

A CUFI PRIMER: US Security Assistance to Israel

In Brief

For decades, the United States and Israel have maintained strong bilateral relations based on a number of factors, including robust domestic US support for Israel and its security, shared strategic goals in the Middle East, a mutual commitment to democratic values, and historical ties dating from US support for the creation of Israel in 1948.

The United States was the first nation to recognize the Jewish state when it declared independence on May 14th 1948 and provided political support to the fledgling state from its inception. But it would not be until almost two decades later, in the 1960s, that a security relationship began to develop between the two nations. Israel began buying arms from the United States in 1962, but did not receive any direct military aid until the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

"I am proud of my part in the creation of this new state. Our Government was the first to recognize the State of Israel."

- President Harry S. Truman

American security assistance to Israel is motivated by the desire to reinforce a strong Israel that can defend itself, by itself and serve as a deterrent to America's and Israel's shared enemies in the region. American security assistance to Israel seeks to ensure these key pillars of policy:

Qualitative Military Edge (QME): The US commitment to maintain Israel's qualitative military edge (QME) -- that is, the technological, tactical, and other advantages that allow it to deter numerically superior adversaries -- is a longstanding policy that every president since Lyndon Johnson has reiterated. In 2008, American commitment to Israel's QME was written into law by Congress, establishing the requirement that the President must continually assess if Israel's QME is being maintained.



Security Assistance: US foreign aid represents less than one percent of the federal budget and is a vital component of promoting American interests globally. Israel has not received economic assistance for over a decade but does receive military aid. US security assistance to Israel is one of the clearest displays of American support for its ally, Israel. This assistance manifests itself as funding for Israel to purchase the arms it requires to defend itself from its numerous enemies.

How Aid to Israel Strengthens America

A Reliable Ally: In one of the most volatile regions of the world, Israel has remained an island of stability and democracy. It is an ally upon which the United States can always depend, and cooperation between the two nations is making the world a better place. Cooperation between the United States and Israel is multifaceted, covering a wide range of areas such as counterterrorism, intelligence and homeland security. Israel has never asked US troops to fight for its security. The Jewish state defends itself by itself. Israeli experience in dealing with terrorism, which is consistently shared with the US, has enhanced our own country's ability to tackle the growing security challenges at home and abroad.



Boosting the American Economy: Of the over \$3 billion that is given to Israel annually in security aid, 74% of these funds must be spent on the acquisition of US defense equipment, services, and training. In this way US military aid, while supporting and strengthening our ally Israel, also aids US industries, creating and sustaining many American jobs.



Technological Advancements: The close partnership between the United States and Israel has facilitated numerous advancements in both civilian and military sectors. The sharing of tactics, techniques and technologies by the IDF and US military has benefited both nations. This cooperation has led to developments such as the groundbreaking Iron Dome Missile Defense System.



US military hardware has been improved by the IDF, and the innovative use of these technologies has facilitated the advancement of these technologies use by the US military. In addition, Israeli battlefield technologies such as the Israeli bandage have helped save countless American lives, especially in the combat zones of Afghanistan and Iraq. In short, Israeli technology is saving American lives.

War Reserves Stock Allies-Israel: Established in the 1990s, the War Reserves Stock Allies-Israel program is maintained by the United States European Command. This program consists of weapons and equipment owned and managed by the United States that are stored in Israel for use by the US military. Located within Israel, it is one of the United States' biggest War Reserves. In 2014, with the passage of the 2014 United States-Israel Strategic Partnership Act, the US agreed to increase the stock to \$1.8 billion. When needed, Israel can request to access the WRSA-I stock, but the request would need to be approved by the US Congress

A Strong Israel Means a Safe America

We are in one of the most perilous periods in the history of the modern Middle East. Israel has found itself surrounded by threats. While Egypt and Israel maintain a peace treaty, the growth of terror groups in the Sinai Peninsula has created a threat on a normally calm border. In the south, the threat from Hamas and a variety of jihadist organizations in Gaza looms, while to Israel's north, the terror group Hezbollah is firmly entrenched on positions along the Lebanese-Israeli border. The civil war in Syria has given Iran and its proxies a beachhead on Israel's northern front. The Iranian threat posed not only to Israel but also to the United States is growing, as Iranian influence spreads to multiple capitals in the Middle East and to Israel's borders. With the increased power and positioning of Iran and multiple radical Islamic terrorist groups intent on murdering Israelis and Americans, Israel stands on the frontline combating these threats. When soldiers of the IDF fight these dangers, they are protecting us in America as much as the families in Israel.



The Future

With an increasingly vocal minority spreading untruths about the US-Israel relationship and US aid to Israel, it is vital to ensure the United States stands with its ally and friend. The US-Israel relationship has brought numerous benefits to both nations. The partnership that our two nations share creates the possibility of a more stable Middle East and a safer world for everyone. We must continue to shine the light of truth and ensure the US-Israel relationship continues to go from strength to strength.

"Israel has no better friend than America. And America has no better friend than Israel. We stand together to defend democracy. We stand together to advance peace. We stand together to fight terrorism."
- Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu