

Congress approves \$1.2 billion worth of US-funded Israeli arms purchases, including 50 huge GBU-28 guided bunker busters

October 4, 2007, 10:29 PM (GMT+02:00)



American GBU-28
guided bunker buster
sold to Israel

DEBKAFfile's military sources report the package, discussed by US Pentagon and Israel defense ministry officials, aims at replenishing the seriously depleted Israel Air Force stocks of missiles, bombs and fuel to their level prior to the 2006 Lebanon war, ready for any potential war contingency. Some of these items will be delivered shortly; others over a five-year period.

They include thousands of missiles, tens of thousands of new bombs worth \$799 million and 132 million gallons of jet fuel worth \$308 million.

The accent of this consignment will be on the heaviest American bombs designed for such subterranean targets as the bunker fortresses of Iran, Syria and Lebanon's Hizballah and on operating and guidance systems for upgrading Israeli Air Force ammunition.

The list, according to US defense sources, also includes 10,000 JDAM tail kits for high precision guidance of bombs in all weathers at ranges of up to 25 km, which are designed for use with the GBU-29-32 bunker busters; 4,000 laser-guided Paveway II munitions kits; more than 11,000 Mk-84 and Mk-82 bombs; 2,000 heavy fortifications-penetrating BLU-109 bombs; and 50 GBU-28 5,000-pound guided bunker busters.

The Israeli Air Force will also receive 500 Sidewinders AIM-9M, and 200 AIM-120C (AMRAAM) medium range air-to-air missiles.

The American DefenseNews.com quotes Israeli industry executives, including the state-owned Rafael Armament Development Authority, Israel Aerospace Industries and Military Industries, as concerned by the country's increasing dependence on American weaponry. While appreciative of American generosity, they complain that locally made, alternative products are often more capable than US systems and better adjusted to Israeli needs. They took particular exception to the defense ministry's plans to stock up on US Sidewinders and AMRAAM missile when the Python-5, Derby and follow-on indigenous systems are specifically designed for the Israeli Air force.

This massive purchasing program, say Israeli industry sources, not only denies their firms billions of shekels in new orders, but threatens to erode their international sales of such items as Israeli-built air-to-air missiles, which have made their mark on world markets.

