

Military Aid

Aid to Israel: General Overview

On August 16th, 2007, Israel and the U.S. signed a Memorandum of Understanding promising \$30 billion in military aid to Israel over the following decade. Israel is the largest cumulative recipient of military as well as total U.S. aid since World War II. Israel has received over \$106 billion from the U.S., including \$58.6 billion in military aid. The U.S. Congress approves this aid, while the Department of Defense, with assistance from the Department of State, is responsible for transferring the weapons.

Israel receives direct U.S. military aid in two forms: **money** and **weapons**

Money

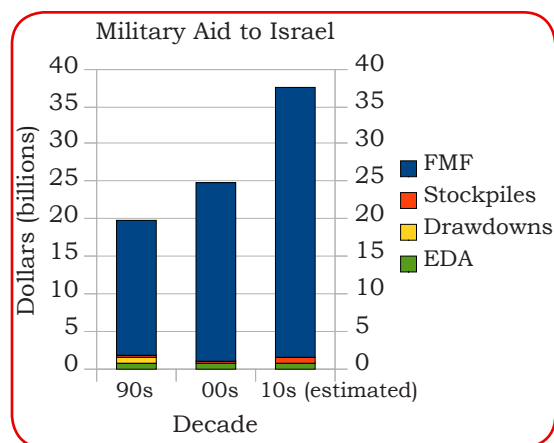
Foreign Military Financing (FMF) - Money transferred directly to a recipient nation for purchasing military products and services.

- The U.S. has promised \$30 billion in FMF to Israel from 2009-2018.
- As of 2008, U.S. aid to Israel has been exclusively FMF.
- In 2010, Israel accounted for more than half of all FMF, meaning that Israel receives more FMF than the rest of the world combined⁵.
- Israel is the only country allowed to use FMF (about 25%) on its own domestic defense industry².

Weapons

Israel uses roughly 75% of its FMF to purchase U.S. Government Weapons, which are purchased with U.S. tax dollars, and for Direct Commercial Sales of weapons produced by private manufacturers and sold with government approval. Israel has access to additional U.S. Government Weapons through the following programs:

- 1. Emergency Drawdowns** - Outdated weapons transferred at little or no charge to the recipient.
- 2. Excess Defense Articles (EDA)** - Current weaponry not in active use transferred to U.S. allies.
- 3. Stockpiled weapons** - US-owned weapons stored on a friendly nation's soil and available for that nation's use in case of emergency.



The U.S. further aids Israel by guaranteeing its **Qualitative Military Edge (QME)**. This means that any other aid to the Middle East is conditioned upon whether it affects Israel's military superiority over its neighbors².



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U.S. Law on Military Aid

The United States has clear laws governing foreign assistance, especially military aid.

- The *U.S. Arms Export Control Act* prohibits aid to countries using U.S. weapons against civilians or civilian infrastructure.
- That act, as well as the treaty between Israel and the U.S., limits the use of U.S. weapons to “legitimate self defense” and “internal security.”^{10,11}
- The *U.S. Export Administration Act* restricts weapons exports, especially to China, in order to protect U.S. national security as well as the safety of U.S. troops abroad.
- The *U.S. Foreign Assistance Act* states that “no security assistance may be provided to any country the government of which engages in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights.”¹³

There are several areas in which U.S. aid to Israel potentially conflicts with U.S. Law.

- The State Department inconclusively investigated Israel’s use of U.S.-made **cluster bombs** in civilian areas in Lebanon in 2006. Israel used U.S.-made **white phosphorus** shells in civilian areas in Gaza in 2009 and allegedly in Lebanon in 1982 and 2006 as well.
- Israel is China’s second largest military supplier, which is “potentially harmful to the security of US forces in Asia.”²
- According to Gen. David Petraeus, the Israel/Palestine conflict is strategically damaging to all other U.S. military efforts in the Middle East. In March 2010, Vice President Biden stated that Israeli intransigence on the issue of settlements “undermines the security of our troops who are fighting in Iraq.”¹⁵
- Israeli security forces are responsible for the deaths of approximately 3000-4500 noncombatant Palestinians since 2000^{16,17}.

Israel’s Use of U.S. Weapons

Israel used U.S.-produced white phosphorus shells during its three-week military assault on Gaza, in the winter of 2008-09. White phosphorus burns anything containing water, including flesh and tissue, and cannot be extinguished by water or other conventional means. White phosphorus was used in the neighborhood of Tel al-Hawa with devastating effects. Mohammad al-Haddad was in the car with his family immediately after Israel had announced a temporary ceasefire. A white phosphorus shell hit their car, launching Mohammad out, which broke his jaw. He ran back to try to rescue his family and had to be dragged away from the burning car by other neighbors, but not before losing an eye and suffering third degree burns to his legs, hands and forehead. The burning persisted, even hours later in the hospital. Of the four family members in the car with Mohammad, only a small collection of bones were found.



Story and photo from Human Rights Watch report, *Rain of Fire*, 2009

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