

The “Juniper Cobra” Air Defense Exercise: American and Israeli Forces Prepare for War against Syria, Hezbollah and Palestine

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*The Jerusalem Post reported that **Juniper Cobra**, a joint air defense exercise with U.S. and IDF forces which was announced by the U.S. Department of Defense last month involving simulated missile attacks directed against Israel from multiple fronts has begun. The report ‘U.S. and IDF Troops, In Major Joint Drill, Simulating Battle on 3 Fronts’ clarifies who and what is involved in the joint-exercise:*

Some 2,000 IDF Aerial Defense troops will be participating alongside 2,500 US troops, including some 1,400 Marines and 1,100 sailors, in the largest joint exercise with US Army’s European Command (EUCOM). The Americans have also deployed the USS Iwo Jima and USS Mount Whitney as well as their Patriot missile defense system, Aegis ballistic missile defense system, communication systems, 25 aircraft, and three hovercraft.

Over the course of the two-week long exercise troops will practice possible challenging and complex scenarios adapted to Israel’s operational reality such as missile threats in various sectors simultaneously as well as the threat posed by precise missiles that Iran is trying to produce for Hezbollah. Simulations during the exercise will include the use of the Arrow missile defense system, the Iron Dome, the Patriot system and for the first time the David Sling system, which was declared operational in April 2017

Hezbollah and the Gaza Strip will be major targets for both the U.S. and Israeli forces as the report mentions the threat of “*high-trajectory missiles*”:

“Juniper Cobra 2018 is another step in improving the readiness of the IDF and the IAF in particular to enhance their operational capabilities in facing the threat posed by high-trajectory missiles,” Haimovitch said.

While “the exercise demonstrates the close and strategic cooperation between the IDF and the US Armed Forces,” Haimovitch continued, Israel has the capabilities to protect the country from threats posed by her enemies. Nevertheless “you want to have all the capabilities and the Americans bring additional strengths”

What makes Juniper Cobra (which began in 2001) different this year in comparison with

previous exercises is that it is the largest joint US-Israeli air defense exercise to date. One of the scenarios Israel is concerned about is how the Palestinians will react to the U.S. embassy move to Jerusalem followed by Guatemala (a U.S. puppet state). Although the report did mention Hezbollah, nothing was said about Syria. However, the main *Juniper Cobra* drill will continue until March 15th with *“additional joint exercises between Israeli and American troops will continue after the completion of the drill through the end of March”* the report said.

US Air Force Third Air Force Commander **Lt. Gen. Richard Clark**, who also the commander for the deploying Joint Task Force-Israel said that the

U.S. and Israel have a “strong and enduring military- to-military partnership” and that “The Juniper Cobra exercises continue to strengthen this relationship, providing us with the opportunity to bolster interoperability and develop seamless integration with our Israeli partners.”

Clark continued:

“As far as decision-making, it is a partnership,” he continued, stressing nonetheless that “at the end of the day it is about the protection of Israel – and if there is a question in regards to how we will operate, the last vote will probably go to Zvika [Haimovitch]”

The report also mentions that U.S. troops will be on the ground to defend Israel once they are given the orders:

Washington and Israel have signed an agreement which would see the US come to assist Israel with missile defense in times of war and according to according to Haimovitch “I am sure once the order comes we will find here US troops on the ground to be part of our deployment and team to defend the state of Israel”

What is interesting is what Clark said in regards to U.S. troops going to war for the *‘Jewish State’*:

And those US troops who would be deployed to Israel, are prepared to die for the Jewish State, Clark said. “We are ready to commit to the defense of Israel and anytime we get involved in a kinetic fight there is always the risk that there will be casualties. But we accept that as every conflict we train for and enter, there is always that possibility,” he said

A major war on Hezbollah, the Palestinians and Syria involving both U.S. and Israeli troops will be under Trump and Netanyahu’s watch. Syria will be the main battlefield, the pivotal point in history that will determine if the US-Israeli led coalition (if victorious) will lead the world to the next war with Iran and its allies.

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