

Analysis:

Key Middle East Provisions in the National Defense Authorization Act

Matt Kenney*Vice President for Government Affairs***Eric Zalcman***Government Affairs Associate*

A successful end is in sight for the Fiscal Year 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) after the House approved the bill in a strong bipartisan vote of 312-112 on Wednesday. The NDAA remains one of the few pieces of must-pass legislation each year, enabling robust 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. With Congress having reconciled differences between earlier House and Senate drafts (H.R.3838 and S.2296), the final NDAA must now be approved by the Senate and presented to President Trump for his signature before the year's end to become law.

More than two dozen provisions addressing U.S. national security interests in the Middle East are included in this year's bill. Many were inspired or informed by JINSA research and recommendations, including:

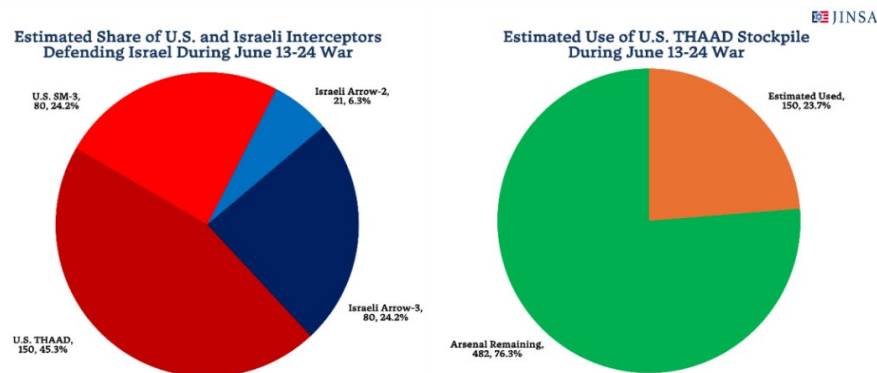
- **Improvements to Middle East Air and Missile Defense:** The bill strongly encourages DoD to continue to strengthen Integrated Air and Missile Defense (IAMD) efforts with U.S. allies and partners in the Middle East by incorporating lessons learned from the April and October 2024 Iranian missile attacks against Israel, the 12-Day War, and Houthi maritime attacks against international shipping. This provision was drafted based on recommendations in JINSA's ["Forged Under Fire: Middle East Air Defense After Iran's 2024 Attacks on Israel"](#) report.
- **Countering Wrongful Detention Act:** Directly inspired by JINSA's groundbreaking ["Rethinking U.S. Hostage Policy in Gaza and Beyond"](#) report, which called for tougher penalties and international coordination to curb hostage-taking, and briefings to Congress in 2024 to create a new "State Sponsor of Wrongful Detention" designation for countries like Iran. This provision will increase deterrence by enhancing American capabilities to penalize countries that wrongfully detain American citizens.
- **U.S.-Israel Defense Industrial Base Cooperation:** Aligning with recommendations in JINSA's trailblazing ["Partners in Production: U.S.-Middle East Cooperation to Enhance Our Collective Defense Industrial Base"](#) report, the final bill directs DoD to establish a United States-Israel Defense Industrial Base Working Group within 90 days to identify opportunities for deeper industrial integration between the two nations and assess the feasibility and policy requirements for adding Israel to the U.S. National Technology and Industrial Base (NTIB).
- **Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar:** The final bill 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 operate two Patriot missile batteries, confirming JINSA's contention that in many respects ["America's Air Force Base in Qatar is a Liability,"](#) not an asset.

- **War Reserve Stockpile Allies – Israel (WRSA-I):** The bill mandates an updated 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. JINSA has consistently emphasized the value of [“The Arsenal of Democracy’s Stockpile in Israel.”](#)

Key Middle East Provisions in the FY’26 NDAA

U.S.-Israel Cooperative Missile Defense Programs

- **Final Bill (Sec. 1657):** Allocates \$60 million in funding for Israel to procure Iron Dome components through co-production in the United States, \$40 million for David’s Sling Weapons System, and \$100 million for the Arrow-3 Upper Tier Interceptor Program. Compared to last year, \$50 million has been shifted away from Iron Dome to increase Arrow-3 funding levels. The [Joint Explanatory Statement](#)¹ further directs the Director of the Missile Defense Agency (MDA) to provide Congress with an assessment on ways to increase Arrow missile production capacity and inventory, including ways Congress could expedite such efforts by establishing a fully redundant production capacity in the United States.
- **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 missile defense programs, which are vital to preserve Israel’s 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 use of approximately 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. These defensive efforts prevented an [estimated](#) \$15 billion in property damage and yielded a net savings of roughly \$13.5 billion. There is now an urgent need to replenish both countries’ missile stockpiles in the aftermath of the 12-Day War.



JINSA’s [“Forged Under Fire”](#) report urged that “serious thought will need to be given by Washington and Jerusalem whether it makes sense, strategically, financially, and in terms of both nations’ defense industrial capacity to seek the ramping up of Israel’s Arrow capabilities in the near term” and that “Congress should draw on CENTCOM’s lessons learned to make any adjustments to its annual appropriations for Israel’s missile defense needs, particularly

¹ Report and briefing requirements included in the Joint Explanatory Statement are considered as equally binding on DoD by Congress as those in the actual bill and treated as such by DoD.

the allotment devoted to the longer range Arrow system.” We are pleased to see Congress support these recommendations.

Further Improvements to Cooperative Middle East Air and Missile Defense Systems

- **Final Version** ([Joint Explanatory Statement](#)): Strongly encourages the secretary of defense to continue to cooperate with allies and partners in the Middle East with respect to implementing an IAMD architecture to protect U.S.-deployed forces and the people, infrastructure, and territory of our CENTCOM partners. The report requires an update on progress made towards incorporating lessons learned from the April and October 2024 Iranian missile attacks against Israel, the 12-Day War, and Houthi maritime attacks on international shipping.
- **Analysis:** This provision draws directly from recommendations in JINSA’s [“Forged Under Fire: Middle East Air Defense After Iran’s 2024 Attacks on Israel”](#) report, drafted in partnership with the Senate Abraham Accords Caucus. Given the rapid evolution of drone and missile capabilities globally, incorporating lessons learned from Israel’s conflict with Iran is essential to help strengthen U.S. IAMD capabilities. These insights should also help inform the development of President Trump’s Golden Dome program to protect the U.S. homeland.

U.S.-Israel Subterranean Warfare Cooperation

- **Final Version** ([Sec. 1231](#)): Reauthorizes the program for two years and increases funding to \$80 million, a bump from last year’s \$50 million. The [Joint Explanatory Statement](#) further directs DoD to conduct a study on steps that Israel, Egypt, and the United States can take to enhance international security measures on the border between Gaza and Egypt to ensure Hamas and other actors do not use tunnels, unmanned aerial systems, or methods via the Mediterranean Sea to smuggle weapons and illicit goods.
- **Analysis:** Hamas’s use of extensive tactical and strategic tunnels under Gaza presented serious challenges for the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), as detailed in JINSA’s report, [“The October 7 War: Observations, October 2023 – May 2024.”](#) These tunnels not only complicated Israeli offensive operations in Gaza, but also continue to endanger 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 bolstered Israeli subterranean defenses, 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 Systems in All Warfighting Domains

- **Final Version** ([Sec. 1232](#)): Authorized \$70 million for broadening the existing United States-Israel Counter Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) cooperation program to include unmanned systems across all warfighting domains and requires an annual report assessing the progress of these initiatives.
- **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 vital 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](#).

United States-Israel Defense Industrial Base Working Group

- **Final Version** ([Sec. 864](#)): Directs the DoD to establish a United States-Israel Defense Industrial Base Working Group within 90 days to evaluate opportunities for deeper industrial integration between the two nations and assess the feasibility of adding Israel to the U.S.

national technology and industrial base. It also requires a report to Congress within 120 days outlining recommended legal authorities or funding needs, while ensuring protection of sensitive national security information for both nations.

- **Analysis:** As JINSA's recent "[Partners in Production](#)" report underscores, the United States can no longer assume its defense industrial base can sustain multiple high-intensity conflicts alone. Russia's war in Ukraine and Iran's confrontation with Israel have exposed dangerous production shortfalls and bottlenecks in U.S. munitions and supply chains. Israel, meanwhile, is rapidly expanding its own manufacturing capabilities—particularly in air and missile defense, drones, and precision strike systems—that can directly reinforce U.S. readiness. Establishing such a working group is a necessary first step toward harnessing this untapped capacity to accelerate joint production, reduce reliance on China for strategic materials, and enable partners to help shoulder the industrial burden of shared threats.

Emerging Technologies Cooperation Between the U.S. and Israel

- **Final Version** ([Sec. 1234](#)): 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](#) also requires a briefing on defense industrial base integration more broadly between the U.S. and Israel in the report accompanying the House NDAA, and the [Joint Explanatory Statement](#) further encourages the Defense Innovation Unit (DIU) to explore adding a regional outreach center in Israel.
- **Analysis:** JINSA has frequently contended examining ways for the U.S. military to take full advantage of Israel's capabilities as a "start-up nation" could provide significant long-term dividends to both countries. These various provisions are all indicative of Congress seeking ways to do so.

Report on U.S.-Israel Military Exercises

- **Final Version** ([Sec. 1235](#)): Requires a report on DoD exercises conducted jointly with Israel within 180 days and annually thereafter for three years. The report must include all such exercises within the past year, participating countries, a description of capabilities and missions rehearsed, how each exercise increased interoperability and regional cooperation, the extent to which they improved readiness, and an assessment of any gaps in joint capabilities that additional exercises could help close.
- **Analysis:** JINSA has argued [for years](#) that combined exercises involving Israel in land, air, naval, space, and cyber domains are clear areas where steady growth can occur, helping strengthen defense cooperation within CENTCOM and set the stage for the expansion of the Abraham Accords. JINSA's "[Forged Under Fire](#)" further recommended: "An important part of a more ambitious U.S. strategy to accelerate IAMD progress should be regular multinational exercises based on contingencies that mirror the acute challenges posed by Iran's massive missile and drone barrages against Israel. In contrast, prior to 2024, planning and preparations had worked from extremely simple scenarios that perhaps envisioned several countries trying to determine how to neutralize a single UAV or two. However, having now been through a real-life crisis that involved hundreds of projectiles crossing through the air space of several nations ... the opportunity for a qualitative step-up in the ambition of regional IAMD planning, training, and exercises is obvious and should be seized upon... [via] live exercises that replicate as realistically as possible the full spectrum of threats that Iran and its proxies are likely to pose."

Briefing on Expediting Arms Transfers to Israel

- **Final Version** ([Joint Explanatory Statement](#)): Congress emphasized its support for the transfer of arms to Israel to assist its defense against shared regional adversaries, including Iran and Iranian-backed terrorist groups such as Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and Hezbollah. In the aftermath of the Biden administration's arms embargo and to ensure President Trump's [directive](#) that weapons "are now on their way" is fully enforced, Congress directs the secretary of defense, in coordination with the secretary of state, to provide a briefing on the status of deliveries to the Government of Israel of any military aircraft or air-launched munitions approved for transfer that are undelivered or partially delivered, including the estimated delivery timetable and any ongoing or potential measures associated with the items, specific reasons for any delay, and what measures are being taken or could be taken to address barriers to deliveries to Israel, including recommended changes to authorities or appropriations that Congress could provide.
- **Analysis:** Since the October 7th attacks JINSA has [strongly advocated](#) for the United States to give Israel the [tools it needs](#) to defend itself, and [opposed](#) the Biden Administration arms embargo on Israel. JINSA has pushed for capabilities like Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAMs) and Small Diameter Bombs (SDBs), and ammunition and spare parts for Israel's predominantly American-produced weapons systems, such as the F-16 and F-35 aircraft and Black Hawk and Apache helicopters, be provided as quickly as possible. This provision is fully consistent with JINSA's point earlier this year that ["President Trump Must Use Every Tool to Speed Up Arms for Israel."](#)

Assessment of the Impact of International State Arms Embargoes on Israel

- **Final version** ([Sec. 1706](#)): Requires DoD to continually assess the impact of international arms embargoes and restrictions on Israel's defense capabilities and its ability to maintain its Qualitative Military Edge (QME). These assessments shall be updated not less than once every 180 days and must identify any defense capability gaps caused by such embargoes and outline potential U.S. actions to mitigate those gaps, including improved foreign military sales, increased industrial support, joint R&D, and enhanced training and logistics cooperation.
- **Analysis:** JINSA's ["European Embargoes and Punitive Actions Targeting Israel's Defense"](#) tracker reflects growing concern that European and international embargoes could potentially erode Israel's ability to defend itself against Iran and its terrorist proxies. As the infographic documents, politically motivated restrictions on defense cooperation not only risk degrading Israel's readiness and deterrence but also undermine broader Western security interests. By mandating continual U.S. assessment and identifying steps to mitigate capability gaps, Congress is signaling that America will not allow allies' punitive measures to weaken a key democratic partner in the Middle East.

Strengthening the War Reserve Stockpile Allies – Israel

- **Final Version** ([Report](#) accompanying the House NDAA): Rep. Stefanik Amendment [5203](#) 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.
- **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 was depleted after the United States sent weapons stored there to Ukraine for use 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](#).

Simultaneous Conflicts Critical Munitions Report

- **Final Version** ([Sec. 364](#)): 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, European, Middle East, or Korean Peninsula theaters increases the likelihood of simultaneous operations in others. 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, with pre-positioning weapons being most effective in peacetime. The United States and Israel learned this lesson the hard way during the 1973 Yom Kippur War, when the delayed resupply of Israeli forces limited the tactical impact of U.S. assistance. In the past two years, simultaneous Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Iran conflicts have strained America's ability to fully arm our partners while maintaining our own stockpiles. This provision could help prevent future shortfalls and ensure U.S. allies can defend themselves at the speed of relevance.

Streamlining the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) Process

- **Final Version** ([Secs. 1211-1215](#)): Directs the secretary of defense to streamline and align the roles, responsibilities, and authorities, as well as improve transparency, relating to Department of Defense processes for international arms transfers, including Foreign Military Sales (FMS). This includes incentives to ensure members of the defense acquisition workforce engage in foreign military sales planning and execution in accordance with the National Defense Strategy, that the foreign military sales process is executed in a manner that effectively addresses urgency of need and associated risk tolerance of the purchasers to accelerate delivery, and that the Departments of State and Defense periodically review the FMS-only list.
- **Analysis:** As far back as 2023, JINSA's ["Build It and They Will Come: A U.S. Strategy for Integrating Middle East Air and Missile Defenses"](#) report recommended it "would be useful to develop a mechanism for streamlining and fast-tracking CENTCOM-approved Foreign Military Sales (FMS) acquisitions by U.S. partners that are deemed essential... for the bolstering of the broader IAMD network, in particular the expansion of the system's region-wide sensor coverage and joint R&D efforts to develop new, more cost-effective technologies for countering missiles and drones." ["Forged Under Fire"](#) further recommended "Congress should ... streamline and accelerate the FMS (Foreign Military Sales) and FMF (Foreign Military Financing) process to ensure that Arab participants fully committed to a U.S.-led IAMD network have rapid access to U.S. equipment that CENTCOM deems essential for strengthening the system's overall architecture and operations." Updates to the FMS process should help address these concerns.

Countering Wrongful Detention Act

- **Final Version** ([Secs. 8351-8354](#)): Fully incorporates the Countering Wrongful Detention Act of 2025 ([H.R.4179](#) / [S.1478](#)), creating a new authority for the secretary of state to designate foreign governments as "State Sponsors of Unlawful or Wrongful Detention" and requiring regular reporting to Congress for oversight purposes. It also mandates a comprehensive review of available U.S. tools to deter and respond to wrongful detentions and directs the Administration to assess travel advisory distribution with the private sector. The Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell, Hostage Response Group, and Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs will also be evaluated to improve interagency coordination.

- **Analysis:** This bill was directly inspired by JINSA's groundbreaking [“Rethinking U.S. Hostage Policy in Gaza and Beyond”](#) report, which called for tougher penalties and international coordination to curb hostage-taking. It specifically implements a JINSA recommendation briefed to Congress in 2024 to create a new “State Sponsor of Wrongful Detention” designation for countries like Iran. Compared to a decade ago, there has been a 175% increase in the number of hostage-taking incidents by hostile governments and terror groups involving Americans. While the horrific kidnappings of Americans by Hamas in Gaza brought the epidemic to the forefront of the public's mind, it was both presaged and enabled by a marked rise in government-sponsored detentions of Americans for political purposes. JINSA is proud to have worked closely with the Congressional Task Force on American Hostages and Americans Wrongfully Detained Abroad to draft this legislation which will add real firepower to American efforts to hit countries that wrongfully detain American citizens with strong repercussions.

Repeal of Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019

- **Final Version** ([Sec. 8369](#)): Repeals the mandatory sanctions originally imposed on the Assad regime in Syria in 2019. Also includes a reporting requirement to assess whether Syria is taking steps such as concrete and tangible action against ISIS and Al Qaida, upholding religious and ethnic minority rights in Syria, and credible steps to implement March agreements with Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).
- **Analysis:** Syria's new president, Ahmed al-Sharaa, has deep roots in the global jihad. But in power, he's proven to be a ruthless pragmatist—ready to divert from extremist orthodoxy to garner desperately needed support from the United States and other key nations to rebuild Syria's shattered state and society and ensure his own success. Since May 2025, U.S. President Donald Trump has gone to significant lengths to bolster Sharaa by lifting sanctions—with the goal of encouraging the emergence of a new Syria that could serve as a viable partner in building a more stable Middle East on the ashes of an Assad regime that for half a century worked with America's enemies to threaten U.S. interests. To maximize the chances of Sharaa paying heed to U.S. concerns regarding Syria's internal governance, JINSA's [“Course Correction: Getting America's Syria Strategy Right”](#) recommended maintaining U.S. leverage by slowing Congress's rush to repeal the Caesar Act entirely, which will void the greatest single incentive Sharaa has to comply with U.S. priorities.

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

- **Final Version** ([Sec. 1223](#)): Extends the authority to provide assistance to vetted Syrian groups and individuals for an additional year but clarifies that funding restrictions apply against militias that previously supported the Assad regime.
- **Analysis:** Despite 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)

- **Final Version** ([Sec. 1224](#), [Budget Tables](#)): Consistent with the president's request, the section reauthorizes \$358 million U.S. security assistance to counter the Islamic State in Iraq (\$213 million), Syria (\$130 million), and Lebanon (\$15 million). The 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. 1229A](#)) and further limits the use of funds to reduce or consolidate U.S. bases in Syria unless certain conditions are met ([Sec. 1229B](#)).
- **Analysis:** These provisions continue Congress's strong interest in ensuring that 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](#).

The requirements in 1229B are fully consistent with recommendations in [“Course Correction”](#) that the U.S. maintain a small U.S. presence in eastern Syria. The report notes: “The other key piece of leverage that the U.S. possesses to positively influence Sharaa’s actions... is the continued U.S. military presence in northeastern Syria alongside the SDF. Having to factor in the presence of U.S. troops and their long history of successful collaboration with the SDF against ISIS gives Sharaa (and Turkey) an important incentive to act with an added degree of restraint, moderation, and reasonableness in his efforts to reintegrate the SDF and the SDF-led autonomous administration into the Syrian state.”

Conditions Required to Reopen the U.S. Embassy in Syria

- **Final Version** ([Sec. 5506](#)): Requires a report within 180 days on the security conditions in Damascus, Syria, necessary for rebuilding and operating of the United States diplomatic mission. Additional report elements include an analysis of the Syrian government’s progress destroying elements of the Assad regime’s chemical weapons program, illicit drug stockpiles (specifically Captagon), current relationship with Russia and Iran, and cooperation with the United States to locate and repatriate American citizens.
- **Analysis:** [“Course Correction”](#) argues that the Trump administration should seek to resume operations at the American embassy in Syria as soon as possible. It should be staffed with a full country team of experienced diplomats and Syria experts with appropriate language skills to assist American efforts to accurately monitor and track the Sharaa regime’s progress in addressing America’s core list of priorities. In an environment as complex and dynamic as post-Assad Syria, a fully functioning American embassy could be of enormous value to senior policymakers in Washington. The sooner the United States can get on the ground to engage, build trust with, and produce its own independent reporting on Syria’s government and its diverse communities—rather than relying on second-hand accounts by agenda-driven partisans—the better.

U.S. Defense Partnership with Syria

- **Final Version** ([Report](#) accompanying the House NDAA): Rep. Hamadeh Amendment [5261](#) 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 and 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, behave toward Israel, and impact U.S. interests in the region. Never-the-less, the opportunity to potentially reorient Syria in a more pro-American direction is worth attempting.

Provisions Related to Lebanon, Egypt and Jordan

- **Final Version** ([Sec. 1225](#)): Extends counter-terrorism support for an additional year and clarifies that aid to the Lebanese armed forces may be used only to promote their ability to counter the threat posed by Lebanese Hezbollah, Hamas, ISIS, and any other terrorist organization that threaten the security of Lebanon and its neighbors. The bill also adds additional support for Egypt to counter transnational terrorism from Sudan. An additional provision ([Sec. 1226](#)) urges the Secretary of Defense to seek to provide assistance to Jordan and Lebanon to enhance Jordanian military capabilities and the capacity of the Lebanese

armed forces to disrupt Hezbollah. It also requires a plan from DoD that must include a rubric for assessing the progress of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) in disarming Hezbollah, and options for suspending assistance to the LAF if it is determined that they are unwilling to act to disarm Hezbollah.

- **Analysis:** To fully eliminate Hezbollah's threat to Israel's northern border, the LAF must increase their capabilities. For more on how this might be best accomplished, see JINSA's report: ["Suppressing Iran's Ring of Fire in Lebanon."](#) The significantly strengthened reporting requirement mandating DoD assess whether the LAF is willing to disarm Hezbollah is a notable change from the original House NDAA language and indicative of patience running thin on Capitol Hill with the Lebanese government.

Force Protection Measures at Al-Udeid Air Base

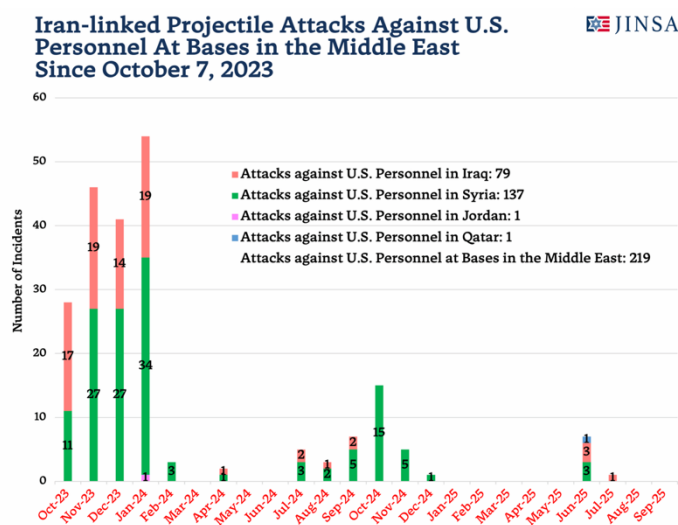
- **Final Version** ([Report](#) accompanying the House NDAA): Rep. Jackson Amendment [4895](#) requires a briefing on force protection measures at Al Udeid Air Base, including an evaluation of the risk posed by the Islamic Republic of Iran's missile and drone capabilities to the base and the status of existing U.S. and host nation air and missile defense capabilities defending 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 that ["America's Air Force Base in Qatar is a Liability: Shut it Down."](#)

Declassification of Certain Records Relating to Tower 22 Attack in Jordan

- **Final Version** ([Sec. 1091](#)): Requires that the secretary of defense declassify and publicly release DoD records related to the January 28, 2024, attack on U.S. forces at Tower 22 in Jordan by an Iranian-backed Shia militia group within 180 days of enactment.
- **Analysis:** Iran-backed militias [have conducted](#) at least 219 attacks against U.S. forces since October 7, 2023, which included more than 370 rockets, missiles, and drones in total. The attack on Tower 22 killed three Americans and injured at least 40 others and led to a significant U.S. retaliatory response in the following weeks against Iranian backed militias and their IRGC sponsors. Incorporating lessons learned from this particular attack should help U.S. forces defend against future similar drone attacks in the future.

Protection of Undersea Cables

- **Final Version** ([Joint Explanatory Statement](#)): Requires a report on the strategy, challenges and capability gaps facing the DoD in protecting undersea cables from physical and cybersecurity threats from China, Russia, Iran, and other naval and shadow fleets of adversaries of the United States.



- **Analysis:** As JINSA explained in [“To Protect Undersea Cables in the Middle East, US Needs a New Hub,”](#) undersea fiber-optic cables serve as not only the economic and communications backbone of much of the civilian world, but for military operations as well. Undersea cables undergird the global commerce system and are responsible for transmitting about 97 percent of global data traffic and roughly \$10 trillion in international financial transactions daily. While recent incidents in which cables have been cut—accidentally or not—have mostly been confined to European and Asian waters, threats to undersea cables will inevitably expand to the Middle East, too—urgently requiring more U.S. action to protect them.

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

- **Final Version** ([Sec. 1227](#)): 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 include pro-Iranian groups.

Cost of America’s “Operation Midnight Hammer” Against Iran

- **House Version** ([Report](#) accompanying the House NDAA): Rep. Khanna Amendment [5670](#) directs the secretary of defense to submit a report detailing all costs associated with Operation Midnight Hammer.
- **Analysis:** In recent years, Rep. Khanna has been one of the House’s strongest advocates for defending congressional war-making powers, demanding that 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.

Restrictions on Funds for the Office of Security Cooperation in Iraq

- **Final Version** ([Sec. 1228](#)): Restricts the disbursement of funds to the Office of Security Cooperation in Iraq to no more than 75% 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 Prime Minister 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. With Iran significantly weakened, Congress is frustrated with the Iraqi government’s lack of action to prevent such attacks against U.S. forces and has intensified its stance, although the final provision is less strict than the Senate’s original withholding of 50% of funds. For more on recent attack trends, see: [Iran Projectile Tracker: Attacks Against U.S. Troops Resume](#).

Repeal of Authorizations for Use of Military Force (AUMF) against Iraq

- **Final Version** ([Sec. 8370](#)): Repeals the 1991 and 2002 Iraq AUMF resolutions. These bipartisan provisions aim to close two decades of war, recognizing renewed U.S. relations with Iraq and in order to prevent future misuse by presidents of either party.

- **Analysis:** A bill to repeal the 2002 AUMF previously passed the House in 2021, and a bill to repeal both the 2002 and 1991 authorizations passed the Senate in 2023. This year, with surprisingly little controversy, there was finally sufficient bipartisan momentum to get over the finish line in both chambers. JINSA has [previously argued](#) Congress should not repeal the 2001 AUMF against Al Qaida or the 2002 AUMF against Iraq unless they are replaced by new measures that strengthen the president's ability to protect U.S. forces and interests in the Middle East.