

BILL SUMMARY

July 2012

U.S.-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act of 2012 (S. 2165)

Signed into law by President Obama on July 27, the U.S.-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act of 2012 (S. 2165) strengthens security cooperation between the two allies. 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 bill was introduced in the Senate by Sens. Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Johnny Isakson (R-GA) and in the House by Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-VA) and Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer (D-MD).

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

The measure originally passed the House on May 9 by an overwhelming vote of 411-2. In July, both the House and Senate voted for final passage by voice vote.

The legislation strengthens 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 in both defense and civilian sectors.
- Assisting Israel with its ongoing efforts to forge a peaceful, negotiated settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that will result in two states living side-by-side in peace and security.
- Encouraging Israel's neighbors to recognize Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state.
- Urging the administration to veto any one-sided anti-Israel resolutions at the U.N. Security Council.

The legislation states U.S. policy is to ensure Israel can defend itself and supports the following actions designed to achieve this policy:

- Providing increased support for development and production of joint missile defense systems.
- Supplying Israel with defensive equipment including air refueling tankers, missile defense capabilities and specialized munitions.

- Furnishing Israel additional surplus defense articles and services in the wake of the withdrawal of U.S. 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 extends, expands and reevaluates key programs that support the commitment of the United States to Israel's security by:

- Authorizing the Department of Defense to expand its forward-deployed weapons stockpile in Israel by \$400 million over the next two years. The United States previously permitted Israel to use this stockpile during the 2006 war with Hizballah. The stockpile is available to the U.S. armed forces whenever needed to meet American requirements.
- Extending previously granted U.S. loan guarantees to Israel through fiscal year 2015. 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.
- Requiring the president to reevaluate and report on the status of Israel's QME in light of current trends and instability in the region.
- Requiring reports on actions 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, and cyber security.

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 America's 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 QME 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.