



The Importance of U.S. Aid to Israel

October marks the beginning of the 2012 fiscal year for the federal government, a year which promises to be filled with legislative initiatives focused on economic austerity. Yet, as Congress looks to tighten the purse strings, we must remind our representatives that foreign aid is an essential, cost-effective tool for promoting American interests abroad.

Foreign aid helps build stable societies in conflict zones, provides alternatives to violent ideologies, stops drugs and diseases from crossing our borders, and opens markets for American products. U.S. foreign aid also promotes exports to the developing world, which now accounts for nearly half of all U.S. exports. With 95 percent of the world's population, these countries present a tremendous potential for U.S. businesses.

Most importantly for those of us in the pro-Israel community, American security assistance to Israel in the annual foreign aid bill is the most tangible manifestation of the United States' support for the Jewish state.

In 2007, then-President 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. For fiscal year 2012, President Obama has asked Congress to appropriate the \$3.075 billion in aid to Israel called for in the MOU's fourth year.

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

At this time of uncertainty in the Middle East, it is particularly important that the United States live up to its commitment to Israel's security. Israeli military innovations help save the lives of American troops and, 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.

Moreover, Israeli aid dollars are spent right back here in America. Israel spends 75 percent of U.S. aid in the United States, purchasing U.S. military equipment.

Put plainly, the value which the United States receives from giving foreign aid, even in this time of economic caution, means that America simply cannot afford to neglect its foreign aid commitments. And, when our members of Congress vote for the annual foreign aid bill, they make a statement that supporting our ally Israel is an American priority.

To learn more about American aid to Israel visit www.aipac.org/ForeignAid.