

Report: Israel Building Underground 'Iron Dome'

Following Operation Protective Edge in the summer of 2014, a great deal of attention shifted to Israel's need to develop a technological solution to the underground tunnel problem. Now, according to *Foreign Policy* magazine, it appears Israel has found that solution.

Under the headline "Israel Is Building a Secret Tunnel-Destroying Weapon," *Foreign Policy* reported last week that "according to intelligence officials, Israeli engineers are working tirelessly to develop what's being called the 'underground Iron Dome'—a system that could detect and destroy cross-border tunnels."

Israel's solution, says *Foreign Policy*, is a network of underground tunnels it is digging near the Gaza border, equipped with seismic sensors that can monitor underground vibrations.

Foreign Policy also reported that the Israeli government has spent more than \$250 million on the project since 2004, and that the United States has "appropriated \$40 million for the project in the 2016 financial year."

The goal, U.S. Defense Department spokesman Christopher Sherwood told *Foreign Policy*, "is to establish anti-tunnel capabilities to detect, map and neutralize underground tunnels that threaten the U.S. or Israel."

Sherwood also noted that, although the majority of the work in 2016 will be done in Israel, "the U.S. will receive prototypes, access to test sites and the rights to any intellectual property."

Among the Israeli companies working on the tunnel-detection

project, according to the report, are Elbit Systems and Rafael Advanced Defense Systems, both of which declined to provide any details due to security reasons.

Meanwhile, Palestinian media outlets on Monday reported yet another tunnel collapse in central Gaza, killing a senior Hamas field commander.

Overnight Monday, a rocket fired from Gaza exploded in an open field in southern Israel, causing no injuries or damage to property. Over the weekend, the Israel Defense Forces attacked targets in Gaza after terrorists in the coastal enclave fired four rockets at Israel.

In Egypt, news outlets reported that Hamas representatives, meeting Egyptian intelligence officials in Cairo, asked that Egypt stop flooding underground tunnels in the Rafah area, which Hamas says has led to many Palestinian deaths. {eo}

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