

# Aid to Israel

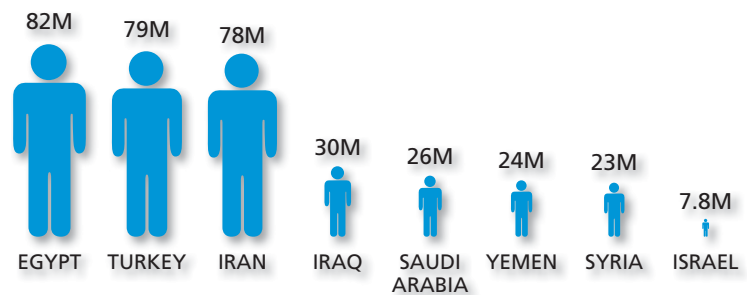
Israel is America's closest ally in the Middle East. To help Israel maintain a strong military, the United States provides the Jewish state with annual security assistance as part of the overall foreign aid bill. This vital aid, most of which Israel spends in the United States, is the most tangible expression of American support for the Jewish state.

## MAKING THE CASE

Knowing some basic facts about Israel's place in the Middle East is critical for understanding why Congress and successive administrations make U.S. aid to Israel a priority.

### SIZE MATTERS

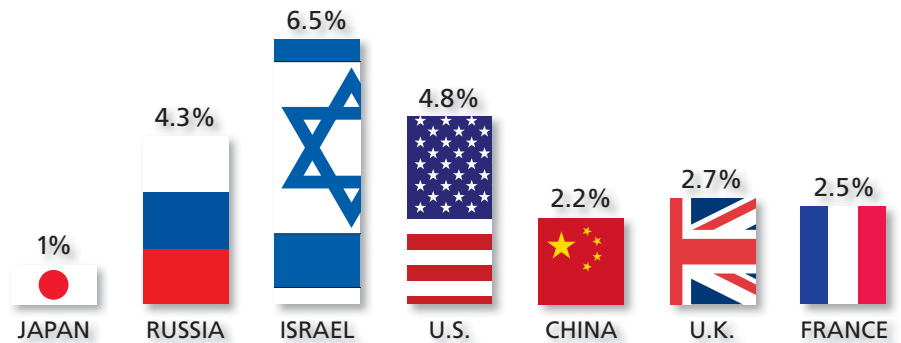
Israel is about the size of New Jersey—America's 4th smallest state. The entire country could fit inside Lake Michigan. It has a population of less than eight million people. And it has peace treaties with only two of its neighbors—Egypt and Jordan.



ISRAEL OUTNUMBERED BY ITS NEIGHBORS (M=MILLIONS OF PEOPLE)

### BURDEN OF DEFENSE SPENDING

Israel spends about 6.5 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) on defense—the highest proportion in the industrialized world.



DEFENSE SPENDING AS A PERCENTAGE OF GDP

### DETERMINED ENEMIES

Israel's military must be flexible enough to fight three completely different kinds of threats. Such a high level of military readiness is very expensive. U.S. security assistance is critical to helping Israel meet these threats.

#### THE ISRAEL DEFENSE FORCES MUST...

##### DETER POWERFUL MILITARIES

Iran is committed to Israel's destruction and is pursuing a nuclear weapons capability. Israel needs to maintain its military might in a region where defense spending is accelerating dramatically.

##### FIGHT TERRORISTS IN CIVILIAN AREAS

As the United States understands well from fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, urban warfare presents complicated challenges, especially when terrorists fire rockets from densely populated areas.

##### PREPARE FOR MISSILE BOMBARDMENT

Iran, Syria, Hamas and Hizballah have more than 150,000 rockets and missiles aimed at Israel. These weapons can carry nuclear, chemical or biological warheads.

## Aid to Israel: An American Interest

The U.S.-Israel relationship is a two-way street. By helping Israel defend itself, the United States promotes its own interests at home and overseas.

### A STRONGER ISRAEL, A STRONGER AMERICA

Here are four of the many ways that the United States benefits from providing annual security assistance to Israel.

#### DETERS MAJOR CONFLICT

U.S. aid has helped to deter major conflict by making clear to potential foes that they cannot defeat Israel on the battlefield.

#### ADVANCES TECHNOLOGY

Israeli military innovations help save the lives of American troops in Afghanistan and Iraq. Because the United States has a deep strategic relationship with Israel, the U.S. military is able to learn from the Israel Defense Forces' vast combat experience.

#### PROMOTES PEACE

U.S. assistance has allowed Israel to remain strong militarily, allowing it to take risks for peace with the Palestinians and sign peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan.

#### CREATES JOBS

Israeli aid dollars are spent across the country, from the Mississippi Gulf Coast to the Northeast Corridor to the Pacific Northwest. Israel spends 75 percent of U.S. aid in the United States, purchasing U.S. military equipment.



#### A BIPARTISAN, LONG-TERM COMMITMENT

At this time of tremendous uncertainty in the Middle East, it is particularly important that the United States live up to its commitment to Israel's security. In 2007, then-President George W. Bush signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Israel that pledged \$30 billion in U.S. security assistance to Israel over a 10-year period, beginning in 2009. The first four years of that agreement have already been implemented. For fiscal year 2013, President Obama has asked Congress to appropriate \$3.1 billion in aid to Israel called for in the MOU's fifth year.

The 10-year agreement embodies America's commitment to maintain Israel's qualitative military edge, which Congress has defined as Israel's "ability to counter and defeat any credible conventional military threat from any individual state or possible coalition of states or from non-state actors."



## Israel's Defense Challenges

There are many reasons that aid to Israel is critical for the Jewish state's security. Here are three of Israel's most pressing concerns.

### SITUATION 1: A STRUGGLE TO REMAIN STRONG IN THE SKIES

Israel's neighbors are dramatically increasing the size and capabilities of their air forces, forcing Israel to spend more to maintain its qualitative military edge. U.S. aid helps Israel do just that.

#### THE NEED TO BE PREPARED

Unlike any other country in the world, Israel faces threats from all sides. This reality means that Israeli pilots must undergo costly training and prepare for every scenario. Due to Israel's small size, Israeli fighter jets must be ready to fly on a moment's notice. Israeli planes are under constant stress, require costly maintenance and must be replaced more often than planes in other countries' air forces.

Such a level of readiness is very expensive. Fuel costs are soaring. The backbone of the Israel Air Force, the F-16i, costs \$45 million each. In the next decade, Israel wants to buy the next generation F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, which may cost close to \$150 million each.



#### A DANGEROUS NEIGHBORHOOD

The threat from Iran is the primary reason that Israel's defense costs are increasing. The regime in Tehran repeatedly threatens to destroy Israel and is rapidly developing the means to do so, building long-rang missiles and pressing ahead with its efforts to achieve a nuclear weapons capability.

Moreover, many of Israel's neighbors are dramatically increasing the size of their militaries, forcing Israel to spend more to maintain its qualitative military edge.

For example, Saudi Arabia, which does not recognize Israel, is spending \$60 billion on new, highly improved F-15s, Apache attack helicopters and more.

It's impossible to say that Saudi Arabia will always be pro-Western. Israel must be able to maintain its qualitative military edge in the region.

### SITUATION 2: CHANGING REGIONAL ASSUMPTIONS

Across the Middle East, protesters are demanding changes in their governments. While Israel hopes that free societies will emerge in Arab countries, the Jewish state must prepare for the possibility that tension with its neighbors could grow.



#### ALL EYES ON EGYPT

The Israel-Egypt peace treaty, signed in 1979, is the linchpin of U.S. policy in the region. There has not been a regional war against Israel since the treaty was signed. The United States has a major interest in preserving this treaty, which helped bring some stability to a part of the world that was constantly at war.

For decades, Israel has based its defense doctrine on the assumption that peace with Egypt was secure. Today, with Islamic parties dominating Egypt's parliament and ongoing uncertainty about Egypt's future, Israel must devote greater resources to protect its southern border and prepare for a worst-case scenario.

**SOUTHERN DISCOMFORT: ISRAEL MAY HAVE TO SPEND MORE MONEY ON DEFENSE IN ORDER TO...**

**COMPLETE THE FENCE ALONG BORDER WITH EGYPT**

Due to rising security concerns in the Sinai, Israel is building a fence along the border with Egypt that will cost \$360 million.

**FORTIFY MILITARY BASES**

The IDF has many bases in the quiet Negev Desert. If Israel's southern border becomes tense, Israel may need to fortify some of its assets.

**PREPARE FOR A STRONGER HAMAS**

Egypt and Israel have worked together to prevent Hamas weapons smuggling into Gaza. But Egypt's future policy toward Hamas is unclear.

**STRENGTHEN ITS NAVAL PRESENCE IN THE RED SEA**

Israel must be able to guarantee that vital international waterways remain open to its ships.



**SITUATION 3: COSTLY MISSILE DEFENSE SYSTEMS**

All of Israel is under the threat of short-, medium- and long-range rocket attacks. The Israeli government cannot afford to shield the whole country. U.S. aid helps Israel strengthen its missile defense capabilities.

**LIFE UNDER FIRE**

Both Hamas and Hizballah now have rockets that can reach major Israeli population centers. Israelis living within range of the terrorist groups' arsenals have endured thousands of attacks on their homes, schools and businesses. The different threats that Israel faces—short-, medium- and long-range rockets and missiles—require different costly systems in response.

In order to protect its population, Israel has had to invest almost \$2 billion to develop and deploy rocket and missile systems such as the Iron Dome, David's Sling and Arrow. Understanding Israel's urgent needs, Congress approved President Obama's request for \$203.8 million for the Iron Dome. The money is being used to produce four new batteries.

