



# Why the US Security Coordinator (USSC) Is Vital

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## Executive Summary

Since 2005, the [Office of the Security Coordinator](#) (known until March 2025 as the Office of the US Security Coordinator for Israel and the Palestinian Authority) headquartered at the US Embassy in Jerusalem has been charged with professionalizing and training the Palestinian Authority Security Forces (PASF) in order to achieve the security conditions stipulated in the Oslo Accords. OSC has also historically played a critical role in safeguarding Israel's security and facilitating coordination and cooperation between the PASF and Israel Defense Forces (IDF), even during episodes during which other communications between the PA and Israel have been suspended. In its nearly two decades, OSC has led the effort to transform the PASF into a US-trained force that is capable of countering Hamas and maintaining order in the West Bank. That work is ongoing and imperfect, but fundamental to the viability of the two-state solution. It is also one of the few durable success stories in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, made possible only through sustained US leadership.

In light of the centrality of OSC's role in developing and maintaining the viability of a future Palestinian state, as well as the safety of Israel during this period of heightened regional instability, J Street is deeply concerned by continued [reporting](#) that this vital institution is being considered for elimination under the State Department's recent reorganization announced by Secretary of State Marco Rubio. We strongly urge Members of Congress to make clear to Secretary Rubio and the Trump Administration that the OSC must not only be maintained but also fully funded and strengthened as an essential tool for counterterrorism coordination and the long-term security of both Israelis and Palestinians.

## What is the Office of the Security Coordinator?

The Office of the Security Coordinator is the latest iteration of a US-led, multinational mission established in 2005 to advance Israeli-Palestinian security cooperation and support the development of professional Palestinian security institutions. Headquartered in Jerusalem, the OSC operates under the US State Department and includes military and civilian personnel from the US and eleven allied NATO countries. Its current charter charges OSC with synchronizing international support efforts and commitment to enduring partnership between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. (Note: USSC's charter also gave it responsibility for directing US security sector assistance to the Palestinian Authority. That assistance was [frozen](#) in January 2025 as part of the new Trump Administration's overall freeze on foreign assistance. While it was restored in March 2025, the direction of those funds is no longer mentioned in the OSC Charter).

OSC's mission and goals have been scaled back considerably in the early months of the Trump Administration. Previously, the primary objectives included:

- Enhance security coordination between the IDF and PASF.
- Train and equip the PASF to perform effective counterterrorism and policing functions.
- Lead international efforts in advising the Palestinian Authority on security sector reform.

- Support stability initiatives to prevent terrorism and radicalization in the West Bank.
- Lay the groundwork for potential governance structures in Gaza post-Hamas.

The ultimate goal of these efforts was for the Palestinian security sector to be able to effectively coordinate with the government of Israel and international community, sustain independent and accountable security apparatus institutions, and provide a safe and secure environment in the West Bank conducive to a lasting peace agreement between Israelis and Palestinians. Today, the new OSC operates under a much narrower scope focused on facilitating and optimizing coordination and communication between Israel and Palestinian security forces by building trust, confidence, and capacity.

### **OSC/USSC Has a Record of Success**

- Funding to then-USSC fluctuated from \$150 million in 2011 to being zeroed out at the end of the first Trump Administration in 2019. Historically, though, the relatively low cost of around \$40-70 million annually has made OSC/USSC one of the most cost-effective U.S. investments in Middle East security and stability.
- The establishment of the PASF – with support from the USSC – remains one of the true bright spots in Israeli-Palestinian relations over the past two decades. PASF forces have played a key role in stabilizing the West Bank and pushing back against Hamas and other extremist groups after the second Intifada and since. And security coordination between the PASF and the IDF, fostered and mediated by the USSC, has repeatedly helped prevent large-scale violence.
- The PASF is not without flaws – this is not an indictment of the program, but rather a nod to the critical work that remains to be done. The PASF has been weakened in recent years by the absence of a political horizon towards a Palestinian state, which has a negative impact on morale, Israeli policies that restrict funding and equipment, and ongoing issues of PA corruption and inefficiency. Losing the PASF entirely or through passive neglect would be far worse. Without a functioning PASF, the West Bank risks collapsing into chaos, triggering further violence, deepening Palestinian suffering, and gravely undermining Israeli security. While eliminating the OSC may not immediately cause such a collapse, it would significantly increase the risk of that outcome in the long-term.

### **The OSC Remains Vital – Here Are Some of the Reasons Why**

The OSC, even in its currently scaled back capacity, plays a pivotal role in maintaining Israel's security, regional stability, and fostering security cooperation between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Eliminating it could disrupt critical functions, leading to increased instability in the region and undermining efforts toward a sustainable peace. Some of the key functions that should continue include:

1. **Essential Communication Channel:** During periods of heightened tension, the OSC has served as the sole conduit for communication between Israeli and Palestinian security forces, preventing further deterioration of relations.

2. **Facilitation of Security Assistance:** The OSC oversees the transfer of necessary equipment and weaponry to the PASF, ensuring that these forces are adequately equipped to maintain order and counter extremist threats posed by both internal and external actors. As the Trump Administration reviews the provision of assistance, it should maintain its support for OSC as a valuable tool in achieving its strategic goals vis-à-vis Israel and normalization.
3. **High-Level Engagement:** The position's current rank as a three-star general allows for direct engagement with senior officials in Washington, Jerusalem, and Ramallah, facilitating effective coordination and swift decision-making.
4. **Support for Future Governance in Gaza:** The OSC is poised to assist in establishing and training a Palestinian security force capable of assuming control in Gaza post-conflict, offering the sole viable alternative to Hamas's security stranglehold.
5. **Preventing Hamas and Iran-Backed Groups from Gaining a Foothold in the West Bank and Beyond:** With Iran seeking to reconstitute its network of proxies in Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen, the West Bank remains a key area where US and Israeli-backed institutions hold ground and prevent Iran from building out from that territory.
6. **Maintaining Stability Necessary for a Political Horizon:** Expansion of the Abraham Accords and normalization – particularly with Saudi Arabia – is increasingly dependent on a political pathway to Palestinian self-determination. A collapse in West Bank stability would derail these efforts. The OSC plays a direct role in maintaining the calm necessary for diplomacy to proceed and will underpin the security of both Israel and a future Palestinian state.

## Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

US leadership and convening power in Israel and the Palestinian territories have been tested, but remain unmatched in terms of safeguarding Israeli security and laying the groundwork for greater regional stability, including through normalization. The OSC is arguably one of the most important tools available in pursuit of those objectives. Most urgently, it is impossible to implement an effective post-conflict strategy for Gaza without assurances that Israel's security will be paramount and that resolution will open the elusive pathway to Palestinian self-governance. Neither of those pre-conditions will be possible absent an expanded role for the PASF – an expanded role that will only be feasible through capacity building provided by OSC with its international partners. The OSC is likewise indispensable to any sustained effort to prevent further extremist gains in the West Bank.

With so many forces pushing the region toward instability, now is precisely the wrong time to dismantle one of the few American-led institutions that has delivered consistent results with bipartisan support. The OSC is indispensable – not only for Israel's security and Palestinian stability, but for advancing a future where peace and statehood remain possible. In short, eliminating OSC would undercut Israel's security, embolden extremists, risk further regional escalation and weaken America's ability to influence outcomes on the ground. Rather than abdicate its unique position, the US government should reaffirm leadership in Israeli-Palestinian security coordination and put its full backing behind a robust OSC mission.