

# *U.S. and Israel ramp up nuclear weapons testing and deployment*

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Tel Aviv, February 4 (RHC)-- The ministry of military affairs of the Israeli regime has announced that it recently conducted a launch test of a “rocket propulsion system from a base in the center of the country.” The ministry refused to disclose any additional details regarding the nature of the missile, contrary to its usual conduct following satellite launcher and missile interceptor tests.

The little information revealed about the test prompted speculation among observers that the tested projectile may have been related to Israel's long-range ballistic missile program, which Israel will not acknowledge publicly.

Tel Aviv conducted a similar rocket engine test last December with Israeli media reporting that the test was meant to be a “show of force” of the Israeli regime’s “nuclear deterrent system especially aimed at Iran.”

The Israeli military reportedly tests a propulsion system used for carrying nuclear-capable and other missiles in “a show of force aimed at Iran.”

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) said last year that the Israeli regime is in possession of approximately 100 atomic warheads, noting that it has 30 gravity bombs which can be delivered by fighter jets – some of which are believed to be equipped for nuclear weapon delivery.

The regime has refused to allow inspections of its military nuclear facilities or sign the the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

The Federation of American Scientists also warned that Washington was deploying the recently developed W76-2 low-yield nuclear warhead as part of a new generation of less-destructive yet more “usable” nuclear weapons.

The report said the W76-2 warhead, which has an explosive yield of about a third of the atomic bomb dropped on the Japanese city of Nagasaki in August 1945, was supplied to Ohio-class USS Tennessee ballistic missile submarines last month.

The authors of the report, military analyst William Arkin and Federation of American Scientists Nuclear Information Project director Hans Kristensen, warned that such weapons increase the likelihood of a nuclear armed conflict.

In a Newsweek article published earlier this month, Arkin and Kristensen said that the development of the W76-2 warhead is the result of Pentagon planning for potential first strike scenarios “against adversaries, especially Iran.”

The article noted that Washington simulated a nuclear strike against Iran in the Global Thunder 17 nuclear exercise in October 2016 during the tenure of then-US President Barack Obama. It out pointed that the newly-deployed W76-2 warhead “is intended for exactly the type of Iran scenario that played out in the last days of the Obama administration.”

Israel and Washington's provocative military deployments and weapons testing come at a time of major regional tensions resulting from Washington's recent unveiling of the "deal of the century" and notably its assassination of General Soleimani.

Iran retaliated for the January 3rd assassination with a volley of ballistic missiles launched at the U.S.-occupied Ain Al Assad base in Iraq and another outpost in Erbil, the capital of the semi-autonomous Iraqi Kurdistan.

Iran, which has noted that Tel Aviv played a part in the assassination of Lieutenant General Soleimani, had threatened to target Israel if the US were to respond to Iran's retaliatory attack.

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