



# The Future

U.S.-Israeli Foreign Relations

# Signs

- First, change on the international scene
- Second, large wave of Jewish immigration
  - Russia and Africa
  - Europe
- Third major event of recent times, the on-going crisis in the Middle East
  - Arab 'winter'
  - Syrian civil war
  - IS

# Bilateral Relations

- First and foremost, there must be an element of trust, of frankness in the relationship at the top levels
- History of distrust and acrimony
- History of special and strategic partnership regardless of ideology and politicians



# Bilateral Relations

- The relationship between the U.S. and Israeli leaderships today is bad, perhaps as bad as this upper level of the relationship has ever been.
- President Obama and Benjamin Netanyahu dislike each other as well as disagree with each other over significant strategic portfolios
  - peace process issues,
  - Syria,
  - Gaza and Hamas, and above all
  - Iran

# History of problems?

- The Eisenhower-Dulles relationship with Ben-Gurion and Moshe Sharett 1955-1957 was difficult.
- The first two years of the Reagan Administration, as its senior officials encountered Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir, were arguably as troubled.<sup>1</sup>
- The Begin-Carter years before and Shamir-Bush 41 years were dreadful, too.

# Internal Interference

- Despite this history, interfering in each other's domestic politics is not a good idea.
- But the interference keeps happening anyway.
  - bipartisan nature of support remains
- What is different now is how simultaneously mutual the interference has become, and how polarized politics in both countries have encouraged it.

# Siblings

- U.S.-Israeli relationship still healthy
- MOU's
- Bilateral relations



# Long-Short Term

- A “pivot” speech does not make a strategic readjustment.
- Even if, as the Obama Administration contends, the United States is “overinvested” in the Middle East, the U.S. government can not just stop and start something else.
- Longer-term trends point to gradual U.S. disinvestment
- the level of dysfunction with the decay of state-level institutions
- U.S. can hold disinterest because global energy production and consumption patterns are changing, and, changing fast.

# Long-short Term

- Perception will reinforce the foregoing reasons for the U.S. government to keep a maximally feasible distance from the region
- Other major powers will gain more efficacy and interest there.
  - China and India
  - Russia and,
  - the European Union.

# America

- The Middle East will become less important within the overall balance of U.S. interests.
  - Israel will become less central too.
- The United States will likely attempt to do less that is positive in the region, and it will not be able to use Israeli to help in preventing the negative.

# America

- Israel will become still less important to U.S. policy, if
  - the Arab-Israeli conflict, including its Palestinian aspect, improves.
- Also, if other potential existential threats to Israel are managed astutely and resolutely.
  - Iran

# Israel

- Israel's conventional security well within its own grasp, arguably still needs the United States to deal with
  - unconventional threats
- Growing security problems that Israel cannot readily handle without help.
- In this mounting imbalance of shifting needs a tender, if not difficult, future relationship is probable

# Conclusion

- It is easy to be pessimistic, don't.
- the idea of peace between Israel and Egypt, and Israel and Jordan, once looked equally as far-fetched.
- A settlement is possible, and indeed is likely—it is simply not possible yet to know when.

