

The Honorable Peter J. Roskam of Illinois
Testimony on U.S.-Israel Missile Defense Cooperation
House Armed Services Committee
April 9, 2014

Chairman McKeon, Ranking Member Smith, distinguished Members of the Committee: thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony for this critical hearing on our national defense priorities for the Fiscal Year 2015 National Defense Authorization Act.

Mr. Chairman, a cornerstone of the historic relationship between the United States and Israel is our cooperative missile defense systems. An increasingly volatile Middle East highlights the urgent need for these advanced defense capabilities. Iran's continued pursuit of nuclear weapons threatens regional and global security, while its terror proxies— Hamas, Hezbollah, and others— pose a growing threat to not only Israel, but our servicemen and women overseas. And the destabilizing impact from ongoing political upheaval in Egypt and Syria's bloody civil war represent new security challenges for the United States and our regional allies.

Tens of thousands of rockets are pointed at Israel at any given time, not including increasingly sophisticated missiles from Iran and its allies. We know the nature of these threats all too well. Just last month, Israeli naval forces intercepted a Gaza-bound arms cache from Iran that included Syrian-made M302 rockets and 80 mortar shells. Days later, Palestinian Islamic Jihad in Gaza launched dozens of rockets into southern Israel—the largest barrage in over two years. While the attack fortunately yielded no casualties, it underscores the very real dangers Israel continues to face from its neighbors.

We are all familiar with the unprecedented success of Iron Dome, which has intercepted hundreds of short-range rockets with near-precision accuracy since its deployment in 2011. With help from the United States, Iron Dome has saved countless innocent lives and prevented conflict escalation on numerous occasions. In 2013, the United States agreed to begin co-producing Iron Dome with Israel. In order to meet production needs, Congresswoman Grace Meng and I sent the Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense a programmatic request seeking \$350.9 million for Iron Dome in Fiscal Year (FY) 2015—an increase of \$175 million from the Administration's budget and \$115.9 million above FY 2014 funding. This partnership—between Israel's Rafael and American subcontractors—is creating jobs in the United States and providing us with a share in the advanced missile defense production technologies.

In addition, the United States and Israel are co-developing the David's Sling and Arrow 3 anti-missile defense systems. While the Arrow Weapons Systems has been operational since 2000 and targets medium-range ballistic missiles, David's Sling and Arrow 3 are expected to be deployed within the decade and will intercept multi-range ballistic and cruise missiles, including intercontinental, exo-atmospheric missile threats. These critical systems will help Israel defend itself against evolving missile threats from those who seek its destruction. Therefore, I requested \$268.7 million for FY 2015 funding the Arrow, Arrow 3, and David's Sling systems to sustain FY 2014 levels.

Mr. Chairman, during these challenging budgetary times we can and must prioritize federal funding for the programs where federal involvement can have the greatest impact on people's lives. These cooperative programs are without question one of these worthy priorities in need of our support. We all hope for a day when these systems are no longer necessary. But the tragic reality is that they are absolutely essential for our close ally Israel and for U.S. national and international security interests in an extremely volatile part of the world. I want to thank the Committee for its past support and I look forward to working with you to sustain and advance this partnership. Thank you again for the opportunity to submit this testimony.