

Beat: News

Israel conducts missile test in the Mediterranean, briefly raising tensions

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USPA News - Israel launched a missile over the Mediterranean on Tuesday to test a U.S.-backed anti-missile system, briefly raising tensions after Russia reported picking up two ballistic "objects" that were part of the unannounced test, Israeli and U.S. officials said. The test began at approximately 9:15 a.m. local time (0615 GMT) when the Israeli Missile Defense Organization (IMDO), with technical assistance from the U.S. Missile Defense Agency (MDA), launched a Sparrow missile, which simulates the long-range missiles that Syria and Iran possess, over the Mediterranean.

The missile was used for target practice by Israel's U.S.-backed Arrow Weapon System, which is designed to protect Israel against short- and medium-range ballistic missiles. The missile was successfully launched and performed its planned trajectory over the Mediterranean Sea, according to Israel's Ministry of Defense. "In accordance with the test plan, the Arrow Weapon System's Super Green Pine radar successfully detected and tracked the target while transferring the information to the Citron Tree Battle Management Control System," the ministry said in a statement. "All the elements of the system performed according to their operational configuration." The test briefly caused concern and rattled financial markets when Russian defense officials said one of their early warning radar stations had picked up two ballistic "objects" that were fired from the central part of the Mediterranean Sea and were heading toward the coast in the east, where Syria - but also Israel - is located. But the objects fell harmlessly into the sea after the test, and no land was affected. Pentagon Press Secretary George Little said the test had been "long planned" and "had nothing to do" with the United States considering to take military action against Syria in response to an alleged chemical weapons attack near Damascus last month, which has led to the deployment of U.S. warships in the Mediterranean. "The test was long planned to help evaluate the Arrow Ballistic Missile Defense system's ability to detect, track, and communicate information about a simulated threat to Israel," Little said. "The United States and Israel cooperate on a number of long-term ballistic missile defense development projects to address common challenges in the region. This test had nothing to do with United States consideration of military action to respond to Syria's chemical weapons attack."

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