

**Dear Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Smith, Chairman Wicker, and Ranking Member Reed:**

We write to urge you to remove [Section 219 from the National Defense Authorization Act](#) (NDAA) in the conference between the House of Representatives and the United States Senate, along with its [Senate counterpart, Section 1217](#). These provisions would establish a United States-Israel Defense Technology Cooperation Initiative within the Department of Defense and direct the Secretary of Defense to accelerate the integration of Israeli-origin technologies into United States weapons systems and programs of record.

The provisions would effect an unprecedented integration of the United States defense industry with the defense industry of a foreign nation—including the creation of an executive agent within the Department of Defense to drive that integration, a step Congress has never taken with any other country, including its treaty allies.

We write with alarm at the conduct these provisions would reward. More than [73,000 Palestinians have been killed](#) in Gaza since October 2023, the majority of them [women and children](#), a count the Israeli government [acknowledged in January 2026](#) as broadly accurate. The ceasefire that took effect in October 2025 has not stopped the killing. More than [1,825 health facilities have been damaged or destroyed](#). Of Gaza's 37 hospitals, [20 remain partially functional and not one is fully operational](#).

The same pattern holds beyond Gaza. In the West Bank, Israeli forces and settlers have killed more than [1,100 Palestinians since October 2023, including American citizens](#). In Lebanon, [the Israeli military has demolished entire villages](#), a campaign Israel's Defense Minister described as following the [model “used in Rafah and Beit Hanoun.”](#) The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has [described the pattern of IDF and settler violence as one sustained by impunity](#). These are not the actions of a government whose defense establishment should be granted deeper access to American military technology, nor rewarded with U.S. defense contracts.

Many of the capabilities Sections 219 and 1217 could import into United States systems were developed and validated in these operations. [Israeli artificial intelligence targeting systems, surveillance platforms, and predictive tools have been used to generate target lists and to assign risk determinations to residents of Gaza](#). Human Rights Watch has found that [these systems rely on mass surveillance of the Palestinian population](#) that is incompatible with international human rights law. Cooperating with Israel to further develop such systems could morally and legally implicate the United States in their continued use. Other channels of American security assistance and technology sharing are conditioned on Leahy vetting and end-use restrictions. Neither Section 219 nor 1217 resolves whether or how existing human rights conditions in current arms export law would apply to joint cooperative programs established under these provisions.

Section 219 directs the Secretary of Defense to designate an executive agent to synchronize bilateral defense technology research, development, integration, and

industrial cooperation with Israel—a level of prioritization within Department of Defense systems that even the AUKUS partnership does not receive. That designation creates a standing office charged with advancing this relationship, shifting the default from case-by-case review toward continuous integration.

Section 219 is additionally concerning as it would harm American industry, which often competes directly on the open market with Israeli defense manufacturers. Licensing and co-production agreements to have Israeli companies manufacture in the United States may enhance Israel's competitiveness in the U.S. market by sidestepping Buy American provisions.

We are also concerned about technology security. The Department of Defense's own [June 2026 threat assessment of Israel](#) remains at its highest internal designation, yet Sections 219 and 1217 would extend access to artificial intelligence, quantum, autonomous systems, cyber, and biotechnology research that the United States shares with only two partners, the United Kingdom and Australia, under Pillar II of AUKUS.

These provisions would significantly reduce Congress' oversight of the U.S.-Israel defense relationship. They would embed Israeli technology directly into acquisition programs and co-production lines, and once those commitments are made, the cost of reversing them may become prohibitive for any future President or Congress. Israel's government has publicly welcomed this shift. Because these provisions are statutory rather than treaty-based, they bind the United States while imposing no reciprocal obligation on Israel. [Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has written to Congress](#) that the time has arrived for Israel to move "from aid recipient to partner."

The war in Gaza, escalating violence in the West Bank and the U.S.-Israel war with Iran have highlighted the need for a fundamental reassessment of the U.S.-Israel security relationship. This requires substantial debate between agencies, policymakers, Congress and the U.S. public. Rushing this provision through a must-pass piece of legislation when the underlying bill has fewer than sixty cosponsors does not meet that bar.

A durable United States-Israel security partnership is possible, but it must be built with an Israeli government that adheres to United States and international law. That relationship does not depend on these provisions, and this is not the moment to encode it into permanent statute. We therefore urge you to strip Section 219 and Section 1217 from the conference report in full. Should any cooperative framework be retained, we urge at minimum that it be subject to annual authorization, that it carry human rights conditions consistent with those governing other United States security assistance, and that it require a counterintelligence certification from the Secretary of Defense prior to any technology transfer.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,