

A U.S.-backed rocket shield to protect Israeli towns against rocket attacks from Gaza

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Global Research Editor's Note

This AP report suggests that Gaza is a strategic threat to Israel's security, requiring the development with US military aid of "Rocket Shield". Realities are twisted and turned upside down. The crimes committed against the people of Gaza including some 1400 civilian deaths in last year's attacks are not mentioned.

WASHINGTON — A U.S.-backed rocket shield is on track to protect Israeli towns against rocket attacks from the Gaza Strip, a senior State Department official said Friday.

The system, dubbed the "Iron Dome," is being touted by the Obama administration as the latest example of expanded military cooperation between the U.S. and Israel. President Barack Obama has asked Congress for \$205 million to accelerate development of the system, about half its total cost.

The election-year message of increased U.S. aid to Israel seems aimed at assuaging the concerns of many Jewish voters that Obama remains committed to Israel's security, despite diplomatic tensions earlier this year.

"As surely as the bond between the United States and Israel is unbreakable, our commitment to Israel's qualitative military edge has never been greater," said Andrew Shapiro, an assistant secretary of State for political and military affairs.

Israel has had no system in place to guard against the thousands of rockets that militants have rained down on its southern and northern borders over the years, fired by Hamas militants in Gaza and Hezbollah guerrillas in Lebanon.

Millions of Israeli civilians are within rocket range, and the military has stepped up its quest for a solution after the country's 2006 war against Hezbollah, when 4,000 short-range Katyusha rockets bombarded northern Israel.

Iron Dome uses cameras and radar to track incoming rockets and shoot them down within seconds of their launch.

Jonathan Peled, a spokesman for the Israeli embassy, said he could not provide details on the latest round of tests, but confirmed that a test this week was successful.

Neither country has said when the system will be operational.

Israel receives about \$3 billion a year in U.S. military aid, including money for training. Last fall, more than 1,000 U.S. troops participated in a massive U.S.-Israeli missile defense exercise codenamed "Juniper Cobra."

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