

MTG vs. the Numbers: Israel Pays America Back 12-to-1

The Lie

Americans who support military aid to Israel are not “America First” because they prioritize Israel’s interests over America’s, a claim repeatedly made by Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA).

The Truth

America’s military aid to Israel directly benefits the U.S.—economically, militarily, and strategically. The \$3.8 billion annual investment in Israel returns an estimated **\$48 billion in value** to the U.S.

Background

- On **November 12**, Rep. **Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA)** told **Megyn Kelly** she wants to end all foreign aid—singling out Israel—arguing that doing so is “America First.” She accused those who disagree of being “MIGA” (Make Israel Great Again).
- There is a growing belief among a segment of the Right that supporting Israel conflicts with America First priorities.

The Truth Explained

- U.S. Aid Structure:** The United States provides **\$3.8 billion annually in military financing** to Israel under a Memorandum of Understanding. The agreement requires that **75 percent of those funds must be spent on American-made defense products and services**, directly supporting the U.S. economy. ([White House](#))
- Military Financing vs. Foreign Aid:** Israel receives **Foreign Military Financing (FMF)**, meaning funds are spent on American products and services to strengthen mutual defense and intelligence cooperation with the U.S. It does not receive general **foreign aid**, such as the roughly **\$60 billion provided to Ukraine**, which primarily supports the country’s domestic budget—paying salaries for teachers, first responders, and other workers—offering **minimal direct economic return to the U.S.** ([White House](#)), ([Foreign Policy](#))
- Actionable intelligence from Israel saves the U.S. roughly **\$2.6 billion annually** in economic losses. Former Air Force Intelligence Chief **Gen. George Keegan** estimated Israel’s intelligence contributions to the U.S. are worth the work of **five CIAs**—roughly **\$75 billion in value** given the CIA’s annual budget. ([Federal Newswire](#)), ([New York Times](#)), ([BBC](#))
- The U.S. avoids the cost of maintaining a military presence in Israel, saving at least **\$2 billion per year** in operational expenditures. Military officials like **Gen. Alexander Haig** and the late **Admiral Elmo Zumwalt** estimate that without Israel’s presence, the U.S. would need to spend **\$15–20 billion annually** to deploy carriers and ground divisions to protect its Middle East interests. ([Federal Newswire](#)), ([JNS](#))
- Israeli joint cybersecurity simulations prevent industrial-scale attacks on American systems, avoiding roughly **\$100 million annually** in losses. ([Federal Newswire](#))
- The U.S. collaborates with Israel on missile systems such as **Iron Dome, David’s Sling, and Arrow-3**. These systems are **first field-tested in Israel** and then licensed back to the U.S. The **Arrow-3 sale to Germany generated \$3.5 billion**, with up to **50% of the work performed by U.S. contractors**. ([Reuters](#)), ([Boeing](#))
- Israeli trauma medicine innovations, such as the **“Stop the Bleed” initiative**, save an estimated **300 U.S. lives annually**, with **\$4.1 billion** in societal welfare impact. ([Federal Newswire](#))
- Israel’s **high-tech startup ecosystem** serves as a key pipeline for **U.S. commercial and defense innovation**. The **Israel-U.S. Binational Industrial Research and Development (BIRD) Foundation** funds joint industrial R&D, enabling Israeli and U.S. companies to co-develop technologies. BIRD estimates that these **collaborative projects generate approximately \$1.2 billion annually** for the U.S. economy. ([BIRD](#)), ([Federal Newswire](#))
- Israel purchased **\$14.8 billion in U.S. goods** in 2024, contributing **\$13.2 billion to the U.S. GDP**. ([US Trade Representative](#))
- Israelis invest close to **\$24 billion** in the United States, and Israel is home to more than **2,500 U.S. firms**. ([U.S. Embassy Jerusalem](#))
- U.S. companies make up roughly **two-thirds** of the more than **300 foreign-invested research and development centers** in Israel. ([U.S. Embassy Jerusalem](#))
- More than **\$150 billion** was invested by Israeli companies in the US between 2010 and 2015 (more than **\$25.1 billion** in 2015 alone). ([BESA Center](#))
- Israel functions as a **force and dollar multiplier**—a battle-tested R&D hub and showroom for U.S. defense technology. The partnership boosts exports, creates American jobs, and reduces the need for costly U.S. deployments. ([The Ettinger Report](#))

Quotes

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“Israel is the largest US aircraft carrier, which does not require American soldiers on board, cannot be sunk, and is deployed in a most critical region, economically and militarily, sparing the US the need to manufacture, deploy and maintain more real aircraft carriers and additional ground divisions, which would cost the US some \$15 billion annually.” — General Alexander Haig and Admiral Elmo Zumwalt

"I could not have procured the intelligence . . . with five CIAs," — General George F. Keegan

Takeaway

The U.S. doesn't give *foreign aid* to Israel—it makes a **high-return investment** in a regional ally that saves American money, resources, and lives. Israel's strength extends America's reach and security, making support for Israel one of the **“America First”** policies Washington maintains.

The Lie: Americans who support military aid to Israel are not America First because they don't have America's best interests at heart.

The Truth: America's military aid to Israel benefits America directly to the estimated tune of \$48 billion. Ending such aid isn't America First—it's America Only.

Background: On November 12th, Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA) told Megyn Kelly she demands ending foreign aid to all other countries—singling out Israel—because she is America First, and suggested that anyone who disagrees is MIGA (Make Israel Great Again), not MAGA. This is a common refrain among a faction of the Right.

Truth Explained:

Under the current arrangement, the United States provides \$3.8 billion in military assistance to Israel annually. The stipulation is that Israel must spend 75% of these funds on American products and services, which bolsters the US economy. ([White House](#))

Israel has key pro-US geo-strategic features that are not typical of other allies: Israel's geo-strategic location; Israel's posture of deterrence, which is critical for the survival of Jordan's pro-US Hashemite regime and other pro-US Arab regimes; Israel's proven defense and commercial technological capabilities; Israel's contributions to the research & development, exports, employment and superiority of the US defense industries and high tech sector; Israel's rapid and massive self-manned troop mobilization; Israel's game—changing, pro-active military track record has advanced US interests.

General George Keegan, a former Chief of US Air Force Intelligence assessed that the intelligence shared by Israel with the US equals to 5 CIAs. The annual budget of one CIA is around \$15bn;

Israel's unconditional identification with the US by the vast majority of Israel's public and political establishment (L and R, secular and religious).

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According to General Haig, if there were not Israel in the Middle East, then the US would have to invest \$15bn-\$20bn annually (instead of \$3.8bn annual investment in Israel) for the manufacturing of a few real aircraft carriers. These carriers would be deployed to the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean, accompanied by a few ground divisions, in order to shield US soil from the wrath of Islamic terrorism, secure US' economic interests, sustain the survival of the US' Arab allies, and constrain China and Russia.

Israel's role as a strategic asset is underscored, when comparing the \$3.8bn annual US investment in Israel to the cost of manufacturing new aircraft carriers: \$10bn-\$13bn for one supercarrier, while smaller carriers may cost \$2.5bn-\$9bn each. Moreover, deploying and operating a carrier, including a full carrier strike group of destroyers, frigates, submarines, and support vessels, incurs annual costs of \$900mn-1.2bn. In addition, the annual cost of deploying a single US ground division to the Middle East is \$2bn, excluding the cost of munition and missiles, with higher costs in combat-intense or logistically complex environments.

The bottom line

The US annual investment in – not foreign aid to – Israel yields a uniquely high Return-on-Investment (R-o-I) by Israel, which is acting as a force and dollar multiplier for the US economy and defense. Israel is also performing as the most productive battle-tested research and development center, as well as the showroom of the US defense and aerospace industries, and an innovation center, sharing ground-breaking battle tactics with the US Armed Forces.

Israel's military and intelligence capabilities have reduced the need for US military deployments in the region, enhancing the safety of US soldiers.

Israel's military, intelligence and technological capabilities – unmatched by any other ally of the US – have significantly lessened the burden on the US military in the Middle East, saving substantial US resources and lives, and facilitating the diversion of US resources to other regions.

The intense collaboration between Israel and the US military has dramatically expanded since January 2021, when Israel joined CENTCOM (which oversees US military interests in the Middle East, Central Asia and parts of South Asia), upgrading the performance of both the US and Israel.