

Israel is the largest cumulative recipient of U.S. aid since World War II (not counting the huge sums being spent in Iraq). The \$3 billion or so per year that Israel receives from the U.S. amounts to about \$500 per Israeli. Most of this money is earmarked in the annual Foreign Operations (foreign aid) appropriations bills, with the three major items being military grants (Foreign Military Financing, or FMF), economic grants (Economic Support Funds, or ESF), and “migration and refugee assistance.” (Refugee assistance originally was intended to help Israel absorb Jewish refugees from the Soviet Union, but this was expanded in 1985 to include all refugees resettling in Israel. In fact, Israel doesn’t differentiate between refugees and other immigrants, so this money is used for all immigrants to Israel.)

Not earmarked but also included in congressional appropriations bills is Israel’s portion of grants for American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA) and monies buried in the appropriations for other departments or agencies. These are mostly for so-called “U.S.-Israeli cooperative programs” in defense, agriculture, science, and hi-tech industries.

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