

Rothman Secures \$ 26M for Advanced U.S.-Israel Arrow Missile Defense System

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Congressman Rothman Secures Historic \$26M for Advanced U.S.-Israel Arrow Missile Defense System in House Bill

Congressman Rothman and Ambassador Meridor.

(Washington, DC)—For the first time in history, the House Appropriations Committee yesterday voted to provide \$26 million in federal funding for the Arrow System Improvement Program (ASIP). ASIP will use the funding, which came at the request of Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ), to test the capacity of the Arrow Weapons System (AWS) to handle more intense ballistic missile threats from Iran, such as multiple warheads and faster reentry vehicles. AWS is a proven ballistic missile defense system developed jointly by the United States and the State of Israel.

Explaining his advocacy of this upgrade to the Arrow system, Rothman said: "The Arrow program is one of the most advanced missile defense systems around and has been proven to work in tests against real and surrogate targets in California and Israel. It provides essential protection against ballistic missiles for Israel's civilian population, as well as U.S. troops in the Middle East. In light of Iran's open hostility toward the U.S. and Israel, I consider increasing the effectiveness of the Arrow system to be essential to our defense. This technology, along with diplomacy, can help us avert another deadly and costly war."

The most recent successful test of the Arrow Weapons System took place in February 2007 as part of the Arrow System Improvement Program (ASIP), which is being carried out by Israel and the United States. The Arrow Weapons System provides Israel an indigenous capability to defend against short- and medium-range ballistic missiles and helps ensure U.S. freedom of action in future contingencies. In addition, U.S. participation in the Arrow development effort ensures interoperability of the Arrow and the Israeli Missile Defense System with deployed U.S. missile defense assets.

The ASIP effort will enhance the performance of the Arrow Weapons System to defeat longer-range and more robust ballistic missile threats expected to be introduced in the Middle East in the near future by Iran.

Funding Background

Congressional funding for ASIP began in FY2001, with all of the funding previously requested by the Senate Appropriations Committee. Rep. Rothman's successful advocacy for the advanced components of the Arrow system marks a historic first for the House Appropriations Committee, which in the past has not funded ASIP.

All told, the House version of the FY2008 Defense Appropriations Bill, which is likely to be debated by the full House of Representatives next week, calls for a total of \$79.2 million for ASIP, including \$53.2 million for ongoing programs and an additional \$26 million requested by Rep. Rothman for the study. The legislation also includes another \$37.4 million for the co-production of Arrow missiles in the U.S. and \$26 million for a feasibility study of the Short-Range Missile Defense Program, also known as "David's Sling," bringing the total recommended funding for programs related to the U.S.-Israeli Arrow Weapons System to \$142.6 million.

This year, Rothman became the first-ever Bergen County Congressman to join the House Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Defense, which is where all military and national defense-related spending legislation originates. The Congressman says that ending the war in Iraq and strengthening the strategic partnership between the U.S. and Israel are among his top priorities.

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