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## **ASSISTING A FRIEND IN NEED: WHY THE U.S. SHOULD EXPAND FUNDING FOR ISRAEL'S ARROW PROGRAM**

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The threat of ballistic missile attack against Israel has not lessened since the Persian Gulf War, when Iraq launched its modified Scud ballistic missiles at Israel despite the fact that Israel, which was not a party to the conflict, had sought to avoid being drawn into it. Today, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Saudi Arabia, and Syria have either missiles capable of reaching Israel or active programs to acquire them, and their inventories of missiles are growing ever more capable. Most of these countries also have chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons programs. Given the level of hostility among these states toward Israel, the U.S. ally may be facing the greatest threat of ballistic missile attack of any nation, and it will need continued help from America to meet it.

Israel's response has been to develop and deploy the Arrow ballistic missile defense system with U.S. support. The first battery of Arrow missiles was deployed last October. Support for this program in the U.S. Congress is rising rapidly as the threat of attack increases, and now that both houses are working on a mark-up of the fiscal year (FY) 2003 defense authorization bill. A proposal before the Senate Armed Services Committee would increase funding for the Arrow program by \$70 million.

Congress should provide additional funding before both houses complete action on the bill, and without compromising funding for U.S. missile

defense programs. What Congress should *not* do is delay or do nothing.

### **ASSURING A MORE CAPABLE, EFFICIENT MISSILE DEFENSE FOR ISRAEL**

America's financial support for the Arrow program will enable Israel to deploy an effective missile defense system as quickly as possible. The Arrow battery currently deployed simply does not provide sufficient coverage of Israeli territory. Military authorities in Israel believe that three batteries are needed to provide the kind of overlapping coverage that is required for an effective defense. Just as it would be unacceptable for the U.S. government to deploy a missile defense that protects only a portion of the U.S. population and leaves others vulnerable, so too should the Arrow system that is ultimately deployed protect all Israelis. Protection of the people from aggression is government's first obligation.

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The additional funding under consideration by Congress would enable Israel not only to conduct additional research and development, but also to produce more missiles. The funds, for example, would pay for 36 of the first missiles that are co-produced by the United States and Israel. The additional dollars also would enable the Arrow manufacturing program to become more efficient so that production of the missiles could expand from just two units per month to approximately six. A multi-year production arrangement could also be considered under this expanded program.

### **SUPPORT SHOULD NOT COMPROMISE U.S. MISSILE DEFENSE**

Though there is growing support for the program, some Members of Congress who reportedly want to cut the U.S. missile defense program by about \$1 billion could try to use the Arrow funding measure as justification for doing so. This would be most unwise. Americans today are vulnerable to ballistic missiles, and deploying an effective national missile defense has become a priority. Moreover, the Israelis never suggested that the United States should help them defend themselves if it meant leaving any Americans vulnerable to similar attacks.

Funding should not be transferred from any other missile defense programs to pay for the increase in Arrow spending. Yet that seems to be the intent of some Members of Congress. If any committee during the authorization process increases funding for Arrow at the expense of other missile defense programs, then the full House and Senate should replace that funding in the account from which it was taken.

### **CONCLUSION**

Israel is a loyal ally of the United States, and it is fighting for its very survival. Both houses of Congress have adopted resolutions to support Israel in its current conflict.

Now Congress should take the next step and ensure that Israel has tangible support to buttress its broad moral support. Nowhere could such tangible support be more effective than in expanding the Arrow program to help Israel defend itself against missile attack. Vulnerability to missile attack should never be an acceptable option for Congress in making its funding decisions.

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