV Sfondoni, which took part in last year's Gaza Flotilla, makes its way across Haifa port***

***Prepared by U.S. Senator Mark Kirk with assistance from Richard Goldberg, Deputy Chief of Staff.***