

**Testimony of The Honorable Josh Gottheimer (NJ-05) Before the House Armed Services  
Committee Hearing: FY2018 National Defense Authorization Act Member Day  
2118 Rayburn House Office Building  
April 27, 2017**

Dear Chairman Thornberry, Ranking Member Smith, and Members of the Committee,

I appreciate this opportunity to testify before you on the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2018.

I want to begin by thanking you for the work you do on this committee to keep our nation safe and to protect Americans in the face of growing threats, including the Islamic State (ISIS). As you know, each member of Congress takes the same oath to protect and defend the Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic. That is why I appreciate this opportunity to be able to address you today and provide input on our national defense priorities as you craft the Fiscal Year 2018 NDAA.

As you know, U.S.-Israel missile defense cooperation is critical to our own defense, as well as the safety and security of our ally Israel, the only true democracy in the Middle East and a key strategic partner. I urge you to continue to support these programs and reaffirm our commitment to keeping support for Israel bipartisan.

Today, Israel faces grave threats and growing numbers of rockets and missiles in the arsenals of terrorist organizations like Hamas and Hezbollah, and state-sponsors of terrorism like Iran.

In March of last year, Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps launched two ballistic missiles inscribed with the slogan "Israel should be wiped off the earth." And Tehran has continued to test the fortitude of the international community by conducting another test in January of this year. Meanwhile, Hezbollah, which the Department of State designates as a terrorist organization, currently has an arsenal of approximately 120,000 to 150,000 rockets aimed at Israel.

To protect from these threats, the Islamic State, and other adversaries, Israel and the U.S. rely on full funding for defense programs like Iron Dome, David's Sling and Arrow 3, to intercept short-range rockets, medium-range rockets and cruise missiles, and to intercept long-range exo-atmospheric, intercontinental ballistic missiles, respectively.

Fortunately, these missile defense programs are proven to work. Just last month, Israel's Arrow system successfully downed a surface-to-air missile fired from Syria, and the Iron Dome system intercepted incoming ISIS rockets from Sinai.

The United States has made significant investments in missile defense cooperation with Israel. Not only do these investments defend our vital ally and reinforce its Qualitative Military Edge in the region, but they also enhance America's own systems and strengthen our U.S. defense industry.

That is why I strongly urge you to support \$705.8 million in Fiscal Year 2018 for these critical U.S.-Israel missile defense programs. That includes a much-needed test of the Arrow 3 long range missile defense program next year. In fact, I am introducing the U.S.-Israel Joint Missile Defense Act to authorize \$105 million for this test to validate Arrow 3's capabilities and assess its interoperability with our own systems.

Full funding for U.S.-Israel missile defense programs will enable Israel to procure more Iron Dome interceptors and launchers. It will make sure our ally can begin full-scale production of the David's Sling Weapon System, improve the Arrow 2 missile interceptor, begin full-scale production of Arrow 3, and conduct a much-needed flight test of the system here in the United States.

Congress and the House Armed Services Committee have an excellent track record of working together in a bipartisan manner to support these missile defense programs. I ask that in Fiscal Year 2018, you continue to support full funding for these programs that are necessary to protect our ally Israel, stabilize the Middle East, and improve our national security.

Thank you for your consideration.