

Aid to Israel

Does the U.S. get its money's worth?

Israel and Egypt are the two largest recipients of U.S. aid. For its "participation" in the Gulf War, Egypt was forgiven its indebtedness of \$9 billion. Israel pays its bills. It receives \$2.8 billion every year. Of that amount, \$2.0 billion is for military aid and \$0.8 billion for economic aid. It's fair to ask whether this is a good deal for the American taxpayer.

What are the facts?

The only democratic country in the Middle East.

Israel is the only genuinely democratic state in the Middle East. It is committed to freedom and equality, and the rule of law. It embodies the fundamental values that are in tune with those of America and that America has traditionally supported. Israel's military and political importance in the Middle East and its strategic position stabilize the entire area, including the oil fields of the Persian Gulf. During the Cold War, it was America's indispensable rampart against the inroads and expansionist ambitions of the Soviet Union. It is now a western bulwark against the aggressive intents of Iran and other bellicose nations that threaten the interests of the United States. It is a most reliable partner in the promotion of Western strategic interests and in the stabilization of the Middle East. Over 20% of its budget goes for defense, compared to 7% in the U.S. and less than 1% in Japan. Israel has one of the best armies in the world. Its navy and air force are the major deterrent forces in the eastern Mediterranean.

Israel effectively secures NATO's southeastern flank, without having a single American soldier stationed in its territory. Still, the superb military installations, the air and sea lift capabilities, the equipment and food storage capacity, and the trained manpower to maintain and repair sophisticated U.S. equipment are instantly at hand in Israel. It is the only country in the

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There are many other benefits that the U.S. military derives from Israel. Israel is the only country that has gained battlefield experience with U.S. weapons. This experience is immediately conveyed to the U.S. Enormous quantities of captured Soviet weapons and defense systems were turned over to the U.S. military for analysis. Israel, in the light of its experience, continually modifies U.S. weapons systems. For instance, Israeli scientists have made over 200 improvements in the F-15 alone and similar improvements, mostly in avionics, in later-generation planes. It would be more in line with reality if military aid to Israel were classified as part of the defense budget, rather than as "aid". Israel is truly America's unsinkable aircraft carrier in the Middle East. Former President Reagan put it well: "The fall of Iran has increased Israel's value as perhaps the only remaining strategic asset in the region on which the United States can fully rely." American aid to Israel is a two-way street. Aid to Israel is America's greatest defense bargain.

area that makes itself available to the United States, in any contingency.

Only fraction of aid stays in Israel. There is no other country in the Middle East except Israel that can be considered to have a stable government or populace friendly to the United States. There is much danger that any military aid to Arab countries, and military equipment given or sold to them, will suffer the same fate as the untold billions of dollars and priceless military secrets that were lost to our enemies in the debacle of Iran. Is Saudi Arabia more stable? Egypt? Jordan? Kuwait? Judge for yourself!

Only a fraction of the aid given stays in Israel. By far the largest share remains with American defense contractors. Peter McPherson, former administrator of the Agency for International Development, estimated that every billion dollars of aid to Israel creates 60,000 to 70,000 jobs in the United States.

Compared to the \$2.0 billion yearly military aid to Israel, the U.S. contributes more than \$130 billion (!) every year to the defense of Europe and more than \$30 billion to the defense of Japan, Korea, and the Far East. Over 300,000 U.S. troops are stationed with NATO and over 30,000 U.S. troops in the Far East. In contrast, not one single U.S. soldier needs to be stationed and put at risk in Israel. U.S. military analysts estimate that the U.S. would have to spend the equivalent of \$150 billion a year in the Middle East to maintain a force equivalent to Israel's.

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