

BILL SUMMARY

May 2012

U.S.-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act of 2012 (H.R. 4133)

The U.S.-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act of 2012 (H.R. 4133)—introduced by House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-VA) and Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer (D-MD)—seeks to strengthen security cooperation between the two allies as they work to counter increasing threats. The United States and Israel face unprecedented challenges in the region, including Iran's nuclear weapons drive, Arab political instability and the rapidly growing arsenals of Hamas and Hizballah. The measure passed the House on May 8 by a vote of 411-2.

The legislation reaffirms that the U.S. commitment to Israel's security is unshakeable and that America is committed to providing Israel the means to defend itself by itself. The bill also seeks ways to enhance Israel's qualitative military edge (QME) as well as measures to strengthen U.S.-Israel strategic cooperation in such fields as missile defense, homeland security, energy, intelligence and cyber-security.

The legislation seeks to strengthen the mutually beneficial U.S.-Israel security relationship by:

- Reaffirming the enduring commitment of the United States to the security of the State of Israel as a Jewish state.
- Helping Israel preserve its QME amid rapid and uncertain regional political transformation.
- Supporting Israel's inherent right to self-defense.
- Encouraging further development of advanced technology programs between the United States and Israel.
- Providing Israel the military capabilities necessary to defend itself by itself against any threats.
- Stating that U.S. policy is to veto any one-sided anti-Israel resolutions at the U.N. Security Council.
- Pursuing avenues to expand cooperation with Israel in defense and across the spectrum of civilian sectors.

The legislation states United States policy is to ensure Israel can defend itself and supports actions designed to achieve this policy, including:

- Providing increased support for development and production of joint missile defense systems.
- Providing Israel defense articles and services, including air refueling tankers, missile defense capabilities and specialized munitions.

- Providing Israel additional surplus defense articles and services in the wake of the withdrawal of United States forces from Iraq.
- Offering the Israeli Air Force additional training and exercise opportunities in the United States to compensate for Israel's limited air space.
- Encouraging an expanded role for Israel within NATO, including an enhanced presence at NATO headquarters and exercises.
- Expanding already close intelligence cooperation, including satellite intelligence.

The legislation supports the extension, expansion and reevaluation of key programs that support the United States' commitment to Israel's security.

- The legislation supports the expansion of forward-deployed United States weapons stockpiles in Israel. Israel has used these stockpiles in times of war to ensure it has the necessary means to defend itself.
- The legislation supports the extension of previously adopted U.S. loan guarantees to Israel. These guarantees cost the United States nothing, but provide crucial support to Israeli credit markets and allow the Israeli government to borrow money at lower rates.
- The legislation requires the president to reevaluate and report on the status of Israel's QME in light of current trends and instability in the region.
- Reports are also required on actions being taken to improve the cost efficiency and timely delivery of Israel's purchase of F-35 aircraft as well as efforts to expand cooperation between the United States and Israel in homeland security, counter-terrorism, maritime security, energy, cyber security and other appropriate areas.

Ensuring Israel remains strong in a volatile region of the world helps secure the interests of the United States.

- As the wider Middle East is swept by the most dramatic upheavals in decades, Israel's vibrant, mature democracy and reliable pro-U.S. international orientation remains unquestioned and assured.
- Israel is the United States' most significant security partner and our most valuable ally in the Middle East. Israel's military strength and central geo-strategic location provide a strong deterrent against Iran, Syria and other radical forces opposed to the United States.
- With U.S. help, Israel is able to maintain its qualitative military edge for deterring aggression by its potential enemies. By collaborating with Israel, the United States has a reliable, democratic and technologically advanced partner in securing American strategic interests.
- Despite its small size, Israel is recognized as a world leader in the quality of its indigenously developed military technology. As such, the United States has incorporated Israeli equipment and technology into its armed forces, helping save countless American lives.