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Senate Panel Approves \$350 Million in Iron Dome Funding

A key U.S. Senate panel approved a spending bill that would double President Obama's request for funding for Israel's Iron Dome missile defense system. The defense subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee on Tuesday approved the \$620 million missile defense package for Israel, which includes \$350 million for Iron Dome, a short-range missile interceptor that is being credited with keeping Israelis safe during the current Israel-Gaza conflict. The funding was already in the pipeline and had been approved last month by the U.S. House of Representatives as part of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, the same overall \$549 billion spending bill approved by the Senate panel on Tuesday. Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.), the chairman of the subcommittee, indicated that Iron Dome's success during the recent hostilities helped spur support for the package, telling The Associated Press that the anti-missile system "works." Israel contributes its own funds to the missile cooperation programs, and the United States maintains a proprietary claim to the technologies.