

June 30, 2017

Mattis, Lieberman Discuss “Regional Strategy” Amid Escalation in the Golan Heights

On June 27, U.S. Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis and Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman met at the annual Munich Security Conference to discuss “regional strategy” and the ongoing cooperation between the Israeli and U.S. militaries. The meeting comes on the heels of three separate incidents in the Golan Heights in which errant shells fired from Syria landed in Israeli territory, forcing the Jewish state to respond against Syrian targets. “We won’t hold back if necessary and when needed we will respond with all our might,” said Lieberman. “Anyone that wants to turn Syria into an Iranian base against Israel should think again.” The issue of Iran’s expanding regional aggression was a major focus of Mattis’ April trip to Israel—his first since becoming defense secretary. To counter this mounting threat, Mattis reaffirmed America’s commitment to Israel’s qualitative military edge: “The United States maintains absolute and unwavering commitment to Israel’s security and to its qualitative military edge over Iran or other threats...Our alliance with Israel is the cornerstone of a larger regional security architecture, which includes cooperation with Egypt, Jordan, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf partners.”

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