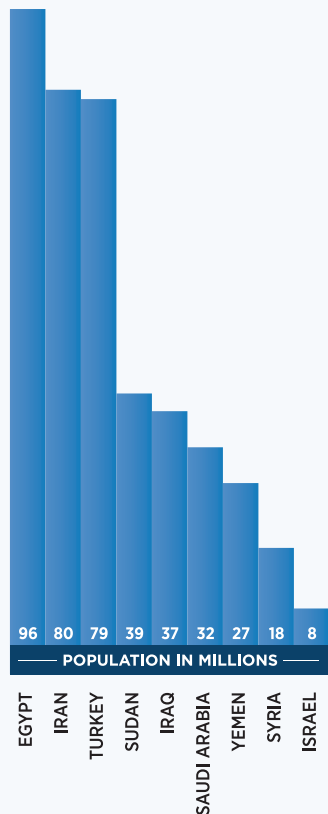


# U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO ISRAEL

## AN ENDURING COMMITMENT



### A TINY NATION

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 about eight million people, and has peace treaties with only two of its neighbors—Egypt and Jordan.

The United States has long defined Israel’s survival and security as important to its own national interests. Israel helps the United States meet its growing security challenges through close cooperation and a range of innovative technologies. Through executive commitment and legislative action, America provides Israel with annual security assistance that helps the Middle East’s only democracy defend itself—by itself—against mounting security threats.

### History & Terms

The United States has supported Israel politically since its inception in 1948. But it was not until the late 1960s that it began to regularly provide security assistance to the Jewish state. Since then, America has consistently provided Israel with security assistance to help it stay strong and deter its enemies.

**Security Assistance:** By means of its annual foreign aid, U.S. security assistance to Israel is the most tangible manifestation of American support for the Jewish state. Assistance primarily takes the form of funding for Israel to purchase the arms needed to defend itself from its adversaries.

**QME:** A core element of American policy is to maintain Israel’s qualitative military edge (QME)—the ability to counter and defeat any credible conventional military threat while sustaining minimal damages and casualties. In 2008, Congress wrote America’s long-standing commitment to Israel’s QME into law and required the president to continually assess whether Israel’s QME is being maintained.

**Memoranda of Understanding:** In 1998, the United States and Israel signed their first 10-year “Memorandum of Agreement on Security Cooperation” to increase security assistance to Israel while phasing out economic aid. Under the agreement, the United States committed to providing Israel \$21.3 billion in security assistance. In 2016, America committed to provide \$38 billion under a new 10-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

## Serving American Interests

**Anchor of Stability:** In an increasingly uncertain Middle East, Israel is the one stable democratic ally upon which America can consistently depend. Cooperation between the two countries in intelligence, homeland security, missile defense and counterterrorism has helped the United States meet its growing security challenges. U.S. support for Israel helps deter regional conflict by making clear to potential foes that they cannot defeat the Jewish state.

**Supporting American Jobs:** Seventy-five percent of security assistance provided to Israel is spent in the United States. This spending boosts the U.S. defense industry and helps support thousands of high-quality American jobs across the country.

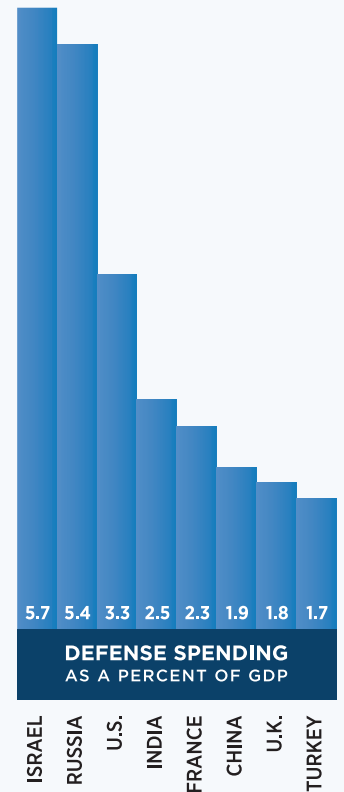
**Israeli Innovation:** As a result of the strong friendship between Israel and the United States, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and the U.S. military share technologies and techniques that greatly benefit both nations. Israel has pioneered cutting-edge technologies in cyber defense, unmanned vehicles, sensors and electronic warfare systems, and advanced defenses for military vehicles. In addition, Israeli battlefield medical technologies have saved countless American lives. The innovative use of U.S. military equipment by the IDF, coupled with shared know-how, has helped the U.S. military improve its own equipment and tactics.

**Stockpiles:** Established in the 1980s, the War Reserves Stock Allies-Israel program consists of up to \$2.2 billion of U.S.-owned and managed weapons and equipment stored in Israel for use by the U.S. military. The IDF may access these reserves during emergencies, if authorized by the U.S. government.

## Crucial to Israel's Security

**Mounting Threats:** The growing chaos gripping the region directly threatens the Jewish state. To its north, Israel faces Hezbollah in Lebanon and a civil war in Syria; to its south, Israel faces Hamas in Gaza while jihadist terrorists roam the Sinai Peninsula. Israel's greatest threat remains Iran, which is attempting to establish a permanent presence in Syria.

**Increasing Costs:** To deal with the region's mounting threats, Israel—a tiny nation the geographic size of New Jersey—has been forced to spend more on defense as a percentage of its GDP than any other nation in the industrialized world. The rising costs of advanced weaponry only compound Israel's challenges. For example, a single F-35I "Adir" Joint Strike Fighter will cost Israel more than twice that of an F-16I fighter jet purchased under the first U.S.-Israel aid agreement in 1998.



### BURDEN OF DEFENSE SPENDING

Israel spends nearly 6 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) on defense—the highest proportion in the industrialized world.

### WHAT'S NEXT

As part of its strategic alliance with Israel, the United States has agreed to provide security assistance through 10-year MOUs. Beginning in 2019, the new MOU stipulates an annual sum of \$3.3 billion in foreign military funding and \$500 million for cooperative missile defense. Congress must now fulfill this commitment by legislating full funding, expanding joint innovation, ensuring Israel's QME, and considering upgrades to the value of U.S. stockpiles in Israel.