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Unipolar Patronage to Strategic Liability? Reassessing U.S Support for Israel in an Era of Great Power Rivalry

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A R T I C L E I N F O

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A B S T R A C T

The long-standing cornerstone of Washington's Middle East strategy, the U.S.-Israel partnership, is under more scrutiny than ever before as great power competition against China and Russia redefines American strategic objectives. This article reexamines whether Israel is an essential ally or is becoming a geopolitical liability in an era of energy transitions, multipolarity, and the end of U.S. unipolar hegemony. Based on current Israeli innovation linkages with Beijing, cable leaks, and defense spending assessments (SIPRI 2023), we continue to believe that three policy developments are rewriting the alliance: (1) Israel's heightened collaboration with the BRICS countries, particularly in the sale of AI and drone technology to China; (2) the erosion of bipartisan congressional support as a result of ideological shifts across generations (Pew 2023); (3) the contradiction between Israel's stringent defense strategy and the US's insistence that Arab allies limit Iranian expansion. Mearsheimer's (2021) "Strategic Overextension" lens is used in the research to pinpoint underlying tensions in U.S. Israeli relations as intelligence sharing and military interoperability grow. It, therefore, recommends a move toward interest-based conditionality collaboration and away from unqualified patronage. The findings shed light on how long allies last after changes in power and offer suggestions for strategy in the management of Middle Eastern alliances in the context of the US-China rivalry.

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INTRODUCTION

This article examines the shifting strategic calculus of the U.S.-Israel partnership as structural forces reshape both countries' foreign policy goals. The traditional rationale for U.S. assistance, which was based on pro-Israel lobbying (Mearsheimer & Walt 2007), shared democratic values, and Soviet containment during the Cold War (Spiegel 1985), now clashes with the realities of the twenty-first century. The Biden administration's cautious response to Israel's denial of Ukraine's demands for military assistance on October 18, 2023, highlighted a silent test: Can Washington continue to spend $3.8 billion annually on Israel's military (CRS 2023) while prioritizing great power struggle against China? China's $17 billion infrastructure investments in Israel (2015–2022), such as Huawei's 5G contracts and the Haifa port project, serve as an example of Jerusalem's practical diversification (Efron et al. 2022). The 2023 Jeddah Summit's failure demonstrates the impasse between the United States' aim for Saudi-Israeli reconciliation in order to trap Iran and Riyadh's demand for Palestinian concessions. Leaning in the direction of concepts According to Brookings, 67% of American millennials favor conditional assistance, which contrasts with Netanyahu's illiberal strategy (2023).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Since Israel sold Azerbaijan a drone in 2024 during U.S.-Russia tensions over Ukraine, our research demonstrates that while Israel still has intelligence value (e.g., counterterrorism, cyber power), its actions in U.S. internal politics and BRICS advancements are pushing the relationship further. This goes one step further and incorporates Allison's (2015) "Thucydides Trap": the adaptation of patron-client relations in the face of peer rivals. There are four steps in this analysis: The alliance's foundations from the unipolar era are first tracked; then, three post-2020 stress points (tech leakage, Gaza diplomacy expenditures, and congressional polarization) are described; third, alternative strategic configurations are modeled; and lastly, a tiered cooperation architecture that aligns with U.S. Indo-Pacific interests is suggested. In addition to contributing to current policy insights, the paper advances IR theory in alliance scholarship. It was published promptly, even as Washington balanced 2024 assistance conditionality proposals.

METHODOLOGY

Mearsheimer's (2021) "Strategic Overextension" lens is used in this study to show the tensions that pervade the US-Israel relationship as intelligence sharing and military interoperability increase. Therefore, this lens recommends a move towards conditional, interest-based collaboration and away from unconditional patronage. The findings shed light on how long allies persist after a change in power and offer suggestions for strategies in managing the Middle East region in the context of US-China competition.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Crucial Elements of the Strategic Alliance between the United States and Israel

The strategic partnership between the United States and Israel, which is founded on shared interests, democratic ideals, and values, is a cornerstone of both nations' foreign strategies. This collaboration spans the political, military, and economic domains, with Security collaboration as one of the prime tenets. The United States provides Israel with substantial military aid, which helps the nation maintain its qualitative military advantage (QME) in a hazardous area. Israel requires this support to defend itself against external threats, especially those presented by adversarial neighbors and non-state actors such as Hamas and Hezbollah. Strong economic ties between the United States and Israel are supported by the U.S.-Israel Free Trade Agreement, the first of its kind signed by the United States, which has encouraged innovation, research, and technology sharing, particularly in the areas of cybersecurity, healthcare, and the military.

The two countries collaborate closely on intelligence cooperation, counterterrorism, and Middle East strategic projects, such as containing Iran's nuclear aspirations. The partnership also reflects the larger geopolitical environment, in which Israel is a crucial partner of the United States in a strategically significant region. The relationship between the United States and Israel is often complex, with an emphasis on political alignment, economic cooperation, and security. Together, they forge a strong alliance in international affairs.

"As if by a law of nature, every century a country emerges with the power, desire, and moral aspiration to shape the international system according to its values," writes Henry Kissinger in his widely known book Diplomacy. Henry Kissinger (1994: 525)

The United States had the most profound and varied impact on global politics during the 20th century. In addition to promoting a collective security ideology that pushed the creation of alliances like NATO to combat current and emerging threats, America's Middle East containment strategy aimed to stop Soviet expansionism on a worldwide scale.

The relationship between the United States and Israel has a significant impact on the history and politics of the modern world. Several of Israel's most significant military and economic successes have been explicitly attributed to the United States. The strong relations between the United States and Israel are based on shared democratic values, religious affiliations, security concerns, and collaboration on a variety of economic, scientific, and military issues. Many people felt morally responsible and liable for the 6 million Jews who died during the Holocaust after World War II.

International support for the establishment of the State of Israel was greatly increased by this feeling. In 1947, the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 181 (II) on November 29th, which advocated for the partition of Palestine into two states: an Arab state and a Jewish state. The territory had previously been dominated by the British. The intended division was supported

by the US, the Soviet Union, and countries in both Eastern and Western Europe. [Zabakhidze Inga (2023): 44]

On May 14, 1948, at 6:01 p.m., the State of Israel was proclaimed. At 6:11 p.m., just eleven minutes later, Washington formally recognized the new state "de facto". Given Washington's view of Israel as a strategic asset, it is easy to comprehend this unusual pace of expanding its influence in the region. The Soviet Union offered "de jure" recognition on May 17. [Inga Zabakhidze 2023: 49–50].

Meanwhile, commercial connections between Saudi Arabia and the US quickly overshadowed political involvement. Formal diplomatic ties were established in 1939. U.S. policy in the Middle East was significantly shaped by oil interests. The rapid expansion of American oil companies became powerful proponents of closer political ties between Saudi Arabia and the United States as a result of Saudi Arabia's oil production.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt was notified in February 1943 that Saudi Arabia had the world's greatest oil reserves. A week later, he extended the Lend-Lease Act to Saudi Arabia and stated that the kingdom was essential to American defense capabilities. Despite officially remaining neutral throughout World War II, Saudi Arabia kept cordial ties with the Allies.

At President Roosevelt's request, future Saudi kings Faisal and Khaled paid a formal visit to the United States in the fall of 1943. During their visit, Roosevelt and Ibn Saud maintained constant communication, and it was decided to establish An American military facility in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. This site was the first American military installation in the Middle East when it opened in 1946. During their visit, the princes went to the New York Stock Exchange, Princeton University, Hollywood, a naval station, and significant industrial centers.

After their U.S. trip, they went to the United Kingdom, where King George VI greeted them, and then to Algeria, where they met with General Charles de Gaulle. The lessons learned from these discussions strengthened the Saudi monarchy family's conviction that the United States was the most powerful country and controlled the postwar international system. [192–205 in Henry Kissinger, 2021].

Israel's provisional government led by David Ben-Gurion was officially recognized as a sovereign state by U.S. President Harry Truman in 1948. In addition to solidifying its position as one of the wealthiest nations in the world, Israel strengthened ties with the US in the ensuing years, which had a big impact on Israel's foreign policy, political conduct, and internal issues. It is important to highlight Israel's significant role in U.S. foreign policy. Despite its small size, Israel boasts one of the strongest economies in the region and a vibrant, culturally varied population. It produced advanced nuclear weapons and was the largest annual receiver of U.S. foreign aid since 1976, giving it a distinct advantage over other recipients of assistance. American foreign policy toward Israel has historically been influenced by the strong Jewish lobby in the US, which has helped to guarantee that subsequent US administrations have consistently maintained a pro-Israel stance.

The Relationship between the United States and Israel has Experienced Both Highs and Lows Over the Years

U.S. administrations have disagreed on key issues such as Israel's nuclear weapons and the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The two countries' partnership was significantly impacted by the change from the Democratic Obama administration to the Republican Trump administration, particularly in terms of policy orientation and diplomatic tone. Many Jews turned to the US as a last resort after the Holocaust during World War II showed that Europe was unable to protect its Jewish citizens. Today, the United States has the largest Jewish population outside of Israel.

Under Dwight D. Eisenhower's leadership in the 1950s (1953–1961), American concerns over Israeli security decreased after Israel was established in 1948. He was friendly with both the U.S. and Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion. Tight ties existed with Israel during the 1956 Suez Crisis. But after the 1958 Iraqi revolution, Washington began to see Israel's stability and democratic values as strategic assets in a dangerous Middle East. [Robert O. Freedman (2012): 232].

The "Eisenhower Doctrine" was established under President Eisenhower to shield the Middle East from Soviet influence, particularly in nations that rely on the region's energy resources. But the government's blatantly anti-communist foreign policy

Why Sanctions Against Israel's Illegal Occupation Must be Led by the United States

The international world, led by the United States and its allies, must choose between enforcing a historic court decision and risking peace under an assertive Israeli government, as the Middle East is on the brink of full-scale conflict. Only a few weeks ago, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) published an advisory ruling denouncing Israel's ongoing occupation of the Palestinian territories and calling for its cessation "as rapidly as possible." Relocating Israeli citizens into occupied regions, seizing Palestinian land, and exploiting natural resources for Israeli settlers' profit is only a few of Israel's unlawful practices. The opinion states that these acts violate the Fourth Geneva Convention and the Hague Regulations. U.S. sanctions have been slow and ineffectual thus far in their efforts to curb settlement violence and instability. On February 1st, US President Joe Biden issued Executive Order 14115 in response to threats to "peace, security, and stability in the West Bank." The most powerful aspect of U.S. sanctions is often the frightening ambiguity of their reach, which forbids Americans and discourages non-Americans from interacting with the sanctions' targets. The initial set of sanctions focused on just four people. Even though the sanctions targets were not American companies, Israeli banks promptly ceased doing business with them. This action had a bad effect on Israel. The U.S. Treasury Department then delivered a letter of guidelines to the Bank of Israel in late March, suggesting that Israeli institutions could assist the violent settlers with basic needs like food and rent without being subject to sanctions.

History & Policy

During Israel's declaration of independence on May 14, 1948, President Harry Truman delivered a proclamation of recognition, making the United States the first nation to acknowledge Israel as an independent state. On March 28, 1949, U.S. Ambassador James Grover McDonald delivered his credentials, establishing diplomatic relations. Israel has remained America's most dependable Middle Eastern ally ever since. In addition to having a strong cultural and historical bond, Israel and the US have similar objectives.

Over $3 billion in foreign military funding annually sustains strong bilateral ties between the United States and Israel. The United States and Israel participate in a number of activities together, including joint military drills, military research, and weapons development, in addition to giving financial aid. The Semi-Annual Strategic Dialogue and the Joint Counterterrorism Group have also increased U.S.-Israel cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

Israel's biggest trading partner is the United States. Diamonds, machinery, agricultural items, aircraft, and optical and medical equipment are the top five U.S. exports to Israel. The top five items the US purchases from Israel are diamonds, medical and optical equipment, machinery, pharmaceuticals, and agricultural products. Similar to Israeli investment in the US, the majority of U.S. direct investment in Israel is focused on the manufacturing sector.

Since 1985, the free trade agreement between the United States and Israel has laid the groundwork for growing trade and investment between the two countries. This agreement encourages regulatory transparency and reduces trade barriers. The two nations meet once a year as a Joint Economic Development Group to review the status of the economy and potential reforms for the upcoming year to promote economic cooperation. Through the U.S.-Israeli Education Foundation, the Binational Science Foundation, and the Binational Agricultural Research and Development Foundation, the United States and Israel also organize cultural and scientific exchanges.

Alternatives to the Alien Tort Statute in US Human Rights Cases

In the post-ATS period, this section illustrates why state common law is a good substitute for federal law. State law claims are not subject to the same conceptual restrictions as federal law claims. The suitability of claims brought in state courts or under state law as a suitable venue for safeguarding rights in circumstances of serious injury is reinforced by the federal judiciary's increased application of federalism principles. The states' interests in hearing these cases, as noted by courts and academics, include safeguarding victims, preventing misbehavior, and holding firms and other organizations with their headquarters in their states accountable for the harm they generate.

The ATS's Demise and the Quest for Substitute Frameworks

Litigators and social movements are looking for additional frameworks and platforms to defend human rights because U.S. federal courts have no ability to hold American actors accountable for worldwide violations of international law. This search has become even more critical in recent years, especially in view of the June 2021 ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court in Nestlé USA, Inc. v. The ATS's capacity to file international human rights complaints in US federal courts was essentially abolished by Doe. Prior to Nestlé, the ATS

served as the main legal tool for holding people accountable for violating the rights of non-citizens in the US for forty years.

The ATS's exact statutory phrasing, which was passed as part of the 1789 Judiciary Act, reads as follows: "Any civil action by an alie for a tort only, committed in violation of the law of nations or a treaty, shall have original jurisdiction of the district courts." of the United States. After nearly two decades of silence, federal courts were finally allowed to examine claims from noncitizens for violations of international law committed by noncitizens outside of US territory in 1980 when Filártiga v. Peña-Irala, a landmark Second Circuit case, was decided. For international human rights cases in American courts, this marked a turning point.

Over the following four decades, survivors of international human rights violations filed a large number of ATS claims, and the body of legal literature pertaining to the ATS increased significantly. Under the ATS, plaintiffs might file a lawsuit for serious, often pervasive violations. In ATS accusations, apartheid, torture, and genocide have all been referenced; these have sometimes been framed as crimes against humanity or war crimes. They are sometimes depicted as separate international violations of human rights, just like in Filártiga.

Phase 1: Israel as a Burden and at a Distance (1948–1967)

Between the founding of the State of Israel and the Six-Day War, American elites perceived the nascent Jewish state as an inadvertent intrusion on their country, while during the USSR war, Israel was perceived as an unwelcome burden, a tiresome duty. It is important to remember that during this time, no senior foreign policy figures, including national security advisors, CIA directors, U.S. ambassadors to the UN, or secretaries of state and defense, became ardent supporters of Israel. President Harry S. Truman recognized the Jewish State within eleven minutes of its creation because he did not want the Soviet Union to be the first government to do so. However, as quickly as possible after 1948, he also distanced himself from what he saw as a futile Arab-Israeli conflict.

The foreign policy community's fear and hostility against Israel were conveyed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in a way that others would only mutter. He primarily aimed to keep the US neutral toward Israel and the state of Israel. The Peres conference video's thirty seconds concentrated on his involvement to the extermination camps' liberation, which took occurred around eight years before he became president.

The link between Massada and the Alamo was always there. President John F. Kennedy claimed that the United States and Israel had a "special relationship," partly due to political pressure, but in reality, he was focused on more pressing issues like Berlin and Cuba. President Lyndon B. Johnson was the only president to leave a lasting impression during this period of his career, praising the nation for which he had "great admiration and affection." Israel also created a stark contrast with his accomplishments in the Pedernales, where he had also brought deserts to life. But when the moment came in 1967, he was preoccupied with Vietnam and content to let Israel handle matters. The

Vietnam War had an underestimated consequence in that it diverted American attention abroad, which spurred the brief Middle East conflict that would later play a major part in Arab-Israeli history. Up until long before the Six-Day War, American policy made sure that Israel received a lot of aid from other countries (such as Britain, France, Germany, and others), especially munitions. In reality, American armaments had little impact on Israel's victory.

Phase 2: American Uncertainty About Israel (1967–1992)

In any event, the War of Attrition in 1969–1970, in which Israel provided the US with Soviet weapons it had seized despite errors and losses, served to partially reinforce these causes. US-Israeli ties were significantly impacted by and would eventually shift as a result of the Six-Day War. The conflict provided a different viewpoint on Israel's possible advantages for US interests by demonstrating to US policymakers that Israel was, in fact, the most potent military force in the area. Another key reason was the crisis of September 1970, when King Hussein looked to be saved by the threat of Israeli participation in Jordan, especially in the event of a Syrian attack.

President Richard M. Nixon's ambivalence about Israel during his Secretary of State William Rogers's more traditional State Department strategy and National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger's opposing stances best exemplified the first term. Kissinger believed that the Arab-Israeli front would not progress until the Arabs, particularly the Egyptians, realized that the United States was the only country with authority over Israel and the Arab nations. Rogers and his allies criticized the customary policy of forcing Israel to make concessions to progress diplomatically.

For Rogers and his followers, the traditional strategy of applying pressure on Israel to make concessions to advance diplomatically was essential. But by the beginning of October, During the 1973 war, the United States concentrated on preventing Israeli preemption and lowering its growing dependency on Middle Eastern resources. "Old thinking" was constantly challenged by new ideas. The aftermath of the war, the Arab oil embargo, domestic gas lines, and the memory of a nuclear war between the US and the USSR may have contributed to the decline of American-Israeli relations, but instead, these events led to a number of positive outcomes, such as two disengagement agreements and, under President Gerald R. Ford, a major agreement between Egypt and Israel through Kissinger's famous "shuttle diplomacy." However, Ford also showed his annoyance with Israel in 1975 by carrying out a contentious but unresolved "reassessment" of US-Israeli ties. The Carter administration, which from the start viewed Israeli policy—then still under the Labor Party—as being overly strict and unyielding toward the Arab side, continued to harbor ambivalence toward Israel.

According to all of its major foreign policy leaders, promoting a comprehensive peace between Israel and the Arabs was the best way to address the energy dilemma. The process of negotiating an Israeli-Egyptian peace accord, supported by the Likud's ascent to power under Menachem Begin, strengthened the widely held belief in the management of Israeli intransigence. The first president to genuinely view Israel as an American strategic asset was

Ronald Reagan, whose belief was strengthened by the overthrow of the Shah. In a July essay published in the Washington Post, he explained his strategy in 1979. The initial simplicity of his convictions was brought into question, nonetheless, when he discovered that his administration's policies were different from Likud's after his first two years in office.

His new relationship with Israel, which he had first envisioned, only started to take shape with Prime Ministers Shamir and Peres in the last two-thirds of his presidency. The weakness of this new strategy toward Israel was exemplified by the disagreements with Israel over the sale of AWACS aircraft to Saudi Arabia during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in mid-1982, especially against the Israeli prime minister and Shamir's tardiness on the Palestinian issue. Despite the minister's fervent support for settlements, the government was led by the notion that Israeli policy was a net disadvantage to US interests in the region, a belief that was firmly held during the Ford and Carter administrations. Bush would probably have been more lenient toward Israel under Yitzhak Rabin, particularly with regard to loan guarantees, but the administration's core values were similar to those of the 1970s, with a nod to Eisenhower's strategy in the conviction that Israel was largely to blame for the setbacks and that an Arab-Israeli solution was necessary for American policy success in the region. Once more, the argument was made that American policy should not be too strongly associated with Israel.

One of the best examples of Bush and Baker's diplomatic skills is their ability to forge a broad regional alliance against Saddam Hussein of Iraq in the run-up to the Persian Gulf War, which was later validated by their organization of the Madrid Conference in 1991 and the subsequent bilateral and international discussions. Since then, observers have come to believe that if Bush had been reelected, this could have resulted in an agreement between Israel and the Palestinians and/or Syria and Israel during his second term.

Regardless of the veracity of that argument (which, of course, we will never know for sure) from the perspective of American interests, what matters to us is that the Bush administration shared many of its predecessors' ambivalence regarding Israel and its actions.

Phase 3: Israel's Embrace (1993)

The renowned American-Israeli alliance that was highlighted at the Peres Conference in May began with Bill Clinton's election to the presidency in 1993 and his unwavering support for Israel. Bush the younger served two terms as president, but this pattern has continued. Both presidents saw Israel as a genuine ally and partner of the United States, regardless of the contrasts in their approaches, levels of diplomatic experience, and the fundamental principles of their foreign policies.

It is astounding how little this fundamental premise was challenged during the initial few months of the Bush administration and the Netanyahu prime ministership in the mid-1990s, with a few noteworthy exceptions. The general consensus now attributes the issues the US faced to Arab diplomacy and violence, despite the fact that state secretaries occasionally attempt to realign Israeli behavior.

This stance appeared unthinkable until the middle of the Reagan administration, when the Arab side was subtly held responsible for the Reagan peace plan's failure and the disintegration of the nascent peace agreement between Israel and Lebanon.

Key Information on US Military Assistance to Israel

The primary source of money for the IDF's force augmentation is military assistance, which is provided through the US Department of Defense's joint project funding component and the foreign military finance (FMF) program, which is primarily focused on anti-missile defense. Additionally, the US allows Israel to use its supplies of American weapons inside its borders in times of conflict, boosting Israel's stockpile, and Israel receives special military aid based on need.

Additionally, local industries produce American weapons designated for Israel, and American corporations participate in reciprocal purchasing from Israeli industry (although this is not required by the aid MOUs). For example, as part of the procurement agreements, the Americans agreed to buy equipment from Israeli companies that produce the Adir (F-35) stealth fighter. The 2016 MOU lists the various types of military aid allotments for 2009–2018 and the 2019–2028 plan in Table 1 below. The third 10-year aid program (2019-2028) began with the 2019 U.S. fiscal year and provides $3.8 billion in aid annually, of which $3.3 billion comes from FMF and $500 million from the Department of Defense's share of joint projects. According to the MOU figures, the 2019–2028 program differs from its predecessor (2008–2018) primarily in the following areas:

1. From $3.1 billion in 2018 to $3.3 billion beginning in 2019, FMF grew from $30 billion in the previous decade to $33 billion in the next decade. Most likely, the purpose of the nominal increase is to offset the impact of inflation on the aid's value.
2. From $815 million in 2019 to zero in 2028, the portion of aid that Israel can convert into shekels for use in purchasing from its industries will progressively decline (a sharp decline is planned to start in 2025). Consequently, Israel will be able to spend a larger portion of the aid in US currency.
3. The United States now views this money as part of the assistance package, not only a partnership to finance the development and production of weapons, as the 10-year aid package contained $500 million in annual US support for Israel-US Department of Defense cooperative programs for the first time. The American support based on collaborative projects from 2009 to 2018 is listed in Table 2.
4. This clause specifies that American aid is not meant for the purchase of refined oil products from the United States and also removes the budgetary cap in shekels on Israel's defense budget.

Table 1. Shows the US Military Aid Budget for Israel From 2009 To 2028 (in US dollars)

US fiscal year	**United States procurement assistance**	**Converting aid into shekels**	**Total FMF**	**The portion of US cash allocated to cooperative missile interception initiatives**	**Total**
2009	1,879	671	2,550	177	2,727
2010	2,045	730	2,775	202	2,977
2011	2,211	789	3,000	415	3,415
2012	2,266	809	3,075	306	3,381
2013	2,169	774	2,943	447	3,390
2014	2,285	815	3,100	729	3,829
2015	2,285	815	3,100	620	3,720
2016	2,285	815	3,100	488	3,588
2017	2,285	815	3,100	601	3,701
2018	2,285	815	3,100	706	3,806
The sum for the ten years	21,995	7,848	29,843	4,691	34,534
2019	2,485	815	3,300	500	3,800
2020	2,495	805	3,300	500	3,800
2021	2,505	795	3,300	500	3,800
2022	2,515	785	3,300	500	3,800
2023	2,525	775	3,300	500	3,800
2024	2,575	725	3,300	500	3,800
2025	2,850	450	3,300	500	3,800
2026	3,050	250	3,300	500	3,800
2027	3,050	250	3,300	500	3,800
2028	3,300	0	3,300	500	3,800
Total for the decade	27,350	5,650	33,000	5,000	38,000

Source: Congressional Research Service and the Israel Defense Budget

Table 2. US$ Millions Allocated to Cooperative Missile Interception Initiatives

US fiscal year	**Arrow 1,2,3**	**The Sling of David**	**The Iron Dome**	**Total**
2009	104.3	72.9		177.2
2010	122.3	80.1		202.4
2011	125.4	84.7	205.0	415.1
2012	125.2	110.5	70.0	305.7
2013	115.5	137.5	194.0	447.0
2014	119.1	149.7	460.3	729.1
2015	130.9	137.9	351.0	619.8
2016	146.1	286.5	55.0	487.6
2017	272.2	266.5	62.0	600.7
2018	392.3	221.5	92.0	705.8
2019	243	187	70	500

Analysis of U.S. Trade with Israel, 2022

1. Reported imports and exports by the U.S. Census Bureau: In 2022, U.S. imports and exports to Israel grew for the second year in a row. U.S. exports increased 10.4% ($1.3 billion) to $14.2 billion, while imports increased 14.6% ($2.7 billion) to $21.4 billion. Between 2021 and 2022, the trade imbalance grew by 24.1% ($1.4 billion) to $7.2 billion. Israel was responsible for 0.7% of all U.S. exports to Israel ($2.1 trillion) and 0.7% of all U.S. imports ($3.2 trillion) from all countries in 2022. In 2022, the U.S. exported $4.0 billion worth of stone, glass, metals, and pearls to Israel, which accounted for 3.8% of its global exports. In 2022, Israel supplied $6.7 billion in metals, glass, pearls, and stones to the United States, making up 5.4% of all U.S. imports.
2. BIS export data In 2022: Encryption was the most commonly used licensing exception under the Export Administration Regulations (EAR). Of all exports to Israel that used licensing exceptions, $519.7 million were made under an ENC license, followed by Servicing and Replacement of Parts and Equipment (RPL) ($39.5 million; 5.9%) and Group B Countries (GBS) ($77.6 million; 11.5%). In 2022, U.S. exports to Israel under a BIS license exception totaled $673.1 million, up 38.6% from $485.6 million in 2021.
3. BIS licensing data: In 2022, Israel received 2.8% of all export license applications worldwide, excluding those for deemed4 exports. Not including presumed transfers of technology and source code to Israeli individuals in the United States or made as deemed reexports in a third country, BIS reviewed 1,110 export license applications totaling $1.4 billion for Israel in 2022 for applications involving commodities, software, and technology. BIS approved 1,028 of them, totaling $1.38 billion for Israel, with a 92.6% approval rate. Three license applications for Israel were rejected by BIS. The rest were RWAs (returned unanswered). In 2022, BIS evaluated three considered export applications involving Israeli persons, which accounted for 0.2% of all deemed export applications worldwide; all three of these applications were approved. The most frequently used permitted Export Control Classification Number (ECCN) on licenses for Israel in 2022 was 9A610; 3A611 Military Electronics has 82 licenses, 3A001 Military Aircraft and Related Commodities has 107 permissions, and 3A001 Electronic Items has 106 permits (see List of Items Controlled).

Total U.S.-Israeli Trade

The United States imported $18.7 billion from Israel in 2021, up 22.3% ($3.4 billion), while exporting $12.8 billion to Israel increased 25.8% ($2.6 billion) from 2020. To reach $5.8 billion, the trade gap grew by 15.2% ($770.9 million).In 2022, U.S. imports and exports to Israel grew for the second year in a row. U.S. exports increased 10.4% ($1.3 billion) to $14.2 billion, while imports increased 14.6% ($2.7 billion) to $21.4 billion.

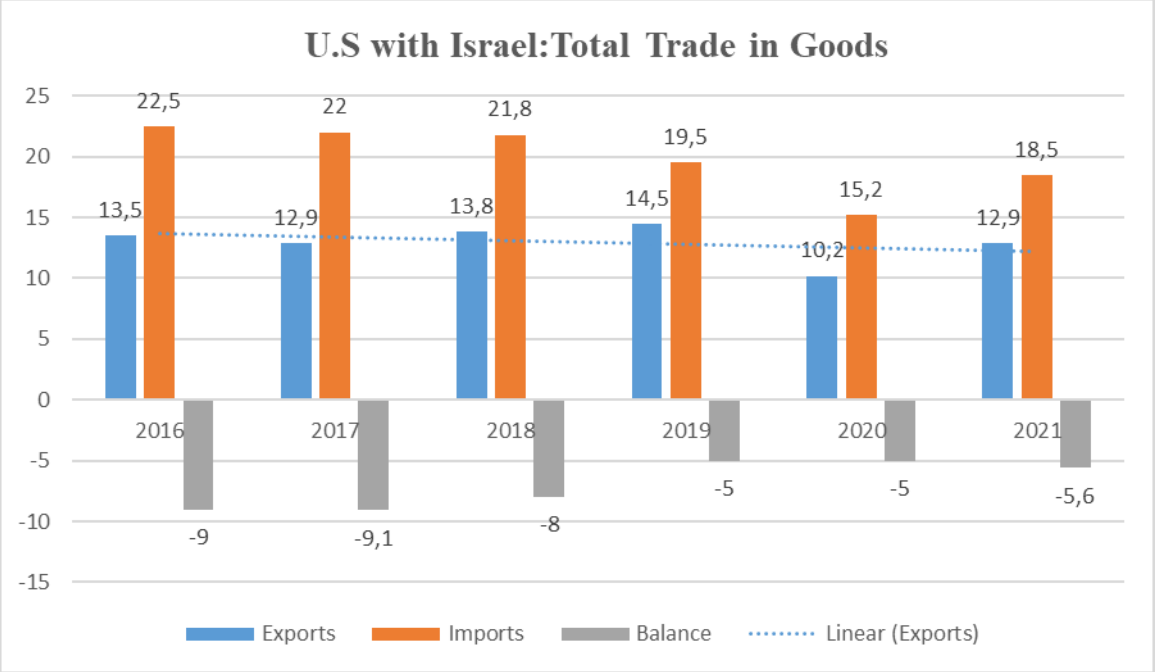

Figure 1. U.S with Israel: Total Trade in Goods

In 2021, U.S. imports from Israel are below the previous five-year average level, while U.S. exports to Israel are greater than the previous five-year average level by value not adjusted for inflation. For the past six years, there has been a persistent trade imbalance between the United States and Israel.

Table 3. The Values in Millions of Dollars

	2016	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2016-2020 Average**
EXPORTS	$13,199.4	$12,547.6	$13,709.4	$14,402.6	$10,188.2	$12,820.4	$12,809.4
value	--	-$651.9	$1,161.8	$693.2	-$4,214.3	$2,632.2	
pct	--	-4.9%	9.3%	5.1%	-29.3%	25.8%	
IMPORTS	$22,203.1	$21,945.0	$21,786.3	$19,531.1	$15,247.2	$18,650.3	$20,142.5
value	--	-$258.1	-$158.7	-$2,255.2	-$4,283.9	$3,403.1	
pct	--	-1.2%	-0.7%	-10.4%	-21.9%	22.3%	
BALANCE	($9,003.6)	($9,397.4)	($8,076.9)	($5,128.6)	($5,059.0)	($5,829.9)	($7,333.1)
value	--	($393.8)	$1,320.5	$2,948.3	$69.6	($770.9)	
pct	--	4.4%	-14.1%	-36.5%	-1.4%	15.2%	

The U.S. imported $18.7 billion worth of goods from Israel in 2021, including 29.3% of stone, glass, metals, and pearls, followed by mechanical appliances and equipment (21.1%) and commodities composed of leather, rubber, plastics, and chemicals (19.5%). Chemicals, Plastics, Rubber, and Leather Products (11.9%), Stone, Glass, Metals, and Pearls (24.5%), and Machinery and Mechanical Appliances (30.1%) accounted for the main commodity sectors of the $12.8 billion in U.S. exports to Israel in 2021.

Table 4. U.S. Census Bureau USA Trade Portal February 15, 2022

Imports from Israel by Sector $18,650,322,974	**Israel Commodity Trade 2021 Total Value All Commodities**	**US exports to Israel by Sector $12,820,429,334**
2.4%	Agriculture (Chapters 01-24)	5.34%
0.5%	Oils, Minerals, Lime, Cement (Chapters 25-27	3.6%
19.5%	Chemicals, Plastics, Rubber, Leather (Chapters 28-43)	11.9%
0.5%	Wood, Cork, Paper, Printed Books (Chapters 44-49)	0.7%
1.7%	Textiles, Footwear, Headgear (Chapters 50-67)	0.6%
29.3%	Stone, Glass, Metals, Pearls (Chapters 68-71)	24.5%
2.9%	Base Metals, Iron, Steel, Tools (Chapters 72-83)	2.1%
21.1%	Machinery & Mechanical Appliances (Chapters 84-85)	30.1%
2.4%	Transportation Equipment (Chapters 86-89)	9.2%
11.0%	Optical, Measuring, Medical, Other Instruments (Chapters 90-92	5.9%
0.9%	Arms & Ammunition (Chapter 93)	2.4%
1.4%	Miscellaneous Manufactured Items (Chapters 94-96)	0.6%
0.1%	Art, Collectors' Pieces, Antiques (Chapter 97)	0.3%
6.3%	Special Items (Chapters 98)	2.8%

0.7% of all U.S. exports went to Israel in 2021, while 0.7% of all U.S. imports came from Israel.

Trade in Arms and Ammunition between the United States and Israel

In 2021, Among the $18.7 billion in commodities that the United States imported from Israel were 29.3% of stone, glass, metals, and pearls, followed by mechanical appliances and equipment (21.1%) and goods composed of rubber, leather, plastics, and chemicals (19.5%). Chemicals, Plastics, Rubber, and Leather Products (11.9%), Stone, Glass, Metals, and Pearls (24.5%), and Machinery and Mechanical Appliances (30.1%) accounted for the main commodity sectors of the $12.8 billion in U.S. exports to Israel in 2021.

The United States and Israel Exchange Pearls, Metals, Glass, Stone

The U.S.-Israel trade in metals, glass, pearls, and stone grew in 2021. From $2.3 million in 2020 to $3.1 billion in 2021, the United States' exports grew by 37.5% ($856.4 million), or 3.3% of the country's total GDP. Global imports of certain commodities: U.S. imports accounted for 4.5% of global imports, totaling $5.5 billion, up 49.4% ($1.8 billion) from $3.7 billion in 2020.

U.S. Government Export Control on U.S. Exports to Israel

Of the $12.8 billion in U.S. exports to Israel in 2021, 6.2% were needed to have a BIS license, 2.4% were transported with a BIS license, and 0.4% were sold globally with a BIS license. The percentage of exports that were made with a BIS license exception was 3.8%; internationally, this percentage was 0.8%. Globally, 10.0% of exports were made using an ECCN without a license, whereas 19.3% of exports used an ECCN without a license.

- The percentage of articles in the Y 600 series that were exported under NLR was 0.1%; internationally, this percentage was 0.02%.
- 0.001% of items worldwide that had the subparagraph 0A501.y were exported under NLR, compared to 0.003% of items having that subparagraph.

Table 5. The Values are Expressed in Millions of Dollars

Israel			
	2019	2020	2021
State Department	$1,250.3	$1,058.1	$1,219.9
Other USG Organizations	$76.2	$56.7	$109.0
Commerce Department	$13,076.1	$9,072.8	$11,491.2
BIS Licensed	$397.3	$372.1	$307.7
Exceptions to the BIS License	$652.0	$473.0	$487.1
An ECCN is reported by NLR.	$4,153.9	$2,214.9	$2,451.8
No ECCN is reported by NLR.	$7,853.9	$5,987.0	$8,226.9
NLR for 600-Series ". y" paragraph	$19.0	$25.9	$17.7

Table 6. Automated Export System

Reasons for Control	Chemical and Biological Weapons			Nuclear Nonproliferation		National Security		Missile Tech	Regional Stability		Firearms Convention	Crime Control			AntiTerrorism	
	CB:1	CB:2	CB:3	NP:1	NP:2	NS:1	NS:2	MT:1	RS:1	RS:2	FC:1	CC:1	CC:2	CC:3	AT:1	AT:2
Israel	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X		

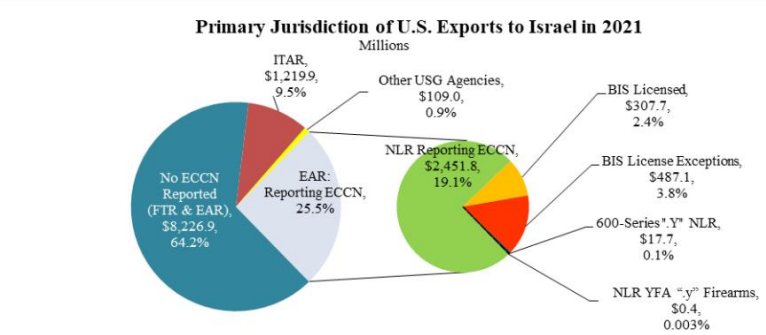

Figure 2. Primary Jurisdiction

In 2021,22, U.S. exports to Israel under a BIS license exception totaled $487.1 million, an increase of $3.0% ($14.1 million) from $473.0 million in 2020.

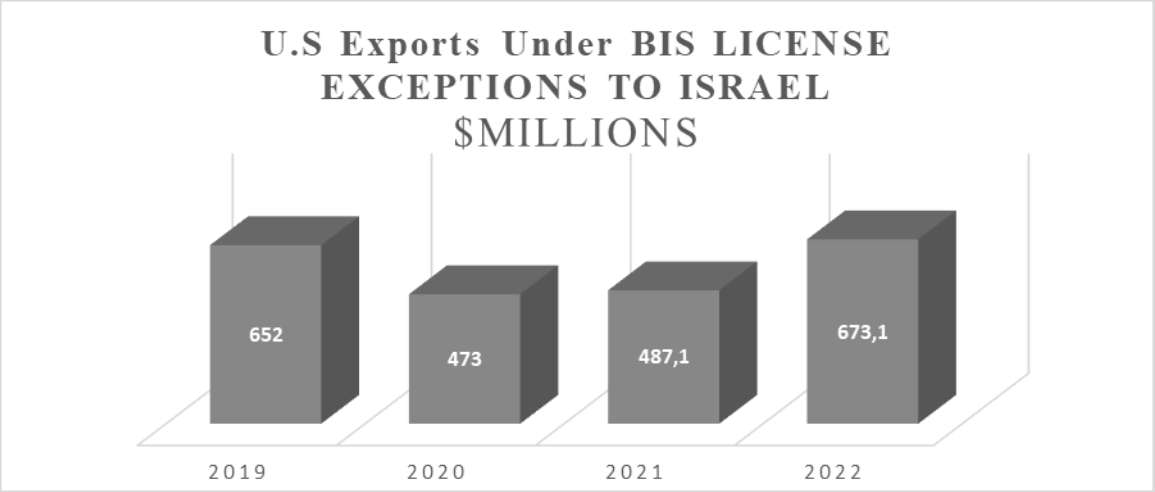

Figure 3. Automated Export System

Encryption Commodities & Software (ENC) had the biggest license exception in 2022, with $519.7 million (77.2% of all licensing exceptions for Israel). Serving and Replacement of Parts and Equipment (RPL) came in second with $39.5 million (5.9%), followed by Group B Countries (GBS) with $77.6 million (11.5%).

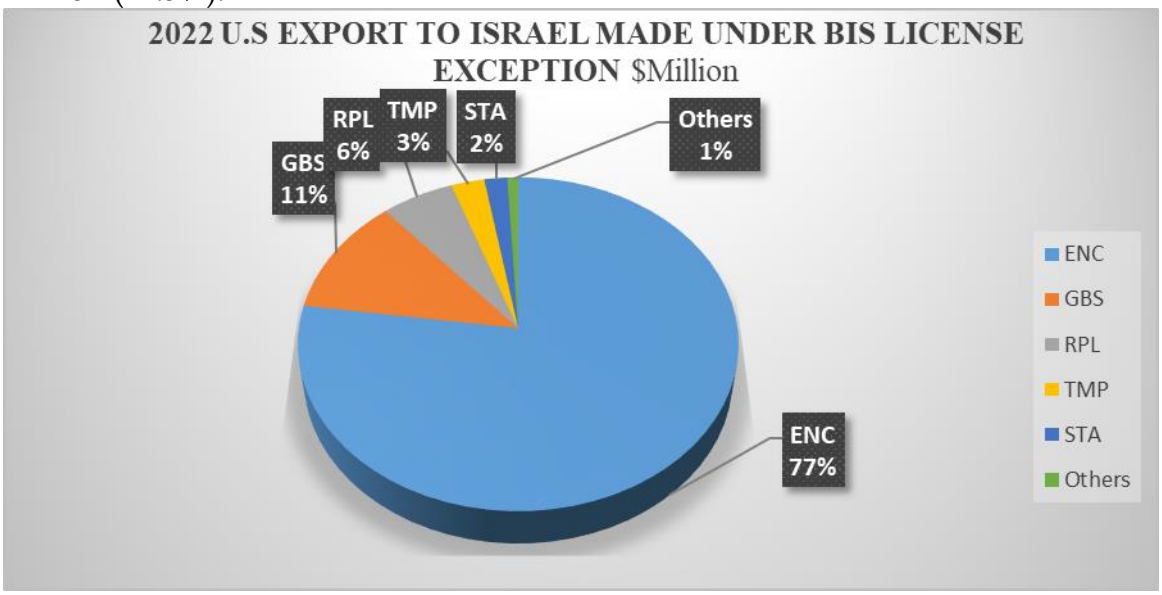

Figure 4. Automated Export System

Strategic Trade Authorization, or STA
ENC: Technology, software, and encryption products
RPL: Equipment and part maintenance and replacement
TMP: Short-term in-country imports, exports, re-exports, and transfers
GBS: Countries in Group B

In 2022, U.S. exports to Japan under the BIS license exception ENC totaled $519.7 million, a 34.7% increase over 2021's $385.8 million.

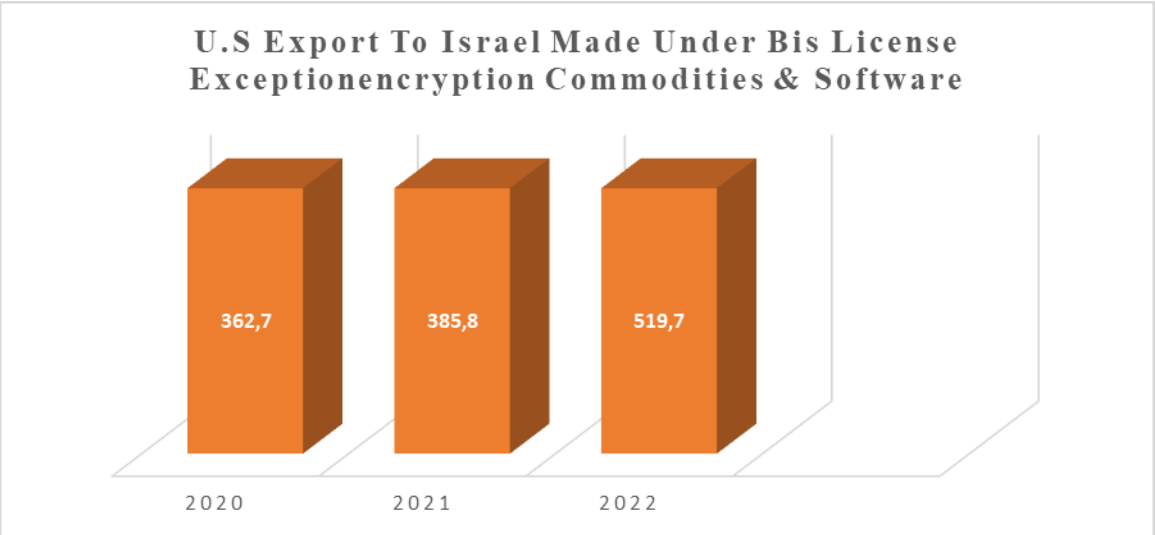

Figure 5. Automated Export System

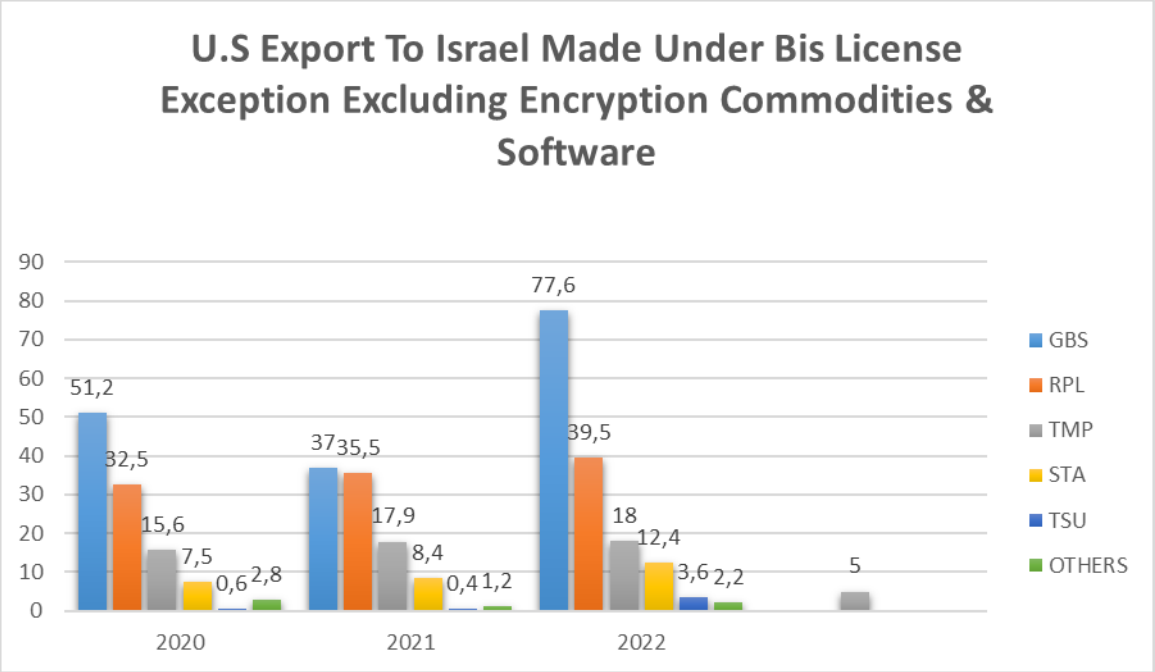

Figure 6. Automated Export System

The trade imbalance increased by 24.1% ($1.4 billion) to $7.2 billion between 2021 and 2022. The U.S. terms of trade dropped from 107.82 points in the third quarter to 107.45 points in the fourth quarter of 2024. Between 1967 and 2024, the U.S. terms of trade averaged 110.23 points, having risen to a peak of 165.48 points in the second quarter of 1968 and falling to a record low of 89.99 points in the third quarter of 2008. U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, cited

U.S Israel Trade Relations

The United States and Israel exchanged products worth an estimated $37.0 billion in 2024. The US exported $14.8 billion worth of goods to Israel in 2024, up $5.8% ($813.7 million) from 2023. America imported $22.2 billion worth of goods from Israel in 2024, up 6.7 percent ($1.4 billion) from 2023.

US Exports to Israel

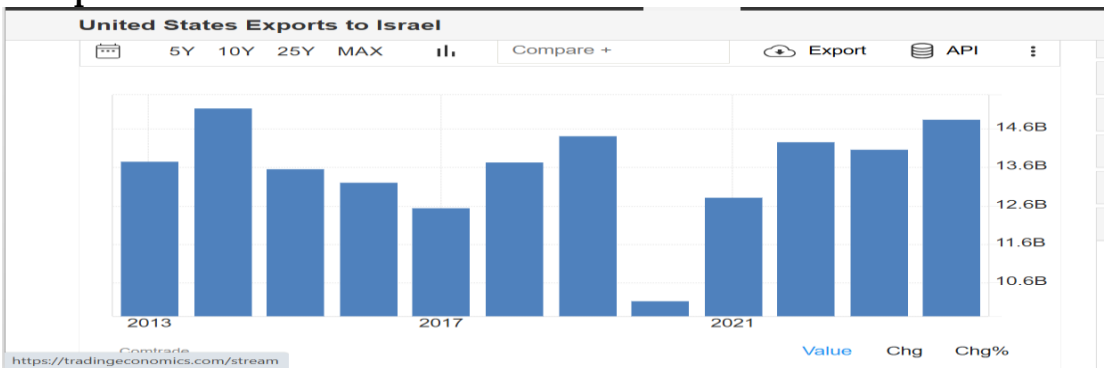

Figure 7. United States Exports to Israel

Export by Category

Table 7. US Exports to Israel

US Exports to Israel	Value	Year
Pearls, precious stones, metals, coins	$2.78B	2024
Electrical, electronic equipment	$2.22B	2024
Arms and ammunition, parts and accessories	$1.60B	2024
Machinery, nuclear reactors, boilers	$1.48B	2024
Aircraft, spacecraft	$1.12B	2024
Optical, photo, technical, medical apparatus	$992.68M	2024
Vehicles other than railway, tramway	$719.79M	2024
Commodities not specified according to kind	$498.11M	2024
Pharmaceutical products	$472.02M	2024
Plastics	$414.75M	2024
Photographic or cinematographic goods	$229.13M	2024
Articles of iron or steel	$176.43M	2024
Edible fruits, nuts, peel of citrus fruit, melons	$147.72M	2024
Organic chemicals	$139.29M	2024
Miscellaneous chemical products	$133.26M	2024
Residues, wastes of food industry, animal fodder	$105.62M	2024
Soaps, lubricants, waxes, candles, modelling pastes	$82.45M	2024
organic chemicals, precious metal compound, isotope	$78.03M	2024
Aluminum	$75.09M	2024
Essential oils, perfumes, cosmetics, toiletries	$68.54M	2024
Iron and steel	$60.70M	2024
Base metals not specified elsewhere, cermet's.	$51.25M	2024
Paper and paperboard, articles of pulp, paper and board	$49.67M	2024
Tools, implements, cutlery of base metal	$46.19M	2024
Miscellaneous edible preparations	$45.38M	2024
Nickel	$42.92M	2024
Tanning, dyeing extracts, tannins, derivatives, pigments	$42.13M	2024
Rubbers	$36.49M	2024
Furniture, lighting signs, prefabricated buildings	$35.98M	2024
Albuminoids, modified starches, glues, enzymes	$35.53M	2024
Oil seed, oleagic fruits, grain, seed, fruits	$33.50M	2024
Copper	$25.81M	2024
Cereal, flour, starch, milk preparations and products	$24.90M	2024
Footwear, gaiters and the like,	$24.24M	2024

Headgear and	$23.78M	2024
Railway, tramway locomotives, rolling stock, equipment	$22.40M	2024
Stone, plaster, cement, asbestos, mica or similar materials	$21.78M	2024
Explosives, pyrotechnics, matches, pyrophorics	$21.53M	2024
Vegetable, fruit, nut food preparations	$21.28M	2024
Toys, games, sports requisites		2024
Pulp of wood, fibrous cellulosic material, waste	$20.40M	2024
Wadding, felt, nonwovens, yarns, twine, cordage	$19.08M	2024
Miscellaneous articles of base metal	$19.05M	2024
Articles of apparel, not knit or crocheted	$18.20M	2024
Cereals	$17.68M	2024
Dairy products, eggs, honey, edible products	$15.00M	2024
Glass and glassware	$14.54M	2024
Wood and articles of wood, wood charcoal	$13.80M	2024
Meat and edible meat offal	$13.48M	2024
Manmade staple fibers	$12.52M	2024
Miscellaneous manufactured articles	$11.10M	2024
Articles of apparel, knit or crocheted	$10.98M	2024
Printed books, newspapers, pictures	$9.80M	2024
Works of art, collectors' pieces and antiques	$9.47M	2024
Articles of leather, animal gut, harness, travel good	$9.26M	2024
Beverages, spirits and vinegar	$9.25M	2024
Manmade filaments	$8.70M	2024
Ceramic products	$7.26M	2024
Edible vegetables and certain roots and tubers	$7.18M	2024
Ships, boats, and other floating structures	$6.79M	2024
Milling products, malt, starches, inline, wheat gluten	$6.25M	2024
Animal, vegetable fats and oils, cleavage products	$6.23M	2024
Cocoa and cocoa preparations	$5.70M	2024
Impregnated, coated or laminated textile fabric	$5.56M	2024
Sugars and sugar confectionery	$5.13M	2024
Meat, fish and seafood preparations	$4.72M	2024
Musical instruments, parts and accessories	$4.51M	2024
Other made textile articles, sets, worn clothing	$4.05M	2024
Fish, crustaceans, mollusks, aquatics invertebrates	$4.04M	2024
Salt, Sulphur, earth, stone, plaster, lime and cement	$3.91M	2024
Clocks and watches	$3.07M	2024
Fertilizers	$2.54M	2024
Raw hides and skins (other than foreskins) and leather	$2.36M	2024
Products of animal origin	$1.73M	2024
Lac, gums, resins	$1.53M	2024
Carpets and other textile floor coverings	$1.42M	2024
Coffee, tea, mate and spices	$1.17M	2024
Live animals	$1.17M	2024
Knitted or crocheted fabric	$703.44K	2024
Special woven or tufted fabric, lace, tapestry	$561.53K	2024
Cotton	$507.49K	2024
Ores slag and ash	$450.97K	2024

Bird skin, feathers, artificial flowers, human hair	$434.84K	2024
Lead	$429.16K	2024
Zinc	$339.59K	2024
Tin	$209.27K	2024
Vegetable textile fibers not specified elsewhere, paper yarn, woven fabric	$174.21K	2024
Fur skins and artificial fur, manufactures	$171.75K	2024
Wool, animal hair, horsehair yarn and fabric	$83.96K	2024
Umbrellas, walking-sticks, seat-sticks, whips	$83.80K	2024
Tobacco and manufactures tobacco substitutes	$50.03K	2024
Cork and articles of cork	$14.52K	2024
Live trees, plants, bulbs, roots, cut flowers	$9.02K	2024
Silk	$6.2K	2024
Vegetable plaiting materials, vegetable products	$3.12K	2024
Manufacturers of plaiting material, basketwork	$42.06K	2024

Table 8. United States

United States	Last	Previous	Highest	Lowest	Unit
Balance of Trade	-122.66	-130.65	1.95	-130.65	USD Billion
Current Account	-303.90	-310.30	9.96	-310.30	USD Billion
Current Account to GDP	-3.90	-3.30	0.20	-6.00	percent of GDP
Imports	401.12	401.16	401.16	0.58	USD Billion
Exports	278.46	270.51	278.46	0.77	USD Billion
External Debt	27629576.00	25798118.00	27629576.00	6570168.00	USD Million
Terms of Trade	107.45	107.82	165.48	89.99	points
Capital Flows	284700.00	-46600.00	398900.00	-194622.00	USD Million
Foreign Direct Investment	76241.00	73904.00	81456.00	-9988.00	USD Million
Net Long-term TIC Flows	112000.00	-42200.00	261938.00	-134889.00	USD Million
Gold Reserves	8133.46	8133.46	8149.05	8133.46	Tonnes
Crude Oil Production	13146.00	13451.00	13451.00	1097.00	BBL/D/1K
Auto Exports	101.10	64.40	131.10	11.40	Thousand
Current Account Services	76.05	73.22	78.59	-0.52	USD Billion
Current Account Goods	-326.08	-309.57	3.03	-332.00	USD Billion
Weekly Crude Oil Production	13458.00	13580.00	13631.00	3813.00	Thousand Barrels Per Day
Oil Exports	9150.00	9189.00	11664.04	0.00	USD Million
Weapons Sales	11287.00	15592.00	15883.00	1388.00	SIPRI TIV Million
Tourism Revenues	21799.00	22148.00	22255.00	3835.00	USD Million
Tourist Arrivals	5610249.00	6456562.00	8418370.00	248486.00	
Terrorism Index	3.52	4.14	7.39	3.52	Points
Goods Trade Balance	-147910.00	-155570.00	1492.00	-155570.00	USD Million

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In a period of global great power competition, the U.S.-Israeli alliance, which has long been the cornerstone of U.S. Middle East policy, is currently dealing with tensions never seen before. As previously mentioned, three covert changes are transforming the relationship from one of Cold War-era favoritism into a complex strategic burden:

1. Israel's deepening technology and economic links to U.S. competitors like China
2. Mounting costs of automatic military aid with the Washington pivot to Asia
3. Erosion of bipartisan domestic underpinnings for the special relationship

The data reveals an unsustainable paradox—while Israel is America's most powerful regional counterterror and intelligence-sharing partner, its stand-alone partnerships with BRICS nations and assertive security policy increasingly oppose U.S. efforts to contain Iran and isolate Russia. The $3.8 billion a year military aid package, once a strategic investment, now has the potential to embroil Washington in diversionary wars that deflect attention away from peer rivalry against China. This does not require renunciation of alliance but entails readjustment. A graded cooperation paradigm making aid contingent upon non-alignment with U.S. competitors but preserving intelligence collaboration more truly represents both governments' interests. The ideological exceptionalism that has historically defined U.S.-Israeli ties must also fade with the unipolar era. As Israel adjusts to a multipolar environment by diversifying its alliances, U.S. policymakers must also remap old commitments through the cold-eyed lens of 21st-century great power rivalry. The alliance's longevity ultimately rests on the realization that Middle Eastern alliances do not have to be gained at the expense of global strategic priorities. The future is transactional pragmatism: maintaining security cooperation where mutual interests persist while openly embracing where they don't in this new multipolar world.

FURTHER STUDY

This research still has limitations so further research is still needed on this topic.

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