

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4978

To require a study and report on a potential transfer of Israel to the area of responsibility of United States Central Command.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

DECEMBER 8, 2020

Mr. COTTON (for himself, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. TILLIS, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. WICKER, Mr. HAWLEY, and Ms. ERNST) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

A BILL

To require a study and report on a potential transfer of Israel to the area of responsibility of United States Central Command.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Israel CENTCOM Re-
5 classification Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. STUDY AND REPORT ON POTENTIAL TRANSFER OF**
2 **ISRAEL TO AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY OF**
3 **UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND.**

4 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following find-
5 ings:

6 (1) Israel is a vital diplomatic, economic, and
7 security partner of the United States.

8 (2) The United States, Israel, and certain
9 neighboring Arab countries cooperate on security
10 matters to counter shared regional threats, such as
11 Iran.

12 (3) The normalization of ties between Israel
13 and the United Arab Emirates, the normalization of
14 ties between Israel and the Kingdom of Bahrain,
15 and the announcement by Israel and Sudan that
16 such countries will pursue the normalization of ties
17 have dramatically changed the security environment
18 in the Middle East in favor of peace and cooperation
19 between Israel and neighboring Arab countries.

20 (4) In assigning the geographic boundaries of
21 unified combatant commands, the Unified Command
22 Plan specifically requires the Chairman of the Joint
23 Chiefs of Staff to consider “whether the current geo-
24 graphic boundary between the United States Central
25 Command and European Command through the
26 Middle East could create command conflicts in the

1 context of a major regional conflict in the Middle
2 East region.”.

3 (5) The current placement of Israel within the
4 area of responsibility of the United States European
5 Command may not optimize coordination among the
6 United States, Israel, and other partners in the Mid-
7 dle East on issues of regional security.

8 (6) Efforts to improve coordination between the
9 Israel Defense Forces and the United States Central
10 Command are underway and have made meaningful
11 progress in the past decade.

12 (b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
13 gress that the Secretary of Defense should consider oppor-
14 tunities to strengthen shared deterrence and foster deeper
15 coordination between the United States and its allies and
16 partners in the Middle East on vital defense activities, in-
17 cluding military operations, combined exercises, strategic
18 planning, theater missile defense, and pre-positioning of
19 United States weaponry in the region.

20 (c) STUDY.—

21 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall instruct
22 the Joint Chiefs of Staff or one or more other ap-
23 propriate individuals to conduct a study on a poten-
24 tial transfer of Israel from the area of responsibility
25 of the United States European Command to the

1 area of responsibility of the United States Central
2 Command.

3 (2) ELEMENTS.—The study required by para-
4 graph (1) shall include the following:

5 (A) An overall assessment of the feasibility
6 and advisability of transferring responsibility
7 for Israel from the United States European
8 Command to the United States Central Com-
9 mand, including any impact on the security of
10 Israel and the operational, readiness, training,
11 personnel, and budgetary implications for the
12 United States.

13 (B) An assessment of the advantages and
14 disadvantages associated with such a transfer,
15 including an evaluation of the necessary steps
16 to ensure continuity of North Atlantic Treaty
17 Organization activities with Israel and joint
18 United States-Israel missile defense training
19 and contingency planning.

20 (C) An assessment of the advantages and
21 disadvantages associated with retaining the sta-
22 tus quo.

23 (D) Consideration of the views of the Min-
24 ister of Defense of Israel and the head of the
25 Israel Defense Forces, including with respect to

1 the potential impact on the operations and
2 readiness of Israel.

3 (d) REPORT.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days
5 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
6 retary shall submit to the Committee on Armed
7 Services of the Senate and the Committee on Armed
8 Services of the House of Representatives a report on
9 the results of the study conducted under subsection
10 (c).

11 (2) FORM.—The report required by paragraph
12 (1) shall be submitted in classified form together
13 with an unclassified summary.

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