

## U.S., Israel Worry Over Hizbullah Possession of Rockets Capable of Bringing Down F-16s

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U.S. and Israeli concerns mounted after Syria reportedly supplied Hizbullah with rockets capable of bringing down F-16 warplanes.

Head of the Israeli army Intelligence Research Department Brig. Gen. Yossi Baidatz has uncovered that Syria recently provided Hizbullah with Russian-made surface-to-air missiles type "GLA 9K338" which can bring down reconnaissance planes, helicopter gunships and advanced F-16 fighter jets, which form the backbone of the Israeli air force.

He told the Foreign and Security Committee in the Knesset that "this dangerous development is a strategic shift in the balance of power in Lebanon."

"Israel cannot remain silent on that," he warned.

Meanwhile, Russian news agency Novosti reported that Hizbullah's possession of sophisticated Russian-made surface-to-air "Igla" type rockets will hold back the Israeli air force from destroying the projectiles Hizbullah own for fear of bringing down the attacking jet fighters.

Novosti quoted sources in Moscow as saying that these missiles are shoulder-mounted and cannot be detected by radar or obliterated by any means.

The sources said "Syria regards these missiles as defensive projectiles and, therefore, does not see any problem in providing them to Hizbullah."

Washington has conveyed its concerns to France over Syria's continued supply of weapons to Hizbullah, particularly since they include the more sophisticated surface-to-air missiles.

Pan-Arab daily al-Hayat on Friday, citing Western sources in New York, said the U.S. State Department pointed out that "the Syrian arms supplies to Hizbullah have reached a point where Damascus now is providing the group with weapons from its own national military stockpile."

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