

Israel, U.S. hold large-scale joint missile defense exercise

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Prepare for a major 'incident' from desperate conservative forces worldwide! The following article would be a routine report if not for U.S. war games and joint military exercises to be held in Australia in the next few weeks. The recent visit of deputy sheriff, John Howard, to Japan on behalf of his master, the USA, provides for Japan to take an active role in military affairs in the region. Howard signed a joint military assistance pact with Japan, which maintains a constitutional anti-war restriction on its military (at the moment).

Joint military exercises in strategic locations around the globe should alarm China, Russia and other nations. The Americans have no notion of subtlety so these exercises indicate more than just routine events. The rogue must be stopped!

JERUSALEM: Israel and the U.S. are conducting a large-scale missile defense exercise aimed at combining their systems, American and Israeli officials said Sunday, as both countries warn that Iran could obtain nuclear weapons and long-range missiles.

The operation, code-named "Juniper Cobra," is taking place in the Negev desert in southern Israel with thousands of American and Israeli troops. Both sides described the timing as routine, denying a direct connection to the Iran threat.

Israeli and U.S. forces are testing new ways to deal with missiles capable of carrying nuclear, chemical and biological warheads, according to military officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to give details of the operation.

The United States is Israel's closest ally, providing about \$2.2 billion (€1.65 billion) a year in military assistance and coordinating many aspects of defense policy.

Stewart Tuttle, the U.S. Embassy spokesman in Tel Aviv, would not directly say if the goal was to counter a potential nuclear threat.

"It is a computer simulation exercise designed to test the interoperability of the air defense system," he said. "The air defense can protect you against whatever happens to be on the warhead."

Both Israel and the U.S. have expressed concern about Iran's nuclear program, suspecting that the goal is to produce nuclear weapons, despite Iranian denials. Israel considers Iran its most serious strategic threat, since its president has often called for Israel's destruction and the nation has developed long-range missiles.

This is the fourth time the two countries have conducted the joint "Juniper Cobra" exercise, held every two years. The current drill began last week and is set to end Tuesday.

During the last exercise, in 2005, the tests included integrating the Israeli-made Arrow anti-ballistic

missiles with the U.S. Patriot system to create a multilayered air defense system.

The Arrow, a joint U.S.-Israeli project, is the world's first operational anti-ballistic missile system.

The concept is for the Arrow to intercept inbound missiles at high altitudes, while the Patriot provides cover at lower levels. The U.S. deployed Patriot batteries in Israel in 1991, when Iraq fired 39 Scud missiles at Israel during the first Gulf war.

The Arrow was jointly developed by Israel Aircraft Industries and Chicago-based Boeing Co. at a cost of more than US\$1 billion (euro750 million), in response to the first Gulf war, where the Patriot missiles failed to intercept many of the incoming Scuds. Some reports say Patriots missed them all.

The Israeli military said in a statement, "From time to time, the United States and Israel conduct routine exercises in Israel. This exercise has been planned for over a year and is part of a routine training cycle designed to validate interoperability of air defense systems."

Military officials identified those taking part in the drill as Israel's air defense artillery brigade and the U.S. Army Corps' 69th air defense artillery brigade.

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