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## US Defense Aid

### US to fund defense systems for Israel

**Congress to vote on DoD budget proposal asking for tens of millions of dollars for development, purchase of new systems to defend Israeli skies against ballistic missiles**

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**WASHINGTON** – The 2008 budget for the US Department of Defense includes the allocation of tens of millions of dollars for Israel to either independently develop or purchase existing defense systems to counter possible ballistic rocket attacks.

The new system would be used in addition to Israel's existing sophisticated 'Arrow' system, a project the US continues to fund.

On Thursday the House Appropriations Committee voted to give Israel an additional \$70 million in defense aid beyond the \$80 million requested by the administration.



Arrow missile test  
Photo courtesy of the  
Israeli Aircraft  
Industry

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**Arrow system being tested**

Should the budget pass both the House and Senate votes, Israel stands to receive no less than \$150 million. These funds are not part of the 'regular' US defense aid budget for Israel, which stands at \$2.4 billion.

Israeli ambassador to the US, Salai Meridor, who worked along with other Israeli diplomats to increase funding for Israel's ballistic defense systems, welcomed the decision.

It would provide \$25 million more for Arrow missile co-production and integration, \$135 million to buy a Theater High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, fire unit and \$45 million for a US-Israeli short-range missile defense system dubbed "David's Sling."

David's Sling, a collaborative effort between Israel's RAFAEL (Armaments Development Authority)

and US military contractor Raytheon, is expected to be operational within four years and is designed to defend against Fajar missiles, which during the Second Lebanon War were fired at Israeli cities. The system does not provide defense against the shorter range Katyusha rockets however.

All three projects involve interceptors designed to shoot down ballistic missiles in the terminal phase of their flight paths.

The Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance, a booster group funded partly by companies involved in building missile shields, applauded the initiative to further integrate US and Israeli missile defenses.

"The more missile defense systems deployed the safer and more stable it is for the United States, our allies and our friends," said Riki Ellison, the group's president.

**Reuters contributed to this report**

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