



Missile Defense Briefing Report: No. 196

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Related Categories: Military Innovation; Missile Defense; India; Iran; Middle East; Russia

INDO-ISRAELI COOPERATION MOVES FORWARD

As part of their evolving strategic ties, Israel will soon assist India in the development of maritime anti-missile defenses. *Defense News* (February 1) reports that, as part of their most sweeping defense accord to date, New Delhi and Jerusalem have agreed to the joint development and production of the "Barak" anti-missile system for both countries' militaries. As part of the deal, India's official Defence Research and Development Organization and Israel's state-run Israel Aircraft Industries will develop six long-range "Barak" systems for new warships recently acquired by the Indian navy.

THE PUSH FOR ASIAN DEFENSE

"Ballistic missile threats and high-tech U.S.-backed programs to defend against them have polarized the nations of the Pacific Rim to a degree unseen since the height of the Cold War," writes Martin Sieff in a January 12th United Press International analysis. Taiwan, Japan, Australia, and India are among the countries that have lined up with the United States, spurred by fears of North Korea and/or China. Meanwhile, India and Pakistan are caught in the middle, with positive ties to both Washington and Beijing but concerns over the capabilities of the other. As a result, Sieff writes, the desire for ballistic missile defense in Asia has never been greater, with countries lining up to buy U.S. technology from companies such as Boeing, Raytheon, and Lockheed Martin.

CLOSING THE BOOK ON THE MTHEL

The Pentagon has formally cancelled the "Nautilus" mobile tactical high-energy laser (MTHEL), a defense project cooperatively developed and funded by Israel and the United States, *Globes* has reported in its January 18th edition. The advanced program, designed to intercept short-range missiles and artillery rockets, was intended as a mobile variant of the tactical high-energy laser initiative begun under the Clinton administration. To date, approximately \$250 million has been spent on the program, with 80 percent coming from the U.S. Army's Space and Missile Defense Command. The decision comes as a blow to the Israeli government, which had been planning to use the system to defend against incoming "Kassam" rockets from the Palestinian Territories.

REFINING THE SHAHAB-3

Iran is gearing up for a military showdown with the West over its nuclear program. Citing Berlin's *Die Welt* newspaper, the Deutsche Presse Agentur (February 3) reports that Western intelligence sources have determined that the Islamic Republic successfully carried out a secret long-range missile test last month. The January 17th trial, believed to be of the 2,000-kilometer Shahab-3, was designed to gather sensor data regarding aerodynamic performance. The Iranian regime is also making progress on the payload capabilities of its premier missile; according to *Die Welt*, intelligence officials now believe that the Shahab-3 is capable of delivering three nuclear warheads.

TOKYO, WASHINGTON MOVE CLOSER ON MISSILE DATA

As part of their expanding strategic partnership, Japan and the United States will integrate their respective information networks on missile defense by the end of the year, according to Fukushima Nukaga, chief of the Japanese Defense Agency. The January 15th edition of the *Japan Times* reports that the two countries are expected to sign an information and technology sharing accord this summer, setting the stage for interoperability between the national radar grid being established by Japan's Self Defense Force and U.S. radars and satellites. A supplemental agreement, designed to increase the security of electronic communications between the two countries, is expected to be signed in mid-February.

NEW MISSILE CLAIMS FROM MOSCOW

Russian President Vladimir Putin has again claimed that his country has successfully developed and tested a ballistic missile that is "immune" to any existing defenses in the world, the Associated Press (January 31) reports. Russia "has tested missile systems that no one in the world has," Putin told reporters in Moscow. "These missile systems don't represent a response to a missile defense system, but they are immune to that. They are hypersonic and capable of changing their flight path."