

Resupply Israel to Deter Iran and Protect U.S. Forces

Ari Cicurel
Associate Director of Foreign Policy

The United States is [preparing to sell](#) Israel 60,000 2,000-pound bombs for \$2.8 billion. Israel heavily used these bombs across nearly three years of fighting on multiple fronts, with the vast majority of the [18,000 bombs](#) Israel dropped in the war against Iran likely being similar heavy munitions. As Iran continues to attack ships in the Strait of Hormuz, a resupplied Israel would support deterrence against Iranian aggression in a way U.S. action alone has not. Iran may calculate that it can absorb tit-for-tat U.S. retaliation while keeping the conflict contained to the strait, but the prospect of a well-armed Israel reentering the fight would force Tehran to consider a broader conflict that could threaten its missile forces and other critical military capabilities.

While Representative Gregory Meeks, the top Democrat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, has placed a [hold](#) on the sale over concerns about the danger to civilians, Israel's precise use of these munitions enables it to strike the weapons and military infrastructure that Iran and Hezbollah bury underground and would otherwise require ground forces to reach. The Trump administration should bypass the hold to proceed with the sale, as it has done in the past, and ship these weapons to Israel quickly, while also upgrading the stockpile of prepositioned U.S. weaponry in Israel with similar munitions and pursuing deals to jointly build these munitions with Israel.

Rearming Israel for a Multi-Front War

Heavy and penetrating munitions, like the 2,000-pound bombs the United States is selling Israel, can reach and destroy some of the underground tunnels, bunkers, and [hardened missile](#) and command sites where Iran and its proxies base their arsenals that smaller warheads cannot reach. Since Hezbollah has tried to reconstitute its underground weapons depots, production sites, and [command-and-control networks](#), repeatedly destroying them has required Israel to continuously [strike](#) Hezbollah sites, likely using a large number of heavy bombs. The possibility of renewed war with Iran further underscores the need to replenish Israel's stockpile of these weapons before it needs to use them at an even larger scale. Having already used a substantial quantity of these munitions, Israel needs to maintain a large supply of these weapons to confront the enduring threats it faces from Iran and its proxies.

As part of the package, the United States would provide 20,000 MK-84 and 20,000 BLU-117 bombs that release blasts and fragmentation, leveling structures and collapsing the shallower bunkers beneath them, and they carry the same warhead, with the BLU-117 using a [more stable filler](#) and thermal coating that let it survive fire and rough handling in storage. The United States would also provide 20,000 I-2000 penetrators, a version of the BLU-109 munition, which use a thick hardened case to bore through soil, rock, and concrete before a delayed fuze detonates the warhead underground, reaching buried targets the blast bombs cannot. Since the casing accounts for much of the weight, the I-2000 carries less explosive material than the blast bombs, with each of the 2,000-pound penetrators of this class being able to breach roughly six feet of reinforced concrete. This capability would enable Israel to destroy shallow bunkers and tunnel entrances but not the deepest hardened sites in Iran, which sit beyond the reach of any air-delivered bomb short of the larger penetrators that Israel does not operate.

Israel already fields all three of these bombs. In early 2025, the Trump administration [shipped](#) Israel 1,800 MK-84s after the Biden administration paused delivery of the munitions. Israeli F-15s and F-16s carry MK-84 and BLU-117 bodies. For example, Israel used BLU-109 penetrators to [kill](#) Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah in a fortified Beirut bunker in September 2024, and to strike Iran's buried missile bunkers during the 2026 war.

Blocking Precise Weapons Endangers Civilians

While Representative Gregory Meeks, the ranking Democrat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, [placed a hold](#) on the sale of the 2,000-pound munitions over concerns about risks to civilians, Israel fits these bombs with U.S.-made Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) [kits](#), which enable it to drop them within meters of an aimpoint, precise enough to strike a single fortified building on a crowded block. Since Hamas and Hezbollah build their bunkers, weapons stores, and command posts beneath homes, hospitals, and mosques, Israel must be able to operate against military targets buried beneath and near civilians. Contrary to objections that blocking the sale of these weapons would minimize civilian harm, without these weapons, Israeli operations could cause more casualties because reaching those fortified positions by other means would require a sustained ground assault or repeated bombing that would expose bystanders to greater risk.

Even more alarming, members in Congress claiming Israeli strikes lack precision have even tried to block selling the JDAMs that make its strikes more precise. Similar to Meeks's hold, when the Trump administration last [notified](#) Congress in February 2025 about the sale of 16,500 JDAMs to Israel, Senator Bernie Sanders proposed a resolution, which the Senate later [rejected](#), to block the weapons transfer. Had Congress stopped this sale, Israel would still need to combat the threat from Iran and its proxies, but its strikes would be less effective and precise, directly undercutting the intentions of those pushing it.

Arming Israel Strengthens Deterrence Against Iran

As Iran continues to attack U.S. forces in the Middle East and commercial shipping in the Strait of Hormuz, a resupplied Israel would bolster deterrence against Iranian aggression that U.S. action alone has not established. Iran may calculate that it can absorb or manage the tit-for-tat U.S. retaliation while keeping the conflict contained to the Strait of Hormuz, but Israel's return to the fight would complicate that calculation. Arming Israel now, before the next round of escalation, would make Iran weigh the potential risks of uncontrolled escalation that brings Israel back into the fighting. Israel could rapidly open an additional front against Iranian military capabilities, creating greater uncertainty over the scale and duration of any conflict and increasing the risk that a limited confrontation escalates beyond Tehran's control.

If the conflict escalates to major combat operations again, a resupplied Israel would be better equipped to destroy more of Iran's launchers and hardened missile sites, leaving Tehran with fewer weapons to fire at those bases. Destroying launchers and the facilities that store and support them would make it harder for Iran to sustain repeated attacks over time, decreasing the need for the United States to expend larger quantities of increasingly [depleted](#) air defense interceptor stocks. Supplying Israel with penetrator munitions would also enable it to better reach many of the underground sites from which Iran stores the weapons it has fired at U.S. forces or to block tunnel entrances, preventing mobile Iranian missile launchers from leaving the facilities to fire.

Building Sustained Munitions Capacity

The Trump administration should move forward with the sale to Israel of 40,000 MK-84, BLU-117, and I-2000 munitions over Meeks's hold and deliver the bombs quickly. The Trump administration issued an emergency waiver to bypass the congressman's hold over similar objections to a roughly [\\$3 billion sale](#)

to Israel in 2025, and it should proceed with this sale under the same authority. The United States should also pair the bombs with an equal number of JDAMs so that Israel can precisely guide each one to its aimpoint.

The Department of Defense should also restock and expand WRSA-I, the [prepositioned stockpile](#) of U.S. weaponry in Israel, so that Israeli and U.S. forces can have rapid access to these capabilities in an emergency or if stocks deplete during an escalation. That depot ran low after three years of fighting, and if the United States maintained air-to-ground munitions like these there, both militaries could draw on them in emergencies. A stocked depot would also enable the United States to resupply Israel immediately, without logistical constraints of transferring the weapons from U.S. territory.

Over the long-term, the United States should jointly [produce](#) these munitions with Israel. A joint production line would expand the output available to both militaries, letting the United States supply Israel and stock its own forces at the same time, while reducing the risk that a prolonged regional war forces Israel and the United States to compete for the same limited U.S. production capacity. Manufacturing inside Israel would also place a source of resupply closer to combat in the Middle East, shortening the time replacements take to reach Israeli aircraft in a war.