

MEMMO

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Growing U.S.-Israel Defense Ties

Amid unprecedented Mideast chaos and instability, Israel and the United States are facing a host of growing security challenges, including the expanding rocket and missile arsenals of Hamas, Hizballah, Syria and Iran. The terrorist groups, backed by their state sponsors, have fired thousands of rockets and missiles at Israeli civilians since 2005. American personnel in the Middle East and elsewhere face similar threats. The United States and Israel can address these threats through expanding cooperation to protect citizens and soldiers of both nations.

The increased threat of rocket and missile attacks is one of the key strategic challenges facing Israel and the United States.

- Israel is facing rocket and missile threats from multiple fronts. Millions of Israelis are within range of attack.
- Israel's director of military intelligence, Major General Aviv Kochavi, recently estimated that 200,000 rockets and missiles are aimed at the Jewish state from Gaza, Lebanon, Syria and Iran.
- Israel has been hit with more than 7,700 indiscriminate rocket and mortar attacks since it withdrew from Gaza in 2005. Hizballah also launched 4,000 rockets at Israeli civilians during the Second Lebanon War in 2006.
- The most recent wave of attacks saw terrorists in Gaza fire more than 300 rockets at Israel during one week in March. In early April a rocket fired from Sinai hit the resort town of Eilat.
- These threats are mounting, as Hamas and Hizballah expand their weapons stockpiles. Weapons smuggling has increased as a result of instability in the region and the availability of thousands of missiles from Libya.
- Hamas' arsenal includes advanced Iranian made Fajr-3, Katyusha and Grad rockets, anti-tank missiles, and heavy mortar rounds. In March, a missile fired by Hamas landed in a suburb of Tel Aviv, illustrating how the group's weapons can penetrate deeply into Israel.
- Hamas' leaders have vowed that the rocket attacks will continue. When speaking about the recent increase in rocket attacks from Gaza, Abu Ubaida, spokesman for the armed wing of Hamas, said, "This attack is a chain in a series of attacks, some have been executed, and others will follow."



Israel's Iron Dome rocket defense system has destroyed more than 80 percent of the rockets it identifies as a threat to population centers.

The United States and Israel have worked closely together to counter the increasing threat of rockets and missiles.

- Israel, working closely with the United States, has developed a multi-tiered missile defense shield that is capable of protecting its citizens from Katyusha-style rockets, medium- and long-range rockets and ballistic missiles.

- Israel developed and, with support from the United States, is producing the Iron Dome rocket defense system to counter Katyusha rocket attacks. The Iron Dome, which uses small radar-guided missiles to intercept incoming rockets, has proven to be over 80 percent effective.
- Recognizing the strategic importance of the Iron Dome, President Obama requested, and Congress approved, \$205 million dollars for the system in 2011.
- After a surge in rocket attacks in March, the Pentagon released a statement expressing support for additional funding for Iron Dome for fiscal year 2013. In late April, a subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee authorized \$680 million in additional funding for the program over a period of three years. If approved by the full Congress, this funding will ensure procurement of additional Iron Dome batteries and projectiles.
- After a successful track record of intercepting short-range rockets fired from Gaza into Israel, the United States is now exploring the feasibility of deploying Iron Dome technology to protect American soldiers.
- Jointly developed by the United States and Israel, the Arrow 3 will intercept longer-range ballistic missiles. Among the world's most sophisticated missile shields, the currently deployed Arrow 2 is the only operational system that has consistently proven that one missile can shoot down another at high altitudes and supersonic speeds.
- Israel and the United States are also collaborating on the development of a quick-reaction defense system, known as David's Sling, to address the threats posed by short and medium-range missiles and rockets rapidly spreading throughout the region.
- The rapid development and deployment of this three-tiered rocket and missile defense system with U.S. assistance has and will continue to play an important role in mitigating this element of the threats Israel faces and serve as an important test for technology that can help protect U.S. forces.

The United States and Israel should find ways to strengthen security cooperation in a variety of programs that can help protect both countries.

- Congress has played a critical role in supporting all elements of U.S.-Israel rocket and missile defense cooperation.
- Congress has recognized Israel's unique role as a strategic partner, as well as the common threats faced by America and Israel. Congress' continued support for Arrow, Iron Dome and David's Sling is vital for the success of these programs.
- More generally, Congress has taken a leading role in fostering broad U.S.-Israel strategic cooperation. This year, legislation introduced in the House and Senate, the U.S.-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act of 2012, 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 legislation (H.R 4133 in the House and S.2165 in the Senate) also calls for increased supplies of essential defense equipment to Israel and continued support for development and production of joint missile defense systems.
- In addition to the Iron Dome funding request, Congress this year is set to make significant contributions to U.S.-Israel cooperative programs funded within the National Defence Authorization Act for fiscal year 2013 and the Defense Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 2013.
- Enhancing joint exercises is another important way for the two allies to strengthen cooperation. The United States and Israel are scheduled to hold their largest ever joint exercise this fall as a way to test both country's rocket and missile defense systems against a simulated missile attack against Israel.