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10 ways to REALLY help Israel

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Ten commandments for the Washington lobbyist

It's time for pro-Israel leaders, organizations and activists to ask themselves not only, "are we doing things right?" but also "are we doing the right things?" Sadly, many pro-Israel groups and leaders are focused on the wrong things. Thus, here are some ideas for what American leaders, non-profits and philanthropists can do to help Israel.

1.

Reconsider measuring the strength of the US-Israel relationship by how many US tax dollars Israel gets in security assistance.

Given the US government's financial shortfalls, and the strength of the Israeli economy, is now the time to make this our measuring stick? True, America gets a security and jobs bonanza for supporting Israel. But given the long-term importance to Israel of America's financial good health, perhaps it's time to ask ourselves whether Israel is better off helping America by making financial sacrifices to help America spend within its means. It should bother Americans and Israelis alike that America's balance sheet is looking more like Greece. Israel has too many eggs in the America basket to risk its future on a country whose power is on the decline. As America's closest friend, Israel can help America regain its strength.

2.

It's time to lobby America to do more to win Arab hearts and minds for peace.

Until now, America has focused on “leader to leader” diplomacy, and not enough on educating the Arab grassroots to accept Israel. The era of strong-armed Arab leaders making decisions on their own, without caring about their voters, is over. US foreign aid should not go to countries whose governments continue to sow the seeds of hate, glorifying “martyrs” in a way that encourages their children to grow up to blow up. Our tax dollars should not go to governments and leaders whose maps don't show Israel, and whose schools teach the glorification of terrorists and that Israel should be destroyed.

3.

We must support America having a more robust public diplomacy effort in Arabic.

It's not enough just to end the negative material about America and Israel that is being disseminated in Arabic. It must be replaced with factual, three-dimensional positive information that can model the ways in which coexistence and cooperation can help promote, create and secure good jobs and a better future for Arabs. For example, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton went to Morocco recently and [led a fabulous program](#) on how to create jobs and economic success.

Tragically, the program was not posted online in Arabic and made accessible to the millions on the “Arab Street” who are on Facebook every day. American taxpayers made the investment of hosting a great conference that was attended by hundreds. For those there on the ground there was simultaneous translation into Arabic of Clinton's excellent remarks. The King of Morocco spoke in Arabic. But if you google the event in Arabic, you can't find it, because the US Department of State only posted it under an English title and with the English soundtrack. Thus, a program that could have had the force multiplier of millions of Arab viewers was only heard by those who were lucky enough to be in the room.

4.

Numerous pro-Israel groups should reach out to the new leaders in the Arab world.

The government of Israel, the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, The Israel Project and others already have some exceptionally talented people and programs doing this. But

much more must be done quickly by them and other organizations. It is critical for new Arab leaders to be invited to Israel, to meet Israelis or to be visited in their countries by Jewish leaders who want peace and mutual respect. This includes academic, cultural and business exchanges as well as a much more robust presence of facts about Israel on the web in Arabic.

5.

Support recruitment and training of a new generation of public sector leaders in Israel.

It's safe to say that in Israel, sadly like much of America, the best and brightest are no longer attracted to public service. In a non-partisan way, young mega-talents and experienced Israeli private sector leaders alike should be encouraged to serve. There is a highly regarded program to bring young Israeli leaders to study at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. But much more must be done in Israel to recruit and train caring and competent people to lead Israel in the future.

6.

We should encourage more Israeli women to serve in Israel's government.

Currently Israel's inner cabinet doesn't have even a single woman. You don't see women in Israel's senior posts as ambassadors or on the senior staff in the Prime Minister's Office. What will have to change in the future to ensure that women have a seat at the table in Israel? It is hard for American and European women to relate to Israel when its key leaders, spokespeople and ambassadors are all men.

7.

It's time to realize that if it isn't iPhone ready, it isn't real.

We need a "TED.com" for facts about Israel. A combination of the Jewish Virtual Library, plus jinsider.com, plus JTA, The Times of Israel and more, but done with modern video, graphics and editing — all about Israel. Recently the Avi Chai Foundation began "[ELI Talks](#)" (for Engagement, Literacy, Identity) to feature information about Judaism. But we also need

a full toolkit for smartphones and iPads about Israel. The future of winning hearts and minds is through electronic devices around the world.

8.

Encourage people to see “Israel Inside: How a Small Nation Makes a Big Difference.”

It's [the best movie about Israel](#) made in a long time. It tells the story of today's Israel in a way that will excite American youth and people around the world. We should also encourage readership of the new [timesofisrael.com](#), this dynamic new online newspaper that gives a balanced view of what is going on in Israel.

9.

Empower Israelis to take more of a stake in their future.

Why is it that Israelis give such a low proportion of their income to charities? Israelis say they pay high taxes and serve in the army, so they feel they have done their duty. But they can do more to partner with Diaspora Jews on projects to help Israel and Israelis. It's also high time to ensure that more ultra-Orthodox Israelis serve both in the Israeli Defense Forces and in the Israeli workforce. Ongoing segregation of the Haredi community doesn't do anyone any favors. Nor does marginalizing Conservative, Reform and other branches of Judaism. Additionally, non-Jewish Israelis should not only continue the rights and opportunities they have; they should be empowered to reach the stars.

10.

Further strengthen ties between Israel and China.

China is the fastest growing power on the planet. They are reaching out to buy influence around the world, hold much of America's debt and the world's supply of rare earths, and hold a veto seat on the United Nations Security Council. Chinese people, overall, also happen to like Jews. Trade between Israel and China is increasing dramatically. Israel has a tremendous amount to offer China in terms of innovations in agriculture, medical services and science, and more. Anything that can be done to strengthen the ties between Israel and China will be vital to Israel's ability not only to survive, but to thrive.

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