

Dear President Trump:

We welcomed the recent news that the United States helped broker full diplomatic relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). This announcement represents historic progress towards a more peaceful future for the region.

Israel is our single most important ally in the Middle East. Central to our support of Israel's security is ensuring that it maintains a qualitative military edge (QME) in the region. Israel's QME was codified into law over a decade ago, which signifies its importance to members of Congress and the American people. It is with this in mind that we write to you with concern about reports of possible US sales of advanced military weapons into the region that could diminish or threaten Israel's QME.

Since the Lyndon Johnson Administration, maintaining Israel's QME has been a bedrock of US policy. In the past ten years alone, Congress and the Executive Branch have affirmed in law our obligation to ensuring Israel's QME multiple times, both broadly<sup>[1]</sup> and explicitly in the case of arms sales to other countries in the region.<sup>[2]</sup> When considering arms sales to countries in the region, statute requires the Administration to consider the impact such sales would have on Israel's QME.

In light of the clear strategic and legal requirements for US preserving Israel's QME, we are concerned about reports that your Administration is considering significant sales of F-35 stealth fighters and advanced drone technology to any of Israel's regional neighbors. This is especially troubling given the years of opposition to such a sale by the Israeli

national security community, including strenuous opposition voiced recently by both Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Benny Gantz.

While we celebrate the recent agreement brokered between Israel and the UAE, and resolutely want it to succeed, we have to also ensure that Israel maintains its QME. We must, therefore, carefully scrutinize any proposed sale of advanced military technology like the F-35 to any nation in the region and make certain that we will continue to fulfill our legal and strategic QME commitment to Israel's basic security needs.

As stalwart supporters of Israel, we will oppose any arms sale that would threaten Israel's QME, and we will take every opportunity to advocate for Israel's security. In accordance with US law, we firmly expect your Administration keep Congress fully apprised of any pending arm sales to the region.

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*This press release was produced by the Office of Congressman Brad Schneider. The views expressed here are the author's own.*