

Washington's strategic alliance gives carte blanche to Israel

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Compare this to Iraq, which under Saddam violated two UN Security Council resolutions, with the result that two wars were waged against it, along with a 13-year long period of sanctions, and the implementation of a no-fly zone in the north and south of the country.

With its latest military assault on Gaza – Operation Protective Edge - winding down, it is clear to anyone who has not had their humanity surgically removed that Israeli military forces have been engaged in the commission of war crimes on a grand scale. Over the course of their military operation lasting almost a month the IDF and IAF have reduced entire residential areas of one of the most densely populated pieces of land anywhere in the world to rubble. They have shelled UN schools and compounds, resulting in the slaughter of civilians, including women and children.

The result has been nothing short of devastating – 1,800 Palestinians killed, of which, according to UN figures the majority have been civilians, including over 300 children. In addition, there have been upwards of 9,000 injured, many seriously, and some 300,000 people displaced. On the Israeli side there have been 67 deaths, breaking down into 64 soldiers and 3 civilians.

UN General Secretary, Ban Ki Moon, described the shelling of an UNRWA school in Rafah on Saturday by the Israelis, which killed 10 civilians, as a criminal act, while Human Rights Watch has reported on Israeli forces firing at fleeing civilians between 23-25 July in the southern Gaza town of Khuza'a.

The extent of the violence unleashed by Israel in these past three weeks, its wanton destructiveness and randomness and the humanitarian disaster it has spawned, is such that even Israel's staunchest allies in the West, the United States chief among them, have issued public statements criticizing the military operation on Gaza. That said, the fact that the US was happy to resupply the Israeli military with ammunition even in the midst of the massacre suggests that when it comes to the special relationship between both countries it continues to be business as usual.

Washington's strategic alliance with Tel Aviv is so close that former President Bill Clinton once described it as "*unique among all nations.*" He wasn't lying.

The strategic alliance between the US and Israel became the key pivot of US foreign policy after the Six Day War in 1967. It came as a product of Israel's crushing defeat of three Arab armies in one of the most audacious and bold military campaigns ever witnessed, which left no doubt of Israel's military superiority in the most volatile and strategically important region in the world. Previously, Washington had operated a more even handed approach in its dealings with the Middle East, concerned with keeping its Arab clients on board lest they be tempted to seek closer ties with the then Soviet Union.



But even prior to the '67 war, ties between the US and Israel were close. When Israel announced its formation in 1948, the US was one of the first UN member states to recognize it. The presence of a large and influential pro-Israel lobby in America played a key role here, as it did thereafter in making the case for Israel as deserving of US largesse. But up until the Suez Crisis of 1956, Israel's main levers of international support were in Europe; France and Britain its main suppliers of armaments, which along with German technology enabled it to remain militarily stronger than its Arab neighbors, particularly Egypt, which under Nasser was committed to a pan-Arab and anti-imperialist agenda that was extremely popular throughout the Arab world. Nasser's increasingly pro-Soviet path ensured him the enmity of the West, culminating in the attempt to depose him by the British, French, and Israelis in the course of a

swift military campaign to wrest control of the Suez Canal from Egypt, after Nasser had nationalized it.

The operation by Britain, France, and Israel was defeated by the intervention of then US President, Dwight D Eisenhower, who was not consulted beforehand and whose subsequent anger was reflective of Washington's assertion of its status as the chief imperialist power whose writ ran in the Middle East. It was a seminal moment in the history of the region, responsible for Israel seeking closer ties with the US at the expense of its European allies.

Washington reciprocated massively, as mentioned, a decade on in the wake of the Six Day War, focusing thereafter on Israel as its main strategic asset in the Middle East. In concrete terms the [relationship](#) involves Israel being the largest recipient of aid from the United States, \$3billion annually, both countries' participation in annual joint military exercises, and the setting up of joint military research and weapons development programs. In addition, in the wake of 9/11, the formation of a Joint Counterterrorism Group further emphasizes the unique nature of this strategic partnership.

Further, the US is Israel's largest trading partner with a free trade agreement in place since 1985. The closeness of economic relations that exist between Washington and Tel Aviv is further enshrined in a Joint Economic Development Group, which meets each year to discuss economic conditions in both countries and possible economic reforms.

The exceptionalism enjoyed by Israel in its ability to ignore or violate international law is predicated on the political and diplomatic support and cover it receives from its US ally. Domestically, the influence of the pro-Israel lobby in Washington has been well documented. Organizations such as the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) are major funders of political campaigns on both sides of the House. US congressmen and women are unlikely to succeed without AIPAC's support or endorsement, which requires unfailing support for Israel regardless of whether detrimental to US interests or not. The sheer extent of AIPAC's influence over the US body politics is detailed in John Mearsheimer's and Stephen Walt's controversial 2006 book: [The Israel Lobby](#).

Facts do not lie. The innocent blood which the Israeli government has on its hands over its massacre of Palestinians in Gaza these past few weeks is also on the hands of its sponsor and strategic ally in Washington.

The statements, views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of RT.
