
WORLD

JERUSALEM, April 20 (Xinhua) -- Israel is interested in receiving the most advanced fighter jets in the world from the United States, in order to maintain its militant deterrent in Middle East, Israeli daily the Jerusalem Post reported on Friday.

Israel Air Force has expressed newfound interest in receiving the F-22, a U.S.-developed fifth generation stealth fighter jet, and has requested that the Israeli Defense Ministry present the request on its behalf to the Pentagon, said the paper.

On Thursday, visiting U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates said that Washington remains committed to preserving Israel's military edge over its neighbors.

His remarks were made aiming at easing Israeli concerns about a planned American weapons sale to Gulf Arab allies.

The post said that the sale or transfer of F-22s to Israel did not come up in talks between Israeli officials and Gates during the latter's visit to Israel on Wednesday and Thursday.

However, Israeli defense officials said that Israel would ask for receiving the aircraft in order to retain its "military edge" in the Middle East, the report added.

The F-22 formally entered operational service in the U.S. Air Force in December 2005 but has not yet been sold outside the U.S. due to a federal law which barred export sale of the aircraft.

Last March, however, the U.S. Congress lifted the ban on its sale, potentially clearing the path for an Israeli purchase of what is considered the most advanced fighter jet in the world today, according to the report.