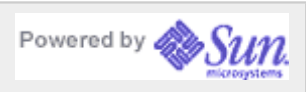


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# Israel to get U.S. "bunker buster" bombs - report

24 Jul 2006 07:56:26 GMT

Source: Reuters

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DUBAI, July 24 (Reuters) - The United States will soon provide Israel with some 100 "bunker buster" bombs to kill the leader of Lebanon's Hizbollah guerrilla group and destroy its trenches, Asharq al-Awsat newspaper reported on Monday.

Quoting unidentified informed sources in both Washington and Tel Aviv, the Saudi-owned Arabic daily said the bombs, which can penetrate up to 40 metres (130 feet) under ground, would be shipped to Israel from a U.S. military base in Qatar.

Israel has been bombarding Lebanon since Hizbollah killed eight soldiers and abducted two others on July 12 and the guerrilla group has fought back. Some 320 people, almost all civilians, have been killed in Lebanon and 37 in Israel. On at least two occasions, the Israeli air force hit Beirut buildings in what media reports described as bids to assassinate Hizbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and senior group officials.

Nasrallah emerged unscathed both times and said other top guerrillas were also unhurt. Some Israeli military experts blamed the missions' apparent failure on the absence of air force ordnance capable of cracking Hizbollah command bunkers.

Israel asked the United States in 2004 to sell it bunker busters. Pentagon approval for the sale of 100 GBU-28 bombs, capable of penetrating some 20 feet (7 metres) of concrete, came through last year but Israel's Defence Ministry, amid steep budget cuts, decided against making the purchase.

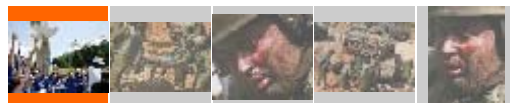
Citing U.S. officials, the New York Times reported on Saturday that the Bush administration was rushing a delivery of satellite- and laser-guided bombs to Israel in response to an Israeli request connected to the Lebanon offensive.

The report did not give details on the munitions in question but said they were part of a sale the Pentagon approved in 2005.

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