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Defense/Middle East

Growing Tension Between U.S. and Israel Over F-35 Jet Fighter

13:55 May 24, '06 / 26 Iyar 5766



The U.S. has indicated it will not allow Israel to install its own advanced equipment on next generation fighter planes, the F-35, limiting Israel's technological edge over its enemies.

The F-35, a next-generation jet fighter, costing \$276.5 billion in development and purchasing costs, is being built in the United States with input from a number of U.S. allies. Though Israel is playing only a small role thus far in developing the plane, it expects to ultimately purchase the jet for the IDF.

According to a report in Ma'ariv, the U.S. is refusing to allow Israel to develop its own guidance, firing, and missile systems for the new aircraft.

That policy will come as a heavy blow to Israel Aircraft Industries, which has traditionally has put its ultra-advanced high-tech equipment in fighter jets purchased from the United States.

Many military strategists claim that Israel's technological superiority over its enemies is derived mainly from the advantage it attains by grafting its own top secret equipment onto the American planes.

This is especially true in cases where the U.S. sells some of its most sensitive and sophisticated equipment to erstwhile allies, such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia, which are potential military adversaries of the Jewish State.

Israeli aeronautic military technology has gained worldwide renown for making U.S. fighter jets much more effective in combat. Souped up Israeli versions of American jets have a clear military advantage over their generic counterparts. U.S. refusal to allow Israel to use its unique technologies on the F-35 may put Israel's strategic military advantage at risk.

An Israeli Air Force delegation that recently visited the U.S. and toured the Lockheed Martin plant, where the plane is being developed, failed to convince American officials of the importance of fitting Israeli weapons systems onto the F-35.

As a result, Israel is considering withdrawing from the project altogether. Other countries involved in developing the plane, Britain, Turkey, and Norway, are also reconsidering their involvement due to production delays and widespread cost overruns that are running into tens of billions of dollars.



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A Lockheed spokesman said the company expects to test a prototype by 2008 and deliver the aircraft by 2011. The Pentagon is planning on manufacturing 2,500 jets, primarily for the U.S. and British air forces.

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Readers' comments

34 comments have been published to this story.

1. Are the Americans afraid
Matti (21:47, May-23, 06)
2. Boosh wants Israel to burn
I wish I could do more for Israel, Canada (22:01, May-23, 06)
3. We should build our own
Zalmi, London (22:04, May-23, 06)
4. Will they finally remember "Yisrael Bitach BaShem?"
Yisrael, Baltimore (22:18, May-23, 06)
5. probably going to start a fight here but.....
(22:31, May-23, 06)
6. better than egypt or saudi arabia
shameful -shamfeul- shameful, that the usa is now treating us no (22:33, May-23, 06)
7. We must become self-sufficient
Yehoshua Friedman, Kochav Hashachar, Israel (22:34, May-23, 06)
8. home grown
Jeff, Atlanta (22:54, May-23, 06)
9. IS THE U.S.A. JEALOUS OF ISRAELS
Mayer Katz, Woodbridge, VA - USA (23:05, May-23, 06)
10. Israel is licensing the Jet, not owning it.
Steve, USA (23:13, May-23, 06)
11. Get the plain and put your tech in, who's asking
Jack, Brooklyn (23:47, May-23, 06)
12. ITS THAT TIME FOLKS
DACON9 (01:32, May-24, 06)
13. Perhaps build own UCAV's instead!
Nebojsa Yitzchak M, Toronto (01:52, May-24, 06)
14. remember the Lavi
Israel, Brooklyn (02:17, May-24, 06)
15. BUILD YOUR OWN
JOHN F SMITH, BRIDGETON (02:25, May-24, 06)
16. One Day
Marc B., Los Angeles (03:29, May-24, 06)
17. come on guys...
david, florida (03:38, May-24, 06)
18. This is typical of the US Defense Industry...
Robert, Los Angeles (03:49, May-24, 06)
19. BOW v JET
DAVID MELECH YISRAEL, CLASSIFIED (05:04, May-24, 06)
20. Engineer proto-type for IAF w/ funding from Pro-Israeli

Donors

Bridget, OR, USA (06:28, May-24, 06)

21. America has, no doubt, made promises to Saudi Arabia and Egypt (--)

(06:29, May-24, 06)

22. Iran

chadgad, london (06:48, May-24, 06)

23. We have to build our own planes

Michael Iosif, New Jerusalem (07:11, May-24, 06)

24. Modern planes are programmed...

As, sameasyours (08:25, May-24, 06)

25. Hack the F-35

Asher Anzel Duvid, NYC (08:32, May-24, 06)

26. Buy Russian and upgrade it or just rebuild f-16s and F-15s

(08:40, May-24, 06)

27. It's a Kfir C3 re-designed as a Fairey Battle, anyway

Walt O'Brien, Syracuse, NY USA (08:46, May-24, 06)

28. What is the main issue with F-35

Nebojsa Yitzchak M, Toronto (09:30, May-24, 06)

29. #10

David, Yesha (09:43, May-24, 06)

30. "Israel is considering withdrawing from the project"

Michael A. Shoemaker, Eugene, Oregon, USA (09:55, May-24, 06)

31. American business 1 Israeli business 0

simcha, Netanya (13:53, May-24, 06)

32. america is killing Israels defense industry

(14:35, May-24, 06)

33. Would Bush like the Modifications for USA and Britain?

Dr. Wolf, ajwps@yahoo.com (15:19, May-24, 06)

34. Withdraw for Israel's survival

Susie, Mpls (16:28, May-24, 06)



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