


 6 December 2006 7:04:30  
 AM

[Home](#)
[Profile](#)
[History](#)
[Jobs](#)
[Contacts](#)
[Home Page](#)
[local](#)
[regional](#)
[international](#)
[business](#)
[spectrum](#)
[analysis](#)
[sports](#)
[cartoons](#)
[daily images](#)
[archive](#)

### :: Praying Times ::

Fajer	05:03
Shoroq	06:27
Thohar	11:38
Aser	14:31
Magrib	16:49
Esha	18:11

## US forces to test Israeli anti-RPG system for Iraq

TEL AVIV: An Israeli-made system designed to protect tanks and troop transports from shoulder-fired rockets will be tested by the Pentagon for possible use by US forces in Iraq, a senior Israeli defence source said yesterday. While most of more than 2,800 deaths of US service personnel in Iraq have been caused by roadside bombs, military officials have pledged to address the threat of rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) as part of long-term planning.

"Trophy" is described by its manufacturer, Rafael, as unique because it uses a sensor to detect an incoming missile and fires a projectile that destroys its warhead in mid-air. Rafael puts the system's reliability rate at about 95 per cent. The Israeli defence source said the Pentagon was in the last stage of ordering one for tests in the United States. "The Department of Defence plans to test Trophy, perhaps on a (US Army) Stryker or another kind of vehicle, beginning in April, and later on to field it in Iraq," the source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told Reuters.

Amit Zimmer, spokesman for the state-owned Israeli firm, declined to comment on a possible US purchase of Trophy. The US embassy in Tel Aviv could not immediately be reached for comment. The US news network NBC reported in September that the army had decided to forgo Trophy in favour of a rival system under development by US arms firm Raytheon Co, although the latter is not expected to be operational before 2010.

The report aroused controversy in the United States for suggesting that the Pentagon was motivated more by corporate protectionism than the need to protect soldiers serving in Iraq. However, a senior army officer, Major-General Jeffrey Sorenson, said at the time that Trophy was not ready and did not meet the requirements of a long-term, more comprehensive US vehicle defence project in the works involving Raytheon. Another Israeli defence source familiar with Rafael's plans projected the unit price of Trophy at between \$250,000 and \$350,000 and said the system weighed about 700 kg.

The source said the prohibitive cost and bulk potentially could be offset by having vehicles travel in close groups so a Trophy installed on one would provide protection for the rest. Lova Drori, Rafael's vice-president of marketing, said development of Trophy, which had been in the pipeline for at least 15 years, was accelerated after Israel's war with Hezbollah guerrillas in Lebanon earlier this year. Dozens of Israeli tanks were destroyed or disabled by Hezbollah RPGs or more sophisticated shoulder-fired missiles during the 34-day war, causing Israel's armoured corps its highest casualty rate in almost a quarter-century of fighting.

Drori said the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) had submitted a request for several dozen Trophy systems to be installed on advanced battle tanks by the end of 2007, when some Israeli analysts have forecast another war on the northern front. An Israeli military spokeswoman had no immediate comment. -Reuters

[<< Back](#)
[Email to friend](#) | [Printable version](#) Article read: 83 times.
