



## Analysis:

# Key Middle East Provisions in the Fiscal Year 2026 National Defense Authorization Act

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The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) remains one of the few pieces of must-pass legislation in Congress each year, enabling effective congressional oversight of the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) and framing U.S. national security policy on a bipartisan basis across a broad spectrum of issues.

The House and Senate Armed Services Committees have now each reported out their respective versions of the NDAA ([H.R. 3838](#) and [S.2296](#)) to the full House and Senate. With the return of Congress after Labor Day, each chamber must now consider and amend their separate versions of the NDAA, before working to resolve hundreds of differences between them to get a consolidated final product to send to President Donald Trump's desk to be signed into law.

Several provisions addressing U.S. national security interests in the Middle East are under consideration in either the Senate, House, or both chambers' versions of this year's NDAA. Particularly important provisions inspired or impacted by JINSA research this year include:

- **Middle East Air and Missile Defense:** The Senate bill requires further improvements to Integrated Air and Missile Defense (IAMD) efforts with U.S. partners in the Middle East, including incorporating lessons learned from the April and October 2024 Iranian missile attacks against Israel and Houthi maritime attacks on international shipping, directly inspired by recommendations in JINSA's ["Forged Under Fire: Middle East Air Defense After Iran's 2024 Attacks on Israel"](#) report.
- **War Reserve Stockpile Allies – Israel (WRSA-I):** The House bill mandates an assessment of the types of munitions in America's war reserve stockpile in Israel, essential for maintaining regional deterrence and allied interoperability within CENTCOM and for Israel to protect itself against Iran and its proxies. JINSA has long emphasized the value of ["The Arsenal of Democracy's Stockpile in Israel."](#)
- **Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar:** The House bill also requires a briefing on force protection measures in place to protect American servicemen at Al Udeid Air Base in the aftermath of Iran's strikes on the facility on June 23, 2025. Prior to Operation Midnight Hammer against Iran's nuclear facilities, DoD redeployed [all but the 44 American soldiers](#) from the base needed to man two Patriot missile batteries, confirming JINSA's yearslong contention that in many respects ["America's Air Force Base in Qatar is a Liability,"](#) not an asset.

## Key Provisions in FY'2026 NDAA Bills



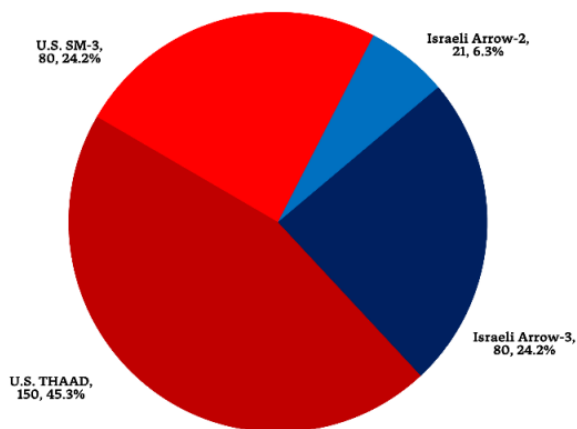
Provision Description	House	Senate
United States – Israel Cooperative Missile Defense Programs	X	X
United States – Israel Subterranean Warfare Cooperation	X	X
United States – Israel Cooperation to Counter Adversaries' Unmanned Aerial System Capabilities	X	X
Emerging Technologies Cooperation Between the United States and Israel	X	X
Extension of Authority to Provide Assistance to Vetted Syrian Groups and Individuals	X	X
Countering the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)	X	X
Provisions Related to Lebanon	X	X
Strengthening the War Reserve Stockpile Allies – Israel	X	
Prohibition on the Use of Funds to the Badr Organization in Iraq	X	
Force Protection Measures at Al-Udeid Air Base	X	
U.S. Defense Partnership with Syria	X	
Cost of America's Operation Midnight Hammer Against Iran	X	
Further Improvements to Middle East Air and Missile Defense		X
Simultaneous Conflicts Critical Munitions Report		X
Streamlining and Expediting Sales of Defense Articles		X
Restrictions on Funds for the Office of Security Cooperation in Iraq		X

# Key Middle East Provisions in the House and Senate FY'2026 NDAA

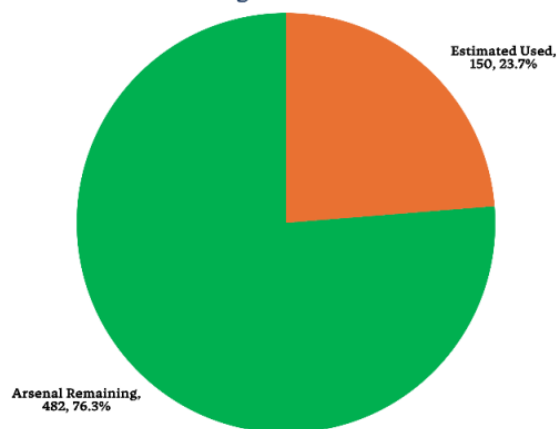
## U.S.-Israel Cooperative Missile Defense Programs

- **House Version** ([Budget Tables](#)): Allocates \$60 million in funding for the Government of Israel to procure components for Iron Dome through co-production in the United States. Also includes \$40 million for David's Sling Weapons System (listed as SRBDM), and not more than \$100 million for the Arrow-3 Upper Tier Interceptor Program. (Other elements of the \$500 million in annual missile defense cooperation funding do not need to be separately reauthorized at this time).
- **Senate Version** ([Sec. 1534](#)): Identical.
- **Analysis:** Consistent with the 10-year U.S.-Israel Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and President Trump's budget request, the NDAA fully authorizes funding for these important joint cooperative missile defense programs, which are vital to helping Israel maintain its Qualitative Military Edge (QME) and defend against rockets, missiles, and drones. Israel's IAMD capabilities were on full display during [Operation Rising Lion against Iran](#), when Iran launched more than 500 missiles in 44 waves over the course of twelve days. JINSA [estimates](#) that Israel and the United States intercepted 273 of 574 missiles launched by Iran. This included the reported use of about 150 Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) "Talon" and 80 Standard Missile-3 (SM-3) interceptors launched by the United States, and an estimated 20 Arrow-2 and 80 Arrow-3 interceptors launched by Israel, preventing an [estimated](#) \$15 billion in property damage and yielding a net savings of roughly \$13.5 billion.

Estimated Share of U.S. and Israeli Interceptors Defending Israel During June 13-24 War



Estimated Use of U.S. THAAD Stockpile During June 13-24 War



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## U.S.-Israel Subterranean Warfare Cooperation

- **House Version** ([Sec. 1212](#)): Maintains last year's \$50 million in authorized funding for the United States-Israel anti-tunnel cooperation program this year and reauthorizes the program for an additional two years (until 2028).
- **Senate Version** ([Sec. 1255](#)): Identical two-year reauthorization, but increases authorization from \$50 to \$80 million for this year.
- **Analysis:** Hamas's use of tactical and strategic tunnels under Gaza has presented serious ongoing challenges for the IDF, previously discussed in-depth in JINSA's report "[The October 7 War: Observations, October 2023 – May 2024.](#)" These tunnels not only complicate Israeli offensive operations in Gaza but also serve as an ongoing threat to domestic security and post-war rebuilding efforts. Tunneling initiatives by Hezbollah in the north have also posed a [persistent threat](#) to Israel in recent years. Technology developed through this collaboration has significantly strengthened Israeli defensive subterranean capabilities as well as helped the United States better secure our southwest border with Mexico via acoustic sensors that identify tunneling activity.

## U.S.-Israel Cooperation to Counter Adversaries' Unmanned Aerial System Capabilities

- **House Version** ([Sec. 1213](#)): Authorized \$70 million for broadening the existing United States-Israel Counter Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) cooperation program to include unmanned systems in all warfighting domains.
- **Senate Version** ([Sec. 1256](#)): Increases Counter UAS budget from \$55 to \$75 million.
- **Analysis:** This funding expansion could pay significant longer-term dividends. During its 12-day war with Iran, Israeli and American capabilities used to counter the roughly 1,100 drones launched from Iran were vitally important elements in protecting Israeli civilians, American military forces in bases in the Middle East, and critical infrastructure in the region. JINSA has carefully tracked Iran's drone and projectile launches since October 7, 2023. For more, please see: [Israel-Iran Conflict](#).

## Emerging Technologies Cooperation Between the U.S and Israel

- **House Version** ([Sec. 1205](#)): This section would establish an emerging technology cooperation program with Israel and other unnamed partner countries, led by the Irregular Warfare Technology Support Directorate of the DoD, to conduct joint research, development, test, and evaluation in the areas of artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, robotics, quantum, and automation. Wilson Amendment [5319](#) further requires a briefing on defense industrial base integration more broadly between the U.S and Israel in the report accompanying the House NDAA.
- **Senate Version** ([Budget Tables](#)): Allocates \$15 million for U.S.-Israel Joint Research and Development on emerging technologies but is not nearly as specific in recommending how this money should be spent.
- **Analysis:** JINSA has frequently recommended that the U.S. military should take full advantage of Israel's capabilities as a Start Up Nation to provide significant long-term dividends for both nations.

## Extension of Authority to Provide Assistance to Vetted Syrian Groups and Individuals

- **House Version** ([Sec. 1233](#)): Extends authority to provide assistance to vetted Syrian groups and individuals for an additional year but clarifies funding restrictions apply against militias that previously supported the Assad regime.
- **Senate Version** ([Sec. 1213](#)): Similarly extends authority for an additional year.
- **Analysis:** In spite of the new regime, Congress remains focused on, at a minimum, maintaining existing Syria policy by continuing to support the Syrian Democratic Forces who opposed Assad, including through military assistance.

## Countering the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)

- **House Version** ([Sec. 1234](#)): Consistent with the president's budget request, reauthorizes \$358 million U.S. security assistance to counter ISIS in Iraq (\$213 million), Syria (\$130 million), and Lebanon (\$15 million).
- **Senate Version** ([Sec. 1214](#)): Identical reauthorization. The Senate bill also requires the Secretary of Defense to take appropriate measures to support the defenses of al-Hol and Roj camps in Syria to prevent an ISIS resurgence ([Sec. 1216](#)) and further limits the use of funds to reduce or consolidate U.S. bases in Syria unless certain conditions are met ([Sec. 1217](#)).
- **Analysis:** These provisions continue Congress's strong interest in ensuring ISIS remains subdued and hedge against renewed Iranian influence in Syria moving forward. Post-Assad Syria presents many opportunities for progress in the region, but the country remains unstable. For example, violence during the [July 2025 Suwayda crisis](#) laid bare the deep tensions between Syria's new government and the country's Druze community. JINSA strongly supports the U.S.-led Countering ISIS Coalition and has advocated for a long-term framework to counter [Iran in Syria](#).

## Provisions Related to Lebanon

- **House Version** ([Sec. 1235](#)): Under counter-terrorism support, the bill clarifies that support for the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) may be used only to promote their ability to counter threats from Lebanese Hezbollah, Hamas, ISIS, and any other terrorist organization that threatens the security of Lebanon and its neighbors.
- **Senate Version** ([Sec. 1253](#)): Requires a detailed plan from the Secretary of Defense and Commander, U.S. Central Command, on how to support the Jordanian and Lebanese militaries via training, equipment, supplies, and services, by summarizing currently available authorities and outlining clear U.S. objectives advanced by U.S. support.
- **Analysis:** To fully eliminate Hezbollah's threat to Israel's northern border, the LAF must increase their capabilities. For more on how this might best be accomplished see JINSA's report: ["Suppressing Iran's Ring of Fire in Lebanon."](#)

# In Only the House

## Strengthening the War Reserve Stockpile Allies – Israel

- **House Version** ([Sec. 1211](#)): Extends authorization for the U.S. War Reserve Stockpile Allies - Israel (WRSA-I) for two additional years beyond its current authorization, until January 1, 2029. Rep. Stefanik's [Amendment 5203](#) further requires a full accounting of the types of munitions in WRSA-I, an assessment of their age and usability, and an evaluation of whether they are sufficient to meet anticipated contingencies in the report accompanying the House NDAA.
- **Analysis:** JINSA has consistently advocated for the importance of maintaining and contributing to WRSA-I, which is key to maintaining Israel's QME in the region. The WRSA-I is also a critical resource for other U.S. allies in times of crisis and supported the Ukrainian war effort against Russia. For the stockpile to fulfill its purpose as a strategic fallback for Israel, there is an urgent need to update and replenish the weaponry stored there with Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAMs) and GBU-39 and GBU-53/B small diameter bombs. For more on the importance of this stockpile from JINSA, see [here](#).

## Prohibition on the Use of Funds to the Badr Organization in Iraq

- **House Version** ([Sec. 1236](#); Rep. Wilson Amendment [5352](#)): Prohibits funding to the Badr Organization in Iraq.
- **Analysis:** Identical to a [provision](#) in last year's NDAA, this is intended to prevent a repeat of actions like the 2016 transfer of \$1.7 billion in dollars and other currencies to Iran as part of a deal negotiated by the Obama administration to release several U.S. hostages held by Iran. The Departments of State and Treasury have been reluctant to issue sanctions against the Iraqi Badr Organization, a Shi'a Islamist political party and military organization, despite its deep ties to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, over concern about the potential destabilizing impact of such a move on the Iraqi government, whose governing coalition includes pro-Iranian groups.

## Force Protection Measures at Al-Udeid Air Base

- **House Version** (Rep. Jackson Amendment [4895](#)): In the report to accompany the House NDAA requires a briefing on force protection measures at Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar, including an evaluation of the risk posed by Iran's missile and drone capabilities to the base and the status of existing U.S. and host nation air and missile defense capabilities to defend U.S. personnel at the air base.
- **Analysis:** Iran's strike on Al-Udeid Air Base on June 23, 2025, after U.S. "Operation Midnight Hammer" highlighted its vulnerable position in any major combat operations against Iran. JINSA has strongly argued, ["America's Air Force Base in Qatar is a Liability: Shut it Down."](#)

## U.S. Defense Partnership with Syria

- **House Version** (Rep. Hamadeh Amendment [5261](#)): In the report to accompany the House NDAA, requires a briefing on potential U.S. defense cooperation with Syria, noting the post-Assad Syrian government's efforts to reduce Iranian and Russian influence in the country.
- **Analysis:** The collapse of the Assad regime in Syria at the end of 2024 may have removed a brutal dictator and dislodged Iran, but serious questions remain regarding the motivations of the new government. Led by Ahmad al-Sharaa, commander of the previously al Qaeda-linked Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) that deposed Assad, the new regime in Damascus is dominated by Sunni Islamists and

backed by Turkey, raising serious concerns about how it will treat minorities at home, behave toward Israel, and impact U.S. interests in the region. Nevertheless, the opportunity to potentially reorient Syria in a more pro-American direction is worth attempting. President Trump's removal of U.S. sanctions on Syria is an attempt to do just that and Rep. Abraham Hamadeh's provision would help further support this effort.

## Cost of America's Operation Midnight Hammer Against Iran

- **House Version** (Rep. Khanna Amendment [5670](#)): In the report to accompany the House NDAA directs the SecDef to submit a report detailing all costs associated with Operation Midnight Hammer.
- **Analysis:** In recent years Rep. Ro Khanna has been one of the House's strongest advocates for defending congress's war making powers, demanding presidents of both parties request Authorizations for the Use of Military Force (AUMFs) prior to initiating any military action against foreign nations not imminently threatening U.S. forces. JINSA acknowledges this is a valid concern, which is why we pushed hard for Congress to pass a [narrow AUMF against Iran's nuclear program](#) in early 2025, unfortunately to a decidedly tepid reception on the Hill.

## In Only the Senate

### Middle East Air and Missile Defense

- **Senate Version** ([Sec. 1251](#)): Further improvements to IAMD efforts with U.S. allies and partners in the Middle East, including incorporating lessons learned from the April and October 2024 Iranian missile attacks against Israel and Houthi maritime attacks on international shipping.
- **Analysis:** This provision is directly in line with recommendations in JINSA's "[Forged Under Fire: Middle East Air Defense After Iran's 2024 Attacks on Israel](#)" report. Given the fast evolution of drone and missile capabilities globally, incorporating lessons learned from Israel's conflict with Iran to help strengthen U.S. IAMD capabilities is an urgent necessity.

### Simultaneous Conflicts Critical Munitions Report

- **Senate Version** ([Sec. 864](#)): Requires a report within 180 days of passage detailing critical munitions required to fight simultaneous conflicts in different theaters, modeled on the assumption that a contingency operation in any one of the western Pacific, Europe, Middle East, or Korean Peninsula theaters increases the likelihood of simultaneous operations in other theaters. Requires consideration of stockpile prepositioning requirements, risks of moving stocks from one theater to another, and opportunities for allies and partner contributions.
- **Analysis:** Building supply chains to deliver weapons to war zones takes time. It is far more effective to pre-position weapons in peacetime. Israel and the United States learned this lesson the hard way during the 1973 Yom Kippur War, and by the time America replenished Israeli materiel, it had only limited tactical benefit for Israel's war effort. In the past two years, simultaneous conflicts between Russia and Ukraine, as well as Iran and Israel have strained America's ability to fully arm our partners, while maintaining our own stockpiles. This provision could help alleviate such strains from reoccurring.

## Streamlining and Expediting Sales of Defense Articles to U.S. Allies

- **Senate Version** ([Sec. 1261](#)): Requires the DoD develop improved acquisition strategies for U.S. NATO allies and Major Non-NATO Allies such as Israel, to expedite sales and delivery of defense articles and services. [Sec. 866](#) also requires an overall estimate of U.S. ally and partner demand for U.S.-produced munitions more broadly to further streamline production.
- **Analysis:** Shortcomings in the U.S Defense Industrial Base impact both our defense capabilities, and America's ability to support our allies through defense sales. Israel has felt this impact directly, such as by having to compete against other U.S. allies and partners for high demand munitions like 2,000-pound bombs. These provisions should help address this concern.

## Restrictions on Funds for the Office of Security Cooperation in Iraq

- **Senate Version** ([Sec. 1218](#)): Restricts the disbursement of funds to the Office of Security Cooperation in Iraq to no more than 50% until the Secretary of Defense certifies Iraq has taken credible steps to reduce the operational capacity of Iran-aligned militia groups, strengthens the authority of the Iraqi PM's authority over the Iraqi Security Forces, and holds accountable individuals operating outside the formal chain of command who attack U.S. or Iraqi personnel.
- **Analysis:** With Israel's launch of Operation Rising Lion against Iran in June, Iranian proxies resumed their attacks against U.S. service members in the Middle East for the first time since December 2024, attacking six times, including three attacks in Iraq. In total, Iran-backed militias have conducted at least 79 attacks against U.S. forces in Iraq since October 7, 2023. With Iran significantly weakened, Capitol Hill is fed up with the Iraqi government's lack of action to prevent such attacks against U.S. forces and is now playing hardball. For more on recent attack trends, see: [Iran Projectile Tracker: Attacks Against U.S. Troops Resume](#).