

US may have less access to bases in the region and more threats to American security interests in the future.

Dr. Thompson states, among other things, that:

It (Israel) needs enough money to buy and equip 15 more F-15's for a total force of 40. . . . Making such a purchase would nearly double the Israeli Air Force's capacity for long-range strikes. . . . The US economic and political interest in the Middle East-Persian Gulf region will continue to grow in the years ahead (and) Israel is the only stable, reliable US ally willing to take the necessary risks. Congress and the Clinton Administration need to equip it (Israel) so that it is ready when the time comes.

Mr. President, to share Dr. Thompson's thoughts with my colleagues, I ask unanimous consent that this essay be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the essay was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

**BOLSTERING ISRAEL'S STRATEGIC AIR POWER  
SERVES AMERICA'S INTERESTS**

(By Loren B. Thompson, Ph.D.)

Israel's government is currently considering a major purchase of military aircraft from the United States. The pending sale has attracted media attention in the U.S. because it pits two highly-regarded tactical aircraft—the Boeing F-15 and Lockheed Martin F-16—against each other in a competition that may be the last opportunity to keep the F-15 in production.

The F-15 is more capable than the F-16 in some roles, but it is also more expensive. That is one reason why the F-16 has won most of the recent international arms-sale competitions in which both aircraft were offered. With global tensions greatly reduced from the Cold War period, many nations would prefer the operational flexibility of acquiring a larger number of planes for the same price.

Israel will probably be no exception. It is a foregone conclusion that the Israeli Air Force (IAF) will select one of the two planes because the U.S. government subsidizes Israeli arms purchases and the F-15 and F-16 are the only U.S. aircraft being offered in the current competition. But the IAF has over a hundred aging F-4 fighters and A-4 attack planes reaching the end of their useful life, and the multi role F-16 is a much more affordable replacement than the F-15, both in terms of up-front acquisition costs and later support costs. So the F-15 is likely to lose the competition.

**THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT**

The U.S. government should not try to dictate to Israel how it organizes or equips its military. On the other hand, Washington should be sensitive to the fact that Israel is one of America's few democratic allies in the Middle East, and its armed forces in the future may be called on to serve as substitutes for U.S. military power. This has happened in the past, most notably when the IAF destroyed Iraq's Osirak reactor in 1981—a facility the Iraqis planned to use for making weapons-grade nuclear material.

The Osirak mission was carried out by Israeli F-16 strike aircraft escorted by F-15 fighters. Its success was good news for every nation in the region, although few Arab states could publicly say so. Saddam Hussein's subsequent behavior demonstrated it was also good news for America, which avoided having to deal with a nuclear-capable dictatorship in a volatile, strategically important region.

But things have changed in the Middle East since 1981. A number of countries other

than Iraq—some of them more distant from Israel—have begun acquiring access to weapons of mass destruction. Iran is developing nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, along with the ballistic missiles to deliver such weapons over long distances (it tested the new Shahab medium-range ballistic missile in July 1998). Libya has made similar efforts. And Sudan has become a center of global terrorism, one suspected of sponsoring the manufacture of chem-bio weapons.

These trends, which are likely to grow worse, already pose a serious threat to both Israeli and Western interests in the region. But whereas policymakers in Washington have the luxury of seeing such developments in tactical terms, for Israel they are strategic: the very survival of the Jewish state is at stake. And although it is now fashionable to think of America as the world's policeman, it is clear that Israel will often have more incentive and latitude than the U.S. to respond expeditiously to such threats in the future.

**ISRAEL'S STRATEGIC DILEMMA**

Which is why the pending arms sale has a special significance: if the government of Prime Minister Ehud Barak decides its top air-power priority is to refresh its force structure with the improved version of the F-16 (the F-16I), Washington shouldn't dispute that decision. But the issue of Israel's strategic strike capability against emerging threats in distant states like Iran should not be neglected. One of the ways in which the F-15I is superior to the F-16I is in its ability to carry bigger bomb loads to greater distances. It would be easier to sustain a long-range bombing campaign against strategic targets near the Iranian capital of Teheran using F-15I's than F-16I's for the simple reason that the F-15I's have about a third more range.

A single F-16I has a maximum weapons carriage of four 2,000-pound bombs, which it can carry to a maximum unrefueled combat radius of over 700 nautical miles. An F-15I can carry the same bombload to a radius of about 1,100 nautical miles, or it can carry up to seven 2,000-pound bombs of lesser range. The performance of the F-15 results from the fact that each of its twin engines generate as much thrust (29,000 ponds) as the single engine on an F-16. Unfortunately the twin engines are also the biggest reason why each F-15I would cost the IAF about 30% more, not counting later support costs. In air warfare, the tradeoff between price and performance often is inescapable.

Fortunately for Israel, long-range strategic strike is a specialized mission that does not require a large number of aircraft, and the IAF already has 25 F-15Is suitable for the mission that it bought in 1995. Furthermore, it's not as though the F-16s can't hit remote targets: it was the strike aircraft against the Osirak reactor. But for truly distant targets, the F-16 imposes performance penalties. Conformal fuel tanks might have to be added at the expense of bombload, or aerial refueling might be necessary in hostile airspace. For these very distant targets, the F-15I is the safer choice.

The problem is that Israel doesn't have enough F-15I's today to prosecute a sustained bombing campaign over great distances, and within current budget constraints it can't afford to buy more—unless it decides to buy fewer F-16s, which would be a bad idea given the age of existing IAF assets and the myriad other missions the F-16Is are needed to cover.

**THE BOTTOM LINE**

The bottom line is that Israel needs more military assistance funding for aircraft purchases from the United States. Specifically, it needs enough money to buy and equip 15 more F-15Is for a total force of 40, without

cutting its planned purchase of F-16s. Some F-15I proponents have called for a "second squadron" of F-15Is, but the U.S. should not be in the business of dictating the organization of the Israeli Air Force. What it should be doing is helping Israel meet the full range of its legitimate military needs.

Fifteen more F-15s for Israel is not enough to keep the F-15 line open for an extended period of time, but that's precisely the point: this may be the last chance for Israel to acquire an adequate strategic strike capability before the F-15 line closes. Making such a purchase would nearly double the IAF's capacity for long-range strikes while permitting more efficient use of the support infrastructure bought to support the 25 F-15Is already in the force. It would also free up F-16s for other missions, thus enhancing utilization of the entire tactical-aircraft inventory.

But the case for funding a viable IAF strategic force transcends Israeli military needs. The U.S. economic and political interest in the Middle East-Persian Gulf region will continue to grow in the years ahead as America becomes more dependent on foreign oil. Unfortunately, its access to bases and freedom to act militarily in the region will probably diminish, forcing it in some cases to rely on allies to achieve military goals. Israel is the only stable, reliable U.S. ally willing to take the necessary risks. Congress and the Clinton Administration need to equip it so that it is ready when the time comes.

**MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE**

A message from the House of Representatives was received announcing that the Speaker signed the following enrolled bill on July 1, 1999:

**H.R. 775. An act to establish certain procedures for civil actions brought for damages relating to the failure of any device or system to process or otherwise deal with the transition from year 1999 to the year 2000, and for other purposes.**

**MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE RECEIVED DURING ADJOURNMENT**

A message from the House of Representatives was received, during the adjournment of the Senate, announcing that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

**H.R. 1691. An act to protect religious liberty.**

**H.R. 2466. An act making appropriations for the Department of the Interior and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes.**

The message further announced that the House agrees to the resolution (H. Res. 249) returning the Senate the bill (S. 254) to reduce violent juvenile crime, promote accountability by and rehabilitation of juvenile criminals, punish and deter violent gang crime, and for other purposes, in the opinion of this House, contravenes the first clause of the seventh section of the first article of the Constitution of the United States and is an infringement of the privileges of this House and that such bill be respectfully returned to the Senate with a message communicating this resolution.

This message also announced that the Speaker appoints the following Members as additional conferees in the conference on the disagreeing votes of the

House on the amendment of the House to the bill (S. 1059) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2000 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of the Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Forces, and for other purposes: As additional conferees from the Committee on House Administration, for consideration of section 1303 of the Senate bill and modifications committed to conference: Mr. THOMAS, Mr. BOEHNER, and Mr. HOYER.

#### MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read twice and placed on the calendar:

H. R. 2466. An act making appropriations for the Department of the Interior and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes.

#### REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. ROTH, from the Committee on Finance, without amendment:

S. 1386. An original bill to amend the Trade Act of 1974 to extend the authorization for trade adjustment assistance.

S. 1387. An original bill to extend certain trade preferences to sub-Saharan African countries.

S. 1388. An original bill to extend the Generalized System of Preferences.

S. 1389. An original bill to provide additional trade benefits to certain beneficiary countries in the Caribbean.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second time by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. GREGG (for himself, Mr. KERREY, Mr. BREAUX, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. THOMPSON, Mr. ROBB, and Mr. THOMAS):

S. 1383. A bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to provide for individual savings accounts funded by employee and employer social security payroll deductions, to extend the solvency of the old-age, survivors, and disability insurance program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. ABRAHAM (for himself, Mr. BOND, and Mr. KOHL):

S. 1384. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for a national folic acid education program to prevent birth defects, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. REED:

S. 1385. A bill to require that jewelry boxes imported from another country be indelibly marked with the country of origin; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. ROTH:

S. 1386. An original bill to amend the Trade Act of 1974 to extend the authorization for trade adjustment assistance; from the Committee on Finance; placed on the calendar.

S. 1387. An original bill to extend certain trade preferences to sub-Saharan African

countries; from the Committee on Finance; placed on the calendar.

S. 1388. An original bill to extend the Generalized System of Preferences; from the Committee on Finance; placed on the calendar.

S. 1389. An original bill to provide additional trade benefits to certain beneficiary countries in the Caribbean; from the Committee on Finance; placed on the calendar.

#### STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. ABRAHAM (for himself, Mr. BOND, and Mr. KOHL):

S. 1384. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for a national folic acid education program to prevent birth defects, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

THE FOLIC ACID PROMOTION AND BIRTH DEFECTS PREVENTION ACT OF 1999

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise to introduce the Folic Acid Promotion and Birth Defects Prevention Act of 1999. I would also like to thank my colleagues Senator BOND and Senator KOHL for cosponsoring this important piece of legislation.

Mr. President, each year over 8,000 infants die from birth defects. The loss of these children, who could have grown up to be community leaders, teachers, doctors, or lawyers, weighs heavily upon our society. In addition, each year over 2,500 babies born live with serious birth defects of the brain and spine, called neural tube defects, and over 50 percent of these cases are preventable. In 1991, research proved that if pregnant women take as little as 400 micrograms of B vitamin folic acid each day, 50 to 70 percent of all cases of these serious birth defects of the brain and spine, such as spina bifida, would be prevented. Unfortunately, this information is not widely known by the public. According to a Gallup Poll conducted for the March of Dimes, only 32 percent of women of childbearing age reported taking a multivitamin with folic acid on a daily basis.

We must broaden public awareness about the prevention of these crippling defects. For this reason, I have introduced the Folic Acid Promotion and Birth Defects Prevention Act of 1999. This legislation authorizes \$20 million for the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), in partnership with state and local public and private entities, to launch an education and public awareness campaign, conduct research to identify effective strategies for increasing folic acid consumption by women of reproducing age, and evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies.

Mr. President, this legislation is an effort to link great advances in research with everyday life. This life-saving information about the consumption of folic acid, which will prolong the health and well-being of women and infants, needs to be broadcast to families and individuals across the country. It

is my firm belief that this legislation will be the vehicle to help bring this important message into every home in America.

I would like to take a moment to thank the March of Dimes for their involvement in this issue. Their work will be critical in getting this legislation passed and in helping spread the message of the benefits of folic acid. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

#### ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 324

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 324, a bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act with respect to registration requirements for practitioners who dispense narcotic drugs in schedule IV or V for maintenance treatment or detoxification treatment.

S. 556

At the request of Mr. BAUCUS, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. ALLARD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 556, a bill to amend title 39, United States Code, to establish guidelines for the relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction of post offices, and for other purposes.

S. 593

At the request of Mr. COVERDELL, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. DOMENICI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 593, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase maximum taxable income for the 15 percent rate bracket, to provide a partial exclusion from gross income for dividends and interest received by individuals, to provide a long-term capital gains deduction for individuals, to increase the traditional IRA contribution limit, and for other purposes.

S. 782

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. INOUYE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 782, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to modify the exception to the prohibition on the interception of wire, oral, or electronic communications to require a health insurance issuer, health plan, or health care provider obtain an enrollee's or patient's consent to their interception, and for other purposes.

S. 821

At the request of Mr. LAUTENBERG, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 821, a bill to provide for the collection of data on traffic stops.

S. 1007

At the request of Mr. JEFFORDS, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1007, a bill to assist in the conservation of great apes by supporting and providing financial resources for the conservation programs of countries within the range of great apes and projects of persons with demonstrated expertise in the conservation of great apes.