



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on March 7, 2011

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## Would Cutting Foreign Aid Help Israel?

Six Democratic Senators wrote to House Appropriations Committee Chairman Hal Rogers of Kentucky and House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) February 1 complaining that “Republican Senator Rand Paul suggested that the United States should ‘halt all foreign aid including its financial aid to Israel.’” The six Senators — Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.), Bill Nelson (D-Fla.), Bob Menendez (D-N.J.), Ben Cardin (D-Md.), Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio), Robert Casey (D-Pa.), and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.) — concluded that Dr. Paul’s proposal was “alarming and aim[ed] to weaken the decades-long bipartisan consensus on U.S. support for Israel.”



Christopher Jasper

Interestingly, the words attributed to Paul were never spoken by him; those words are merely a press summary of Dr. Paul’s views. Of course, the fictional quote sounded like a strong attack against the Jewish state of Israel, but it was taken out of context. The Kentucky Senator and eye surgeon did indeed answer “yes” when asked by CNN’s Wolf Blitzer, on January 26, whether he believed the United States should “end all foreign aid including the foreign aid to Israel as well.” But Dr. Paul noted in context that cutting out all foreign aid would help Israel, in part because “when you send foreign aid, you actually send quite a bit to Israel’s enemies. Islamic nations around Israel get quite a bit of foreign aid, too.... So really you have to ask yourself, are we funding an arms race on both sides?”

Dr. Paul also stressed he has “a lot of sympathy and respect for Israel as a democratic nation, as a, you know, a fountain of peace and a fountain of democracy within the Middle East. But at the same time, I don’t [believe in] funding both sides of the arms race, particularly when we have to borrow money from China to send it to someone else. We just can’t do it anymore. The debt is all consuming and it threatens our well being as a country.”

While Dr. Paul’s primary reason for cutting foreign aid is the looming budget deficit crunch, genuinely independent economic and political analysis indicates it is reasonable to argue that eliminating foreign aid to Israel would help Israel.

Even Israeli-based analysis of the impact of foreign aid has found that U.S. foreign aid hurts Israel and other donor states more than it helps them, by stifling economic growth. Yuval Levin of the Jerusalem-based Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies concluded in his study *American Aid to the Middle East* that American aid to Israel was “a tragedy of good intentions on a grand scale.” Levin explained: “Analysis of the economic consequences of aid must conclude that aid slows growth, stifles economic activity, encourages inefficiency, and keeps alive Israel’s socialist system. It is profoundly counterproductive for the Jewish state.”

Even military aid to Israel is counterproductive, according to some of the most staunch supporters of



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Israel. "Israel receives military and financial assistance, and also some diplomatic support at the United Nations, but the US puts pressure on Israel to surrender parts of the homeland," Shmuel Ben-Gad wrote in the Israeli-based *Artutz Sheva* back in November 2007, during the height of the U.S. presidential primary season. "Even worse, this relationship seems to foster a mentality of dependence amongst many Israelis who, it seems, cannot imagine Israel defying the United States in any major way."

American military aid has also funded anti-Israeli terrorism, as much U.S. military aid to the Palestinian Authority ends up being used to aid in terrorist bombings. WorldNetDaily.com explained that Abu Yousef, a senior officer of the Palestinian Authority's security force and later a terrorist, boasted, "I do not think that the operations of the Palestinian resistance would have been so successful and would have killed more than 1,000 Israelis since 2000 and defeated the Israelis in Gaza without these [American] trainings." Indeed, the United States not only armed the Palestinian Authority using foreign aid, U.S. diplomatic pressure — using foreign aid as a leverage device — was what forced the Israeli government's hand to set up the Fatah/Hamas-led Palestinian Authority in the first place.

The counterproductive impact of foreign aid to the Middle East was ably summarized by Congressman Ron Paul (Rand Paul's father) in a January 10, 2008 Presidential campaign debate, where the elder Dr. Paul explained: "In many ways, we treat Israel as a stepchild. We don't give them the responsibility that they deserve. We undermine their national sovereignty. We don't let them design their own peace treaties with their neighbors. And then we turn around and say that when you want to defend your borders, you have to check it out with us. I think Israel would be a lot safer. I made the point earlier, we give three times as much money to the Arabs. Why do we arm their enemies? So if you support Israel you should be against all the weapons that go to the Arab nations. I just don't see any purpose in not treating Israel in an adult fashion."



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