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New Federal Spending Bill Boosts Security Assistance to Israel

On Dec. 13, Congress passed a \$1.1 trillion spending bill for the 2015 fiscal year that designated \$3.1 billion in security assistance to Israel. Bolstering the two-country alliance, the omnibus appropriations bill fully met America's commitment to the Jewish state in the U.S.-Israel Memorandum of Understanding. The spending bill included a total of \$619.8 million for U.S.-Israel missile defense programs, with \$351 million allocated for Iron Dome. The remaining \$268.8 million is allocated for cooperative programs, including David's Sling, Arrow-2 improvements, and Arrow-3. The bill also increased oversight of Palestinian aid and the ongoing nuclear negotiations with Iran. The legislation prohibits assistance "to Hamas or any entity effectively controlled by Hamas, any power-sharing government of which Hamas is a member, or that results from an agreement with Hamas and over which Hamas exercises undue influence." The bill also presses the Palestinians to halt anti-Israel incitement by explicitly linking economic aid to Palestinian efforts to counter incitement of violence against Israelis and to ensure that they are supporting activities aimed at promoting peace, coexistence and security cooperation with Israel. Tightening supervision over Iranian nuclear negotiations, the administration will now be required to submit reports to Congress every 30 days regarding Iran's compliance with the Joint Plan of Action (JPOA).