

A Narrow U.S.-Israel Defense Pact: *Addressing Criticism*



JINSA's Gemunder Center U.S.-Israel Security Policy Project

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November 2019



JINSA

The Jewish Institute for
National Security of America

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Introduction

In July our project, under the leadership of former NATO Supreme Allied Commander Adm. (ret.) James Stavridis, issued a report making the strategic case for a U.S.-Israel mutual defense pact and providing draft text of a treaty. This expanded on our initial comprehensive May 2018 report proposing policies to bolster the bilateral security relationship, including a recommendation that the two countries consider a formal alliance similar to – but more narrowly defined than – existing U.S. arrangements with 50 countries on five continents.

Shortly after our report this summer, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu discussed the idea of a U.S.-Israel mutual defense pact with President Donald Trump, who then in September tweeted his interest and intention to discuss such an agreement at their next bilateral meeting.

Since then many American and Israeli experts and pundits have weighed in on a U.S.-Israeli mutual defense pact, with many raising various objections. Our earlier report addressed anticipated counterarguments from both Israelis and Americans. However, we believe it is now constructive to advance the policy conversation by elaborating the most serious skepticisms that have been expressed.

Specifically, we address six concerns about a mutual defense pact: first, that it might hinder either country’s strategic freedom of action; second, that it may require Israel to assist U.S. military operations beyond the Middle East; third, that such a pact would be superfluous, given already high levels of bilateral security cooperation; fourth, that it would impose unwelcome standards for military interoperability on either country; fifth, that it would force each ally to reveal plans and capabilities with respect to nuclear weapons; and finally, that Israel’s unsettled borders would complicate a U.S. security guarantee to help defend the country.

We hope this follow-on report will generate support for a narrow defense treaty, ultimately ratified by two-thirds majority in the Senate, which would formalize the close relationship between two allies, advance vital U.S. interests throughout the Middle East and help prevent or mitigate an extraordinary conflict that could threaten Israel’s strategic and economic viability.

Background of Narrow Mutual Defense Pact

While broadly comparable to existing U.S. mutual defense pacts, our proposed alliance with Israel would be limited strictly to exceptional circumstances where Israel or the United States would struggle to defend vital interests in the Middle East. As we laid out in our report this summer, narrowing the scope acknowledges each country’s concern for its strategic independence, while still reflecting the growing shared threats from the degrading security situation in the Middle East.

Throughout its history, Israel has proven exceptionally capable and insistent in providing its own security, all the more so as the United States increasingly expects friends to shoulder their fair burdens for collective defense. Yet, Iran’s growing regional aggression – including providing more than 130,000 rockets and missiles to Hezbollah in Lebanon – and its now revived nuclear program create the potential for higher-level conflict that Israel alone might struggle to deter or defeat. Such conflict could even at some point threaten Israel’s existence. Syria could also try to deploy its chemical weapons against Israel or U.S. forces in the region. And Israel and the United States would face great danger if Turkey moved beyond hostile rhetoric and a concerted arms buildup to active military engagement, alone or in coalition.

Any of these conflicts would gravely jeopardize U.S. vital interests and credibility, which are already under great strain in the region. Simultaneously, even as these challenges in the Middle East worsen, American strategists and force planners must reckon with renewed great power competition more globally, particularly in Eastern Europe and Asia-Pacific.

A U.S. security pledge to Israel, enshrined in a treaty ratified by the U.S. Senate, could bolster Israel’s ability to counter growing Middle East threats at acceptable cost to itself – known as its “qualitative military edge” or QME, which the United States is committed to uphold under a 2008 U.S. law.

By treating a major attack on one as an attack on both, a mutual defense pact would provide greater deterrence than either ally could provide alone. This could prevent Iran or others from initiating or escalating to large-scale action against Israel or U.S. vital interests in the Middle East – and others from joining in – or mitigate or curb the scope of enemy action. Indeed, since the United States first formed such partnerships around the world in the late 1940s, no war has broken out that threatened the existence of any treaty ally. By shoring up U.S. and Israeli deterrence in the Middle East, a mutual defense pact thus could enable more concerted U.S. focus on other strategic issues, while also bolstering Israel’s ability to continue defending shared interests in the region.

Some observers in either country might worry a mutual defense treaty could tie their hands or drag them into each other’s conflicts. Therefore, whereas existing U.S. defense pacts state unequivocally that an attack on one is an attack on all, a formal alliance with Israel should be confined only to a small set of *exceptional* circumstances in the Middle East: threat or use of weapons of mass destruction; major armed attack by a powerful regional or global power, or coalition of powers; an assault threatening vital lines of air and sea communication; an attack undermining Israel’s qualitative military edge; or an urgent request from either government.

Addressing Counterarguments

There are six basic arguments raised by opponents and skeptics of a mutual defense treaty: first, that it might hinder either country's strategic freedom of action; second, that it may require Israel to assist U.S. military operations beyond the Middle East; third, that such a pact would be superfluous, given already high levels of bilateral security cooperation; fourth, that it would impose unwelcome standards for military interoperability on either country; fifth, that it would force each ally to reveal plans and capabilities with respect to nuclear weapons; and finally, that Israel's unsettled borders would complicate a U.S. security guarantee to help defend the country.

1. Freedom of Action

For both countries the issue of strategic independence is the primary wellspring of wariness toward a mutual defense pact, which could be perceived as giving a vote or veto in each other's national security decision-making.

It is therefore highly relevant that U.S. mutual defense pacts are careful to limit their parties' formal obligations, while still offering credible deterrence against shared adversaries. The United States and its treaty allies have long histories of pursuing independent security policies, even as they remain committed fundamentally to one another's defense and to their shared alliance. Reflecting both U.S. and Israeli concerns, our proposed treaty would be even more circumscribed than existing U.S. defense pacts.

Israelis have a deeply ingrained conviction not to rely on others, and the national ethos to "defend itself, by itself" is a *raison-d'etre* of Zionism. This has served Israel well, contributing to its survival against immense odds. Given its shared adversaries with the United States, in many cases this readiness and willingness to shoulder such burdens benefits both countries.

Nor has Israel ever shown an inclination to relinquish its ultimate rights of decision on self-defense, as seen in Prime Minister Netanyahu's recent remarks:

Like in 1973, today we very much appreciate the important support of the United States, which has greatly increased in recent years, as well as the major economic pressure that the United States is using on Iran. Even so, we will always remember and implement the basic rule that has guided us; Israel will defend itself, by itself, against any threat.¹

Meanwhile, Americans in recent years have become steadily more eager to reduce overseas commitments and extremely reluctant to assume new ones, and thus could be concerned a mutual security pact might drag their country into Israel's conflicts.

Existing U.S. treaty alliances with 50 countries on five continents can help address concerns about strategic freedom. The United States has multilateral pacts with 28 mostly European countries (North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "NATO"), 16 Latin American countries (Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, "Rio Pact") and Australia and New Zealand (Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty, "ANZUS"), plus bilateral pacts with Japan, Philippines, South Korea and Thailand – all of which were agreed during the Cold War to bolster deterrence against expanding Soviet-led threats.

The architects of these treaties recognized the potential risks inherent in such pacts, and thus intentionally crafted treaty language as statements of intent rather than as binding contracts. The North Atlantic Treaty, on which most other U.S. alliance treaties were modeled, explicitly and unequivocally gives each signatory an uncompromisable right of independent decision. In the case of one or more parties being attacked, Article V provides that every signatory “shall assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith ... such action as it deems necessary...”² Moreover, by declaring each member will “act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes,” U.S. mutual defense treaties – including our draft treaty – explicitly recognize each party’s sovereign right to decide its own response to an attack on an ally.

In the one case where Article V was invoked in a U.S. treaty alliance – in response to 9/11 – each member interpreted this obligation by its own lights. According to NATO’s secretary general Lord Robertson, “the declaration did not necessarily mean NATO would get involved in military action. Nor did it mean that Washington was obliged to act through the group.”³ Indeed, allies’ concrete contributions varied from trivial to substantial. For instance Britain, Denmark and Canada sent significant troop numbers into heavy combat in Afghanistan while other members did little, if anything, beyond dispatching liaisons and planners.

As this case underscores, instead of being bound automatically to a military response, the parties to a mutual defense treaty commit only to confer with one another when an ally’s security is threatened. NATO’s Article IV provides the parties “will consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence or security ... is threatened.”⁴ This consultation is what the parties make of it in the circumstances and time at issue, and such consultations can be lengthy or quick, decisive or inconclusive. U.S. mutual defense pacts do not place the crucial decision of war or peace in the treaty or a treaty body, but rather with each individual party. In the United States, for example, those sovereign powers are set forth in the Constitution; in Israel, in its Basic Laws.

Furthermore, the specific military actions, plans and capabilities – and the coordination of these elements – between the United States and its treaty allies are neither spelled out nor prescribed in any of the treaties. Rather, the allies set this agenda through lengthy and complicated negotiations only after the treaty is signed and ratified. Accordingly, any given ally’s relationship with the United States differs from others. Some countries have a wider range of security issues on the agenda, and others fewer; some relationships are more intimate and sensitive, others less so.

For all these reasons, mutual defense pacts do not give allies a direct say in each other’s strategic decisions, nor do they obligate the parties to support or become involved in the others’ military activities.

Indeed, the United States has often judged it necessary to take actions either without consulting allies or without their support and sometimes despite their opposition, for instance in the Dominican Republic in 1965 and Panama in 1989. By the same token, history is replete with examples of U.S. allies acting on what they consider vital interests that were not shared by the United States, and which Washington did not support. In fact, during the Cold War many American policymakers would have strongly preferred fellow NATO members concentrate on preventing Soviet aggression in Europe rather than bogging down in distant colonial wars. Though President Kennedy advised Portugal not to fight to retain its African possessions,

NATO membership did not prevent Lisbon from freely pursuing that exact policy. Likewise, British and French NATO membership imposed no external obstacles to their policies in Malaya, Vietnam, Suez, Algeria or the Falklands, among other places, nor did U.S. NATO membership create any obligation to support them.

The cases of France in Algeria and Britain in the Falklands are particularly illustrative. The United States resisted French efforts in the 1950s to depict its long colonial war in Algeria as part of the larger Western struggle against communism, and rejected the notion Algerian nationalists were a threat to the southern flank of NATO. In fact, the United States feared that French policy risked driving moderate Arab nations and much of the emerging Third World into the Soviet camp, and that war in Algeria meant fewer French troops to defend Western Europe.⁵

In 1982 Britain – America’s closest ally – rejected the counsel of President Reagan and his top advisers against going to war to repel Argentina’s invasion of the Falklands. Some American officials viewed the Argentinian regime as an asset in the struggle to contain communism in Latin America, and Secretary of State Alexander Haig even developed a plan effectively giving Argentina sovereignty over the islands, which Britain rejected. President Reagan eventually acquiesced and supported Britain’s ultimately successful military campaign.

As these examples illustrate, a mutual defense pact with the United States did not prevent allies from pursuing their own foreign and defense policies, oftentimes in ways that prompted American objections or concerns. Meanwhile, Israel today is unlikely to conduct a major military action to defend itself against a looming dire strategic threat, which could unintentionally put U.S. military assets at risk, without consulting or informing the United States in advance. The U.S.-Israel relationship therefore already features greater responsibilities than those officially contained in or required by a treaty alliance, without the extra deterrence provided by an explicit security guarantee.

2. Mutuality

Officials and other experts in both Washington and Jerusalem have questioned whether the “mutual” aspect of a mutual defense pact might oblige Israel to assist U.S. military operations far afield. Specifically, there is concern on the Israeli side that a mutual defense pact would require it to assist the United States in a major conflict beyond Israel’s normal theater of operations, for instance in Eastern Europe or Asia-Pacific. Drawing from existing U.S. defense pacts, our proposed treaty would be limited to strictly shared concerns and interests in Israel’s geographic neighborhood.⁶

Accordingly, our draft treaty is limited in both the type and scope of conditions under which its Article V provision would activate. Our proposal pertains only to a limited set of exceptional armed attacks on either or both parties, and only in the Middle East. Bounded as such, the mutuality of such a defense pact resides in the fact both Israel and the United States already would be self-interested in preventing or mitigating these attacks in the first place, and that neither party would be expected to assist with lower-level attacks or those occurring against the other party outside the Middle East.

There is ample precedent for such a limited geographic scope among existing U.S. alliances,

which can vary appreciably from one another in what they seek to defend. Treaties with Japan and South Korea cover only armed attacks “against either Party in the territories under the administration” of Tokyo and Seoul, respectively, while ANZUS and the Philippines treaty cover “armed attack on the metropolitan territory of any of the Parties, or on the island territories under its jurisdiction in the Pacific or on its armed forces, public vessels or aircraft in the Pacific.” The Rio Pact limits a very specific treaty area of rhumb lines to given latitudinal and longitudinal points in the Western Hemisphere.⁷ NATO’s Article V and VI are more expansive, covering attacks “in Europe or North America” including the “Mediterranean Sea or the North Atlantic area north of the Tropic of Cancer.”

Beyond geographically-defined treaty areas, mutuality can also derive from working agendas devised jointly by alliance members. In the case of a U.S.-Israel defense pact, and in return for a U.S. security guarantee against exceptional armed attack on Israel, this could reflect the need for Israel to assume greater responsibility in defending shared interests as America’s own regional presence recedes.

Israel could assist with regional air and missile defense, maritime freedom of navigation in the Eastern Mediterranean and Red Sea, intelligence sharing – including combat data assessment of new technologies and platforms – as well as cyber operations, artificial intelligence, quantum computing and discreet U.S.-led strategic and operational coordination with Egypt, Jordan and U.S. partners in the Gulf, among other areas.

3. Necessity vs. Superfluity

Another concern raised against a U.S.-Israel mutual defense pact is that it would be superfluous, given that the bilateral partnership already features high levels of diplomatic and security cooperation exceeding some of America’s existing treaty alliances. As a corollary, it could be possible that any new advantages might not be equal to the burdens a pact conceivably would impose on one or both countries.⁸

Fundamentally, the value-added of our proposed mutual defense pact derives directly from the extra layer of deterrence it would create against rising, potentially unprecedented Middle East threats that either country might struggle to prevent or mitigate alone. By aggregating the potential counterforce confronting a shared adversary, treaty alliances can prevent aggression in the first place or, failing that, lower the scale of conflict by enabling a more forceful, combined response. By allowing allies to respond in the manner most advantageous to themselves and most costly to their adversary, mutual defense pacts further bolster deterrence by creating uncertainty in the minds of potential aggressors.

Tellingly, since the United States first formed such alliances around the world in the late 1940s, no war has broken out that threatened the existence of any treaty ally. Credible U.S. military threats have also reliably influenced adversaries’ decision-making in the modern Middle East, most clearly in compelling Iran to agree to end the interminable Iran-Iraq War in 1988 and voluntarily suspending key elements of its nuclear program in 2004.

Our proposed treaty would further raise Israel’s official status as a U.S. ally – currently on par with Argentina and Tunisia – by making it U.S. policy to release to Israel any intelligence pertaining to its security that is releasable to the signatories of the UKUSA Agreement. Known as “Five Eyes,” this agreement allows for unparalleled intelligence cooperation between the

United States, Australia, Britain, Canada and New Zealand. Placing Israel on par with these countries would help reinforce shared U.S.-Israel deterrence against their adversaries by facilitating greater bilateral strategic and operational coordination. Formal ally status also could enable higher clearance levels for Israel to share sensitive information about U.S. and adversary capabilities, gleaned from its far more extensive experience than existing allies when it comes to battle-testing U.S. and adversaries' weapons systems in combat – for instance operating F-35 aircraft in Syrian airspace covered by advanced Russian S-400 air defenses.

Furthermore, the United States likely could be drawn into a major regional conflict even in the absence of any formal commitment – as it was in the Iran-Iraq War, the first Persian Gulf War and the war against the Islamic State – giving it strong incentive to secure a mutual defense pact that would deter or mitigate such conflict in the first place.

4. Interoperability

Some have raised the possibility that, in order to facilitate rapid and significant U.S. assistance to Israel in the exceptional circumstances we identify, a mutual defense pact would impose a slew of interoperability requirements on both countries' militaries.⁹ To be sure, a certain level of interoperability is desirable or even necessary for contingency planning and to enable combined operations. This also reinforces deterrence, by making more credible to shared adversaries the prospect of effective operational coordination among allies.

However, existing U.S. mutual defense pacts vary appreciably in the degree of military interoperability between member states, without undermining the basic Article V principle at the core of each alliance. Each member of a U.S. treaty alliance makes its own choices on the desired degree of interoperability, based on issues such as associated costs, local jobs and security considerations – especially related to intelligence, where the members may legitimately fear their ally has been penetrated by an adversary.¹⁰

NATO is often considered the gold standard for alliance interoperability, featuring an integrated military command, defense and nuclear planning committees and agreements to standardize equipment and procedures between allies. Even so, notable variances exist among members in terms of their interoperability.

Moreover, the U.S. and Israeli militaries already are highly interoperable – more so than many U.S. treaty allies – due in no small part to longstanding joint research and development (R&D) efforts, exercises and Israel purchasing significant quantities of U.S. defense materiel in recent decades.

Specifically, much of Israel's multi-layered air defense architecture, including radars, has been jointly developed with the United States, and each country also procures missile defense systems produced by the other. Likewise, the lion's share of the Israeli Defense Force's (IDF) manned aircraft are U.S.-made, though Israel regularly makes proprietary modifications to such systems. The vast majority of precision munitions used by these aircraft are also U.S.-made. In addition the two countries either jointly produce, procure from each other or use technologies developed by the other in armored and unmanned vehicles, satellites and battlefield radars, among other systems.

The two countries also have many of the same coordinating structures as formal alliances, including defense planning forums, intelligence sharing, prepositioned weapons stockpiles and extensive joint exercises. Indeed, the United States and Israel already have regular bilateral exercises specifically designed to promote interoperability for missile defense, aerial combat, urban warfare and maritime security operations. They also participate in regular multilateral exercises with NATO members and others focusing on aerial combat, counter-/air defense, command and control, antisubmarine warfare and reconnaissance and navigation.

Nevertheless, as part of a mutual defense pact the United States and Israel could decide to strengthen further these robust levels of interoperability. As with all existing U.S. treaty alliances, this would be the result of independent decision-making between the two countries and not a stipulation of alliance membership itself.

5. Nuclear Opacity

Some observers contend a U.S.-Israel defense treaty would require each country to reveal plans and capabilities with respect to nuclear issues, and/or pressure Israel to join the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).¹¹

While the United States and Israel could decide to increase nuclear transparency between themselves, this would not be necessitated by a mutual defense pact. Indeed, no existing U.S. treaty alliance has any conditions or requirements for the parties to share or alter nuclear intentions, capabilities or plans.

Currently only two formal U.S. allies possess nuclear weapons – Britain and France – and while a certain level of transparency exists among them on these issues, such cooperation evolved independently of their joining or remaining in NATO. This is of particular importance, given the emphasis placed on interoperability among NATO members compared to other mutual defense pacts.

Britain and the United States do have some mutual transparency on nuclear matters, but this is rooted in World War II-era cooperation to jointly develop the first atomic weapons. Subsequently this has been governed by agreements distinct from the North Atlantic Treaty, including the 1958 U.S.-U.K. Mutual Defense Agreement which covered nuclear cooperation among other issues. To a lesser degree, France and the United States also cooperate on nuclear security issues, though France developed its nuclear arsenal largely in secret from even its treaty allies.

NATO does require a certain level of transparency among member states participating in its nuclear sharing program – whereby U.S. tactical nuclear weapons are forward-deployed in Belgium, Germany, Italy, Netherlands and Turkey – but again this cooperation is agreed independent of each country's accession to the alliance.

Separately, a mutual defense pact would not be conditioned on Israel joining the NPT. There is simply no precedence for such linkage, and as a nuclear-weapon state party to the treaty the United States is prevented only from transferring nuclear weapons to other countries or assisting them in manufacturing their own – something which it has never done, and which a mutual defense pact with Israel would do nothing to alter.

6. *Israel's Borders*

A final concern has been raised regarding the unsettled nature of some of Israel's borders.¹² Specifically, the lack of internationally-recognized borders prompts the question of which Israeli borders the United States would commit itself to defend under a mutual defense pact.

In fact, the United States formed treaty alliances with multiple countries whose borders were not finalized or clearly agreed. Moreover, questions about Israel's borders largely would be irrelevant to the types of exceptional attacks our proposed treaty would seek to prevent or mitigate.

Of the United States' existing treaty alliances, several member states have, or have had, borders either lacking international recognition or in dispute with neighboring state(s), yet this did not preclude a mutual defense pact. For example, West Germany joined NATO despite the lack of finalized boundaries with East Germany, whose existence was not even recognized by NATO members at the time.

Japan still has territorial disputes with Russia, China and South Korea that pre-date the ratification of its U.S. alliance. South Korea's border with North Korea – a state the United States does not officially recognize – likewise lacks international recognition. South Korea also has a boundary dispute with Japan. The Philippines has long had a host of border disagreements, most of which are no closer to resolution than they were decades ago, and some of which periodically become violent.

Separately, the lack of internationally-recognized borders on certain Israeli frontiers would be relatively moot in the context of our proposed alliance. Most fundamentally the strategic purpose of our draft treaty is to create shared deterrence against exceptional attacks – in this case, those in which Israel's existence or strategic and economic viability would be at stake. Indeed, Iran and its proxy Hezbollah, which pose the most immediate such threat, are opposed to the existence of the Jewish state itself rather than to its borders. Moreover, Hezbollah has made it clear its massive arsenals are aimed at targets within internationally recognized borders of Israel, including IDF airbases, Haifa port and Tel Aviv.

Endnotes

1. Prime Minister and Defense Netanyahu Attends State Memorial Ceremony for the Fallen of the 1973 Yom Kippur War on Mt. Herzl in Jerusalem, Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, October 10, 2019.
2. North Atlantic Treaty text available at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17120.htm? (accessed November 13, 2019).
3. Statement by the North Atlantic Council <https://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2001/p01-124e.htm>. Suzanne Daley, "AFTER THE ATTACKS: THE ALLIANCE; For First Time, NATO Invokes Joint Defense Pact With U.S.," *New York Times*, September 13, 2001; <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/13/us/after-attacks-alliance-for-first-time-nato-invokes-joint-defense-pact-with-us.html>
4. North Atlantic Treaty (1949), <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/us-treaties/bevans/m-ust000004-0828.pdf>
5. Similarly, since defense treaty alliances put no effective restriction on each nation's freedom action, Britain and France attacked Egypt in 1956 and Turkey invaded Cyprus in 1974 without U.S. agreement.
6. Objection raised in discussions with present and former USG senior policy makers; see also Amos Yadlin (@YadlinAmos), "IDF fight on our borders, not expeditionary wars around the world. The Golani brigade in Afghanistan? No thanks..." September 14, 2019. Tweet.
7. Specifically, the Rio Pact's treaty area is defined as: "beginning at the North Pole; thence due south to a point 74 degrees north latitude, 10 degrees west longitude; thence by a rhumb line to a point 47 degrees 30 minutes north latitude, 50 degrees west longitude; thence by a rhumb line to a point 35 degrees north latitude, 60 degrees west longitude; thence due south to a point in 20 degrees north latitude; thence by a rhumb line to a point 5 degrees north latitude, 24 degrees west longitude; thence due south to the South Pole; thence due north to a point 30 degrees south latitude, 90 degrees west longitude; thence by a rhumb line to a point on the Equator at 97 degrees west longitude; thence by a rhumb line to a point 15 degrees north latitude, 120 degrees west longitude; thence by a rhumb line to a point 50 degrees north latitude, 170 degrees east longitude; thence due north to a point in 54 degrees north latitude; thence by a rhumb line to a point 65 degrees 30 minutes north latitude, 168 degrees 58 minutes 5 seconds west longitude: thence due north to the North Pole."
8. Objection raised in briefings with present and former USG senior policy makers; related objection by Amb. Dan Shapiro, "When you're formal treaty allies, there's a greater presumption of agreement and support for the military actions of your ally," quoted in Ahren, Raphael. "IDF troops in Afghanistan? What a US-Israel mutual defense treaty could mean," *Times of Israel*, September 17, 2019.
9. Objection raised in briefings with present and former USG senior policy makers; Shear, Gilead, and Pinkas, Alon. "Netanyahu's Defense Treaty with Trump Is a Bad Idea. Just as Well It's Only a Gimmick." *Time*, September 16, 2019: "Today, there is a yet more pressing argument against such a pact — that it would significantly narrow and constrict Israel's maneuvering room and operational flexibility...."
10. Discussions with former senior USG policymakers.
11. Objection raised in briefings with present and former USG senior policy makers; see also Yadlin, M.G. (Ret.) Amos (@YadlinAmos), "Keeping opacity about Israel strategic capabilities attributed to Israel by international media." 14 September 2019, 2:42 PM. Tweet; see also Shear, Gilead, and Pinkas, Alon. "Netanyahu's Defense Treaty with Trump Is a Bad Idea. Just as Well It's Only a Gimmick," *Time*, September 16, 2019: "In the past, Israel refrained from raising the issue of a formal treaty, since the U.S. demanded two prerequisites that Israel could not deliver: Permanent and recognized borders, and signing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)."
12. Amos Yadlin (@YadlinAmos), "Defense treaties entail the borders to be defended. Does the Prime Minister intend to discuss our borders with the US Senate now?" September 14, 2019. Tweet.

