The friendship between the United States and Israel comes from a deep commitment to protecting the shared values of both nations. The United States is dedicated to supporting its ally Israel especially in its struggle to defend itself against the harsh attacks of neighboring Arab countries. Israel’s sophisticated missile defense programs have saved thousands of lives by shielding Israeli citizens from rocket attacks. Though the price of the systems is very high, the lives they defend are priceless.

The United States and Israel’s militaries have developed advanced systems and techniques for protecting the safety of innocent civilians in each country. The United States has given $275 million and intends to allocate an additional $610 million for procurement funding for Israel’s Iron Dome system—a portable short-range air defense system that intercepts and destroys short-range rockets aimed at civilians. Additionally, the United States has contributed more than $330 million for Israel’s David’s Sling system since 2006 and $825 million for Israel’s Arrow missiles. Together, Iron Dome, David’s Sling and Arrow make up a complex and effective missile defense system, which will enable Israel to save lives at home and on the battlefield, keeping its citizens off of the frontlines and out of harm’s way.

Our assistance is expanding Israel’s defensive capabilities so that more Israelis can live free from the fear of rockets and ballistic missiles. Because no family, no citizen should live in fear.”

— U.S. PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA

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.”

— DAN SHAPIRO
U.S. Ambassador to Israel
The Iron Dome Rocket Defense System is an Israeli-developed platform that has been tremendously successful in intercepting terrorist rockets aimed at civilian populations. The idea for Iron Dome arose after Israel’s 2006 war with Hezbollah, in which more than 4,000 rockets were launched into the country’s north, destroying civilian homes and lives. As rocket fire from Gaza targeting southern Israeli communities also intensified, it became clear that a system was needed to defend against short-range rockets and missiles.

Iron Dome uses missiles to destroy short-range rockets and artillery shell warheads in midair. Each battery covers an area roughly the size of a small city, protecting it against rockets and mortar shells with ranges of up to 45 miles. The system’s computerized radar and tracking system calculates where an incoming rocket or mortar shell is likely to land, and fires a guided missile to blow up the projectile only if it is headed for a populated area. That way, interceptor missiles are not wasted on rockets that pose no threat to life or property.

In November 2012 during Operation Pillar of Defense, Iron Dome successfully intercepted more than 400 rockets, disarming nearly 90 percent of the rockets within its range. It has been called the most effective missile shield in existence.

David’s Sling is an IDF military system being developed together by Israeli and American defense contractors, designed to intercept medium- to long-range rockets and cruise missiles. Given the increasing danger of rocket and missile fire against Israel—with Qassam rockets from Gaza, Katyusha rockets from Lebanon, and Syrian heavy long-range rockets—David’s Sling is meant to disarm those rockets that are out of Iron Dome’s range. David’s Sling can effectively intercept ballistic missiles and medium-range rockets, manned and unmanned aircraft, cruise missiles and various types of guided weapons. In November 2012, the system successfully intercepted a rocket in a test, thus confirming its effectiveness.

The Arrow is the first operational missile defense system specifically designed and built to intercept and destroy long-range ballistic missiles. The centerpiece of the U.S.-Israeli cooperative defense relationship, the Arrow became the first theater missile defense system in the world to be deployed and is considered one of the most advanced missile defense programs currently in existence. The Arrow-3, for example, has the capability to intercept a missile outside of the earth’s atmosphere, far from its intended target. It is the only operational system that has consistently proven that one missile can shoot down another at high altitudes and speeds. Fully compatible with U.S. missile defense systems, the Arrow can intercept hostile missiles at ranges and speeds high enough to protect citizens and troops from the devastating impact of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons. The multi-billion dollar development program of the Arrow was made possible because of the financial support of the United States. The Arrow program continues to provide the United States with key research and technology for other theater missile defense programs.

Congress recognizes the exceptional success of the Iron Dome short-range rocket defense system in defending the population of Israel… [We] desire to help ensure that Israel has the means to defend itself against terrorist attacks, including through the procurement of additional Iron Dome batteries and interceptors…”

— U.S. NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2013

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