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A 14-plane US airlift lands high-powered FBX radar in Israel with US personnel

DEBKAFfile Special Report

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Huge US Air Force C-5 Galaxy and C-17 Globemaster III transports have ferried the high-powered FBX-T anti-missile radar to Israel's Nevatim Air Base south of Beersheba. **DEBKAFfile's** military sources report that the transportable radar surveillance/forward-based X-band radar was accompanied by some 120 American European Command personnel. The area of its deployment at the Negev base has been fenced off and made off-limits to non-American personnel.

This is the first time an Israel Defense Forces facility housing an American weapons system has been closed to Israeli military.

The X-band radar has been deployed with cooling systems, generators, perimeter defense weaponry and dozens of technicians and security forces to operate and defend the installation.

The Raytheon system can detect a flying object the size of a baseball at a distance of 4,700 km, fix on its speed and trajectory and convey the data to the Israeli Arrow anti-missile battery. This equals detecting an Iranian Shehab-3 ballistic missile 5.5 minutes after its launch, which means that it is picked up halfway on its 11-minute flight from Iran to bomb targets in Israel, adding precious minutes to Israel's response time for incoming missile attacks.

Israel has furthermore been given improved access to US satellites capable of identifying missiles at the instant of their launch. Israel will now be directly linked to the satellites - albeit through the US Joint Tactical Ground Station - JTAGS in Europe.

Commenting on the FBX radar deployment, a Pentagon source said: First, we want to put Iran on notice that we're bolstering our capabilities throughout the region, and especially in Israel. But just as important, we're telling the Israelis, 'Calm down; behave. We're doing all we can to stand by you and strengthen defenses.'"

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