



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on October 14, 2025

Trump Lauds Megadonor Miriam Adelson in Knesset Remarks

When President Donald Trump [addressed](#) the Israeli Knesset on Monday, he made waves not just for his diplomatic comments but for a personal quip about one of his biggest donors. Pointing toward Miriam Adelson, [he said](#),

I'm gonna get her in trouble with this one, but I actually asked her once, 'So, Miriam, I know you love Israel. What do you love more? The United States or Israel?' She refused to answer. That might mean Israel.



AP Images

The comment prompted laughter and applause in the chamber. But in his speech, Trump made clear the deep access and influence Miriam and her late husband, Sheldon, enjoyed:

Miriam and Sheldon would come into the office, they'd call me. I think they had more trips to the White House than anybody else I could think of. Look at her sitting there so innocently! She got \$60 billion in the bank ... and she loves Israel.

He went on to reminisce about the couple's involvement in policy discussions during his first term,

Her husband was a very aggressive man, but I loved him, very supportive of me. And he'd call up, 'Can I come over and see you?' I say, 'Sheldon, I'm the president of the United States, it doesn't work that way.' He'd come in and do good, though.

Trump credited the Adelsons with inspiring key pro-Israel decisions during his first administration. Those included the recognition of Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights and moving the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem.

By mentioning the Adelsons in his remarks, Trump drew attention to a deeper question: How much influence should private donors — especially those with dual ties — have when it comes to U.S. foreign policy?

The Adelsons

So who are the Adelsons, who had such preferential access to the president of the United States?

Miriam Adelson is a dual citizen of Israel and America. A physician and billionaire, she was born in Tel Aviv in 1945 and trained in addiction medicine, later founding treatment clinics in Las Vegas and Tel Aviv. She married Sheldon Adelson in 1991. He was a casino magnate who built the Las Vegas Sands Corporation into a global resort empire and became one of America's most influential political donors before his death in 2021.



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In 2018, Miriam Adelson [received](#) the Presidential Medal of Freedom for her philanthropy, medical work in addiction treatment, and support for Jewish and Israeli causes.

After Sheldon's passing, Miriam assumed control of the family's business and continued their mission. She owns [Israel Hayom](#) ("Israel Today"), a major Israeli newspaper, [part](#) of the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, and, since 2023, a controlling stake in the NBA's Dallas Mavericks.

The Adelsons have poured hundreds of millions of dollars into causes advancing Israeli and Jewish interests. They are the single largest private donors to Birthright Israel, giving about [\\$500 million](#) to fund free trips for young Jews to visit Israel. The couple created and financed the Maccabee Task Force (MTF), which combats Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) campaigns on U.S. campuses, [providing](#) \$70 million since 2016.

They have also funded [Friends of the Israel Defense Forces](#) (FIDF), [Yad Vashem](#) (the Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem), and [Ariel University](#) in the West Bank. Reports also link their foundation to [HaShomer HaChadash](#) ("the New Guardian"), a volunteer security organization active in settler and rural communities.

"All we care about is being good Zionists, being good citizens of Israel," Sheldon Adelson [said](#) in 2010 — a statement that still defines the family's legacy of influence and devotion.

U.S. Politics

The Adelsons' political giving has long matched their philanthropy in scale and intensity. Since the mid-2010s, they have been among the most influential private funders of the Republican Party and its pro-Israel network.

In the 2024 election cycle, Miriam Adelson became the single largest individual donor in American politics. According to website [OpenSecrets](#), she contributed \$100 million to [Preserve America](#), a super PAC backing Trump's campaign. The money was delivered in four separate installments, ranging from \$20 million to \$25 million each. Preserve America used those funds to finance nationwide advertising and voter-mobilization efforts. [AIPAC Tracker](#), an activist-research project, estimated that the Preserve America PAC, funded by some [hundred donors](#), poured "\$215 million+ into U.S. presidential elections to help Trump."

Adelson also remains one of the largest backers of the Republican Jewish Coalition ([RJC](#)), a political advocacy group connecting Jewish voters with the Republican Party and promoting pro-Israel policies. OpenSecrets data show that the [RJC spent](#) more than \$13 million in the 2024 cycle, and \$400,000 on lobbying.

Pro-Israel spending has also reached intraparty contests. In Kentucky, the super PAC "MAGA Kentucky" spent about \$1.56 million between June 27 and August 4 on ads opposing Representative Thomas Massie (R-Ky.), who had urged ending U.S. military aid to Israel. [According](#) to the *Washington Examiner*, the PAC was financed by three major donors. One of them is Preserve America PAC, which gave \$750,000 to the effort.

Similar dynamics have appeared in other races. Pro-Israel groups, including political arms of [AIPAC](#) and the RJC, have spent millions in recent primaries to boost both Republican and Democratic candidates seen as reliably supportive of Israel and to defeat those viewed as at odds with pro-Israel positions (see [here](#) and [here](#)) — often making Israel policy a visible test of party loyalty.



Trump's Aid to Israel

When Trump returned to the White House in January, he immediately reinforced the long-standing U.S.-Israel military assistance framework.

As [reported](#) by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), within weeks, the administration notified Congress of four arms packages to Israel totaling \$8.4 billion. That included a \$6.75 billion deal for munitions and guidance-conversion kits — the largest such “sale” in nearly a decade. These foreign-military “sales” are heavily subsidized by U.S. taxpayers through the [Foreign Military Financing](#) (FMF) program, which provides Israel with \$3.3 billion annually in grants to purchase American-made weapons.

In late February, the administration invoked emergency authority to fast-track shipments of bombs, JDAM kits, and D9 bulldozers without full congressional review. Describing the development, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the administration was providing nearly \$4 billion in additional arms sales, noting that roughly \$12 billion in weapons transfers had already been approved under its watch.

By mid-2025, U.S. support under Trump merged with prior wartime allocations. A Brown University/Watson Institute study published last week [estimates](#) that since October 7, 2023, the United States has provided \$21.7 billion in military aid to Israel across the Biden and Trump administrations.

Trump's actions underscored Israel's exceptional status in U.S. foreign policy. Even amid sweeping budget reviews and aid cuts elsewhere, Israel's military programs remained insulated — benefiting from emergency authorizations and weapons transfers unprecedented in both scope and speed.

That special treatment has not gone unnoticed in Jerusalem. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu introduced Trump to Knesset as “the greatest friend that the State of Israel has ever had in the White House.”

Rising Contention

As the scale and visibility of U.S. involvement in the Middle East grows, critics have sharpened their rhetoric. In a recent [viral monologue](#), Tucker Carlson observed that \$300 billion have flowed from the United States to Israel since the country's founding in 1948, questioning what tangible geopolitical benefit America receives in return.

In Congress, outspoken lawmakers have begun to challenge what they describe as undue influence by pro-Israel lobbying networks. Representatives [Thomas Massie](#) (R-Ky.) and [Marjorie Taylor Greene](#) (R-Ga.) have accused colleagues of being often guided by “AIPAC handlers” rather than by American interests.

Those critics stress that supporting Israel — or caring deeply about the well-being of the Jewish people — does not require American involvement in every foreign conflict. They argue that the U.S. Constitution demands restraint in forming entangling alliances. Blind deference to foreign interests, they warn, risks exceeding constitutional limits and further straining the budget.

As the Adelsons' influence illustrates, wealth and private access can shape policy in ways that drift from republican norms. One can admire Israel's resilience, support its people, and wish for its security — while still insisting that American foreign policy serve the interests and constitutional boundaries of the United States alone.



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