



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on May 20, 2011

Ron Paul Counters Obama Policy on Israel, Middle East

"Unlike this President, I do not believe it is our place to dictate how Israel runs her affairs," the Texas Republican wrote in a May 20 [press statement](#). "There can only be peace in the region if those sides work out their differences among one another. We should respect Israel's sovereignty and not try to dictate her policy from Washington." Representative Paul has [announced](#) an electoral challenge to Obama as a Republican, and will face Obama in November 2012 if he can win the GOP nomination.



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Obama had [proposed](#) May 19 that "We believe the borders of Israel and Palestine should be based on the 1967 lines with mutually agreed swaps, so that secure and recognized borders are established for both states." The proposal rocked the relationship between the United States and Israel, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rebuffed Obama in person the next day from an Oval Office press conference, [complaining](#) that "while Israel is prepared to make generous compromises for peace, it cannot go back to the 1967 lines — because these lines are indefensible; because they don't take into account certain changes that have taken place on the ground, demographic changes that have taken place over the last 44 years."

Obama also [promised](#) some \$2 billion in additional direct foreign aid to Egypt in the May 19 address. Egypt was until the 1980s an enemy of the Jewish state. Obama pledged an additional \$2 billion investment from the U.S. government's Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) to North Africa and the Middle East.

By way of contrast, Rep. Paul has proposed eliminating *all* foreign aid. "I am not the only one who can see the absurdities of our foreign policy. We give \$3 billion to Israel and \$12 billion to her enemies," Paul [wrote](#). "Most Americans know that makes no sense.... We are facing \$2 trillion dollar deficits, and the American taxpayer cannot afford any of it."

Representative Paul also [noted](#) that U.S. foreign aid has often worked at cross-purposes with freedom in the Islamic world. Paul pointed out that for 30 years U.S. aid propped up the corrupt Mubarak regime in Egypt, a regime overthrown by the peaceful "[Jasmine revolution](#)" this spring. "As the President prepares to send even more support to Egypt, we should be reminded that it was our foreign aid that helped Mubarak retain power to repress his people in the first place. Now we have to deal with the consequences of those decisions, yet we keep repeating the same mistakes."

Obama's [May 19 speech](#) also took special note of the Jasmine revolution sweeping the Islamic world, a revolution that [began in December in Tunisia](#) and has since touched just about every Islamic nation. Obama claimed that "the people of the Middle East and North Africa had taken their future into their own hands." Obama even [acknowledged](#) that the United States and its policies had nothing to do with the peaceful demonstrations: "It's not America that put people into the streets of Tunis or Cairo -- it was



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the people themselves who launched these movements, and it's the people themselves that must ultimately determine their outcome."

But despite traditional U.S. foreign aid support for dictatorships, Obama [implicitly threatened](#) further intervention in Islamic nations and devoted particularly harsh criticism to Syria. "Most recently, the Syrian regime has chosen the path of murder and the mass arrests of its citizens. The United States has condemned these actions, and working with the international community we have stepped up our sanctions on the Syrian regime -- including sanctions announced yesterday on President Assad and those around him." Syria has indeed launched a month-long [bloody campaign](#) against peaceful protesters, a campaign that appears to be getting [bloodier](#).

Obama [stressed](#) that the United States stood for "universal human rights" and that "Our support for these principles is not a secondary interest. Today I want to make it clear that it is a top priority that must be translated into concrete actions, and supported by all of the diplomatic, economic and strategic tools at our disposal." To many observers, "strategic tools" is a code word for U.S. military action.

Representative Paul, by way of contrast, has [opposed Obama's Libyan war](#) and strongly condemned the implicit threat to attack Syria. "The President also defended his unconstitutional intervention in Libya, authorized not by the United States Congress but by the United Nations, and announced new plans to pressure Syria and force the leader of that country to step down," Paul [wrote](#). "Our military is already dangerously extended, and this administration wants to expand our involvement. When will our bombing in Libya end? Is President Obama seriously considering military action against Syria?...We need to come to our senses, trade with our friends in the Middle East (both Arab and Israeli), clean up our own economic mess so we set a good example, and allow them to work out their own conflicts."

Photo: Ron Paul



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