



Middle East Spotlight

Iron Dome Saves Lives

As the deluge of rockets from Gaza endangered millions of Israeli lives this summer, the Jewish state was able to rely on a remarkable technology to protect its most populated areas with the Iron Dome missile defense system. Thanks to this groundbreaking, U.S.-backed technology, most of the rockets destined for Israeli schools, buildings and neighborhoods were shot down out of the sky.

The Iron Dome air defense system is unique in its capabilities and is one of the most tangible manifestations of American aid to Israel. Designed by Israel's Advanced Defense Systems LTD., it was first introduced in 2011, after successfully intercepting several Grad rockets that were fired from the Gaza Strip at southern Israel. Since then, Iron Dome has undergone numerous improvements and has become a critical component to Israeli deterrence against terrorist rocket fire.

The system provides robust, selective defense and can discriminate between threats headed toward population centers and those that will land in open fields or in the ocean. It is effective at destroying incoming rockets in all weather conditions, including low clouds, rain, or fog.

U.S. Ambassador to Israel, Dan Shapiro, has joined a chorus of praise from both Israeli and American officials regarding the United States' funding for this life-saving device. "If there has been a more substantial contribution than the aid and funding for [Iron] Dome, that saves lives, I can't imagine what it is," he said.

For years, pro-Israel activists across the country have lobbied their members of Congress to provide annual funding for the Iron Dome system and other critical missile defense programs. As of this summer, the United States has allocated more than \$700 million towards Iron Dome with Congress considering an additional \$576 million in fiscal year 2015.

Additionally, American lawmakers have so far contributed nearly \$2 billion for Israel's mid-range and long-range missile defense programs including David's Sling and the Arrow II and III systems.

The United States played an essential role in helping Israel protect its people from its enemies and eliminate the possibility of mass casualties during the Hamas offensive this past summer. The work of AIPAC and the pro-Israel community to lobby our legislators in support of these vital security subsidies will remain an indispensable facet of the robust U.S.-Israel partnership.