

Aid to Israel Hurts Rather Than Helps

Written by James Blake

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“What if conservatives who preach small government wake up and realize that our interventionist foreign policy provides the greatest incentive to expand the government?” – Ron Paul before the U.S. House of Representatives, February 12, 2009

It baffles me how some conservatives who rail against the excess and waste of big government here at home, in particular its uncanny ability to mismanage and squander our money, still have this benevolent view of government when it comes to our meddling abroad. Not only that, but how can we with a straight face decry the welfare state (socialism) here at home, all the while endorsing free handouts to other nations paid for by our tax dollars?

Foreign aid to Israel is often a popular point of controversy when discussing our foreign policy. As is often the case, the media prefers shocking sound bites rather than critical analyses in order to shape our opinions on the topic. We are encouraged to believe in this two-dimensional world view that all Israelis love the idea of America financing their country.

What you may not know is that many prominent Israelis – including Israeli economists Ran Dagoni, Yoel Bainerman, and Alvin Rabushka, and the late Rabbi Meir Kahane – as well as groups including the Jewish Task Force, the Zionist Freedom Alliance, and the Manhigut Yehudit faction of the Likud Party have long advocated for an end to U.S. foreign aid to Israel. These groups insist that Israel must develop her own economic strength and move toward more free-market economic reforms as a means of boosting national prosperity and strength.

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Even Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has stated that foreign aid may do more harm than good, and proposed efforts to wean Israel off of American military-aid payments.

The Jewish Task Force states among its principles a commitment to “an immediate end to all U.S. foreign aid, even to a genuine friend and ally like Israel, which is harmed rather than helped by her counterproductive dependency on America’s addictive welfare handouts.”

Hoover Institution Fellow Alvin Rabushka says that aid to Israel hurts Israelis: “Free money is the scourge of Israel’s economy. It is the difference between a free, prosperous Israel and a statist, dependent Israel. Before U.S. aid began flowing, Israel’s economic performance rivaled that of the high-growth Asian Tigers. Since then, Israel’s growth rate has fallen by more than half.”

So perhaps Congressman Ron Paul does have a point.

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