



Middle East Spotlight

The Case for Foreign Aid

October marks the beginning of the federal government's fiscal year. During Congress' annual appropriations process, lawmakers face the difficult task of balancing two conflicting needs: funding important priorities and cutting spending to reduce the federal deficit. But as Congress looks for ways to tighten the belt, foreign aid is one expenditure that cannot be sacrificed. Representing approximately just one penny of every budget dollar, foreign aid is a cost-effective investment in America's national security and economic prosperity, especially when it comes to Israel.

In the current global economy—in which ninety-five percent of the world's consumers live outside the United States and one in five American jobs is linked to U.S. exports—foreign markets are crucial to the growth of American businesses. By helping countries stabilize their governments and economies, the United States fosters new customer bases for American businesses and creates more jobs at home. And by funding commercial attachés and trade assistance programs, foreign aid helps U.S. businesses create the relationships and the support they need to succeed in foreign markets.

Foreign aid also helps the United States cope with significant, ever-evolving security challenges. American military leaders have repeatedly warned that the United States cannot meet its security challenges through military action alone—foreign aid, to include American diplomacy, reinforces American military efforts to promote stability in crucial conflict zones.

Security assistance to Israel highlights the dividends of a robust foreign aid budget. U.S. aid to Israel gives the Jewish state the resources it needs to serve as an anchor of stability in the region and deter the combination of forces arrayed against it. Accordingly, in 2007, the United States and Israel signed a 10-year agreement calling for America to provide \$30 billion in security assistance over the next decade. And in 2016, the two countries signed a new agreement that pledges \$38 billion in U.S. security assistance between 2019 and 2028, including \$5 billion for missile defense.

Cooperation between the two countries in intelligence, homeland security, missile defense and counterterrorism has helped the United States meet its growing security challenges. As a result of the strong friendship between Israel and the United States, the Israel Defense Forces and the U.S. military share technologies and techniques that greatly benefit both nations. In June 2017, Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy, Plans, and Capabilities Thomas Harvey [praised](#) the mutually beneficial, bilateral relationship, stating, "The jointly developed Arrow and David's Sling weapon system programs provide Israel with the capability to defend itself against imminent and emerging ballistic missile threats while benefiting the United States through technology sharing."

When America invests in foreign aid—to include Israel's security—it invests in its own security. This is an especially important message to convey to our members of Congress in today's budgetary climate.