

Washington gives green light to military deal between Israel and Germany

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Washington, August 17 (RHC)-- The United States has given the green light for a \$3.5 billion sale of Israel's Arrow 3 missile defence system to Germany, the Israeli Ministry of Defense says. The ministry said in a statement on Thursday that senior officials from the Israeli and German defence ministries would sign a letter of commitment to the deal with a preliminary payment of \$600 million.

“With its exceptional long-range interception capabilities, operating at high altitudes above the atmosphere, [the Arrow 3] stands as the top interceptor of its kind,” it said of the US-Israeli developed missile system.

Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant was quoted in the statement as calling the agreement “the largest in Israel’s history,” adding that it would “contribute to Israel’s force buildup and economy.”

The chairwoman of the German Bundestag’s Defence Committee, Marie-Agnes Strack-Zimmermann, said she was “relieved” by the US approval of the deal.

The Arrow 3 system “will be operational by the end of 2025 and on our initiative will become part of a European air defense system,” she told the Deutsche Presse-Agentur dpa news agency.

“What makes it special is that it is the first anti-ballistic system that can also be used in the stratosphere, ie at an altitude of 100 km [60 miles],” Strack-Zimmermann said. “In future, it will help protect Germany and our neighbouring countries from air strikes.”

The Bundestag’s Budget and Defense committees had voted in favour of the purchase in June.

The U.S. is a partner in the Arrow project, which was developed jointly by the Israel Missile Defense Organization and the US Missile Defense Agency.

The war in Ukraine has laid bare a shortage of ground-based air defence systems, such as Raytheon’s Patriot units or the more recently developed IRIS-T, in many Western nations.

While Patriot and IRIS-T systems cover the medium layer of air defence, the Arrow 3 system – produced by Israel Aerospace Industries and Boeing Co – offers protection for the higher layer. Using a detachable warhead that collides with the target, it is designed to intercept ballistic missiles outside the Earth’s atmosphere, an altitude allowing for the safe dispersal of any non-conventional warheads.

Israel’s Army Radio said the official signing ceremony with Germany on the Arrow 3 sale was expected in November.

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