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Israel unveils newest anti-missile system, eyeing multi-tier air defense

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While intelligence assessments consistently paint a grim portrait of thousands of missiles and rockets showering down on Israel's civilian population and infrastructure in the future, the Jewish state unveils its next-generation missile-defense system.

Arrow III, an interceptor designed to knock out ballistic missiles, has until now been shrouded in secrecy. A full-scale model was put on display at the second annual International Aerospace Conference and Exhibition held in Jerusalem on Monday.

In line with the perception that the upgrading of existing systems is a never-ending process in light of changing threats, the engineers who are developing Arrow III have been tasked with achieving a daunting technological feat: creating a booster-rigged kamikaze satellite that will collide with incoming long-range ballistic missiles beyond Earth's atmosphere with pinpoint accuracy.

Like its two older siblings, the development of Arrow III by the state-owned Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) is being underwritten by the United States. The system is expected to become operational by 2015, according to project director Yoav Turgeman.

Following the aftermath of the 2006 Lebanon war, in which an estimated 4,000 Katyusha rockets and mortars slammed into northern Israel, the country's best and brightest engineers were recruited in a national mission to come up with countermeasures.

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