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ENVELOPE

(b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

HEADER

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181217Z SEP 09
FM (b)(3):10 USC 424;(b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

TO RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
INFO (b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

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RHMFSS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUZEHAA/CDR USEUCOM INTEL VAIHINGEN GE (b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)
RUZFMXI/CDR USTRANSCOM (b)(3):50 USC 3024(i) SCOTT AFB IL

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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC (b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)
RHMFSS/CNO WASHINGTON DC (b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

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RUEPWDC/DA WASHINGTON DC (b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

RUEADWD/DA WASHINGTON DC (b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

RHMFSS/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC

RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC

RHMFSS/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC (b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

RHEFHLC/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC

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RUETIAA/DIRNSA FT GEORGE G MEADE MD (b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC

RHMFSS/FBI WASHINGTON DC

RUCNFB/FBI WASHINGTON DC

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RHMFSS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE

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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC (b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC (b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

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RUZCISR/USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//HUMINT//

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RUCQSAB/USSOCOM MACDILL AFB FL

RHMFISS/USSTRATCOM (b)(3):50 USC 3024(i) OFFUTT AFB NE (b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

RULWAAA/USSTRATCOM OFFUTT AFB NE

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RHEHWSR/WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM WASHINGTON DC

BT

CONTROLS

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SECTION 1 OF 2

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SERIAL: (U) (b)(3):10 USC 424

/***** THIS IS A COMBINED MESSAGE *****/

BODY

COUNTRY: (U) ISRAEL (ISR).

IPSP: (U)

(b)(3):10 USC 424

SUBJ: (b)(3):10 USC 424 EXPERTS CHALLENGE EXPECTED CAPABILITIES OF

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ISRAEL'S SHORT-RANGE ROCKET DEFENSE SYSTEM IRON DOME (U).

WARNING: (U) THIS IS AN INFORMATION REPORT, NOT
FINALLY
EVALUATED INTELLIGENCE. REPORT CLASSIFIED
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DOI: (U) 20090909.

REQS: (U)

(b)(3):10 USC 424

SOURCE:

SOURCE A.

1. (U) DESCRIPTION -- //OPEN SOURCE//OPEN SOURCE. "MA'ARIV", A DAILY RIGHT-WING, RELIGIOUS, NEWSPAPER PRINTED IN JERUSALEM, ISRAEL. HEBREW. DATE OF SOURCE: 20090909.
2. (U) CONTEXT STATEMENT -- INFORMATION PROVIDED IN HEBREW AND TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH.

SUMMARY: (U) SEE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, TEXT PARAGRAPH 1, BELOW.

TEXT: 1. (U) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY. SCIENTIFIC EXPERTS SENT A LETTER TO SENIOR ISRAELI OFFICIALS CRITICIZING THE IRON DOME SHORT-RANGE ROCKETS DEFENSE SYSTEM. THEY CONTEND THAT IRON DOME CANNOT INTERCEPT KASSAM ROCKETS WHOSE IMPACT OCCURS AFTER 25 TO 30 SECONDS AND WHICH HAVE A RANGE UP TO 16 TO 18 KILOMETERS, LEAVING THE GAZA PERIPHERY TOWNS OF SDEROT, ASHKELON, AND NETIVOT DEFENSELESS. THE TEAM RECOMMENDED THE LASER-BASED SKYGUARD SYSTEM. IN CONTRAST TO THIS, THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH THE PROGRESS OF IRON DOME.

2. (U) WHILE THE ISRAEL AIR FORCE (IAF) IS SETTING UP A SPECIAL BATTALION THAT WILL OPERATE THE IRON DOME SHORT-RANGE ROCKET DEFENSE SYSTEM, A SERIES OF EXPERTS AND FORMER SENIOR OFFICERS SENT A STRONG LETTER TO THE ISRAEL DEFENSE MINISTER EHUD ((BARAK)) IN WHICH THEY SCATHINGLY CRITICIZE THE SYSTEM THAT IS EXPECTED TO BE DEPLOYED IN THE GAZA STRIP BY THE MIDDLE OF 2010. MEMBERS OF THE (QUOTE) MAGEN LA-OREF (UNQUOTE) ASSOCIATION (KNOWN IN ENGLISH AS THE HOME FRONT SHIELD), INCLUDING PHYSICISTS, LASER EXPERTS, AND OFFICERS IN THE RESERVES HAVE SENT A STRONG LETTER AGAINST THE DECISION TO PURSUE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RAFAEL-MADE IRON DOME. AMONG THE ADDRESSEES ARE

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PRIME MINISTER BENJAMIN ((NETANYAHU)), ISRAEL DEFENSE FORCES (IDF) CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF LT GEN GABI ((ASHKENAZI)), THE ISRAEL DEFENSE MINISTER, ISRAEL AIR FORCE (IAF) COMMANDER MAJ GEN IDDO ((NEHUSHTAN)), AND STATE COMPTROLLER MICHAEL ((LINDENSTRAUSS)). THE LETTER INDICATED THAT THE PLAN FOR IRON DOME TO PROTECT THE TOWN OF SDEROT AGAINST SHORT-RANGE ROCKETS REMAINS (QUOTE) IN THE REALM OF ILLUSIONS (UNQUOTE).

3. (U) THIS GROUP OF EXPERTS CONTEND THAT IRON DOME CANNOT INTERCEPT KASSAM ROCKETS WHOSE IMPACT OCCURS AFTER 25 TO 30 SECONDS AND WHICH HAVE A RANGE UP TO 16 TO 18 KILOMETERS (KM). THE EXPERTS WROTE (QUOTE) THIS IS THE MINIMAL TIME THAT'S REQUIRED IN ORDER TO DESTROY THE THREAT AFTER ITS LAUNCH. ANY THREAT THAT TAKES LESS THAN THAT WILL NOT BE INTERCEPTED. IT WILL STRIKE ITS TARGET BEFORE IRON DOME CAN REACH IT (UNQUOTE).

4. (U) THE EXPERTS ARGUE THAT THESE LIMITATIONS OF IRON DOME SHOULD HAVE BEEN EXPOSED AT A PREPARATORY STAGE BEFORE THE SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT STARTED. THE EXPERTS ARGUE THAT IRON DOME WILL NOT PROVIDE PROTECTION AGAINST ROCKETS AND MORTARS TO TOWNS LOCATED UP TO 16 KM AWAY FROM THE BORDER. THEY INDICATED (QUOTE) THE TOWNS IN THE GAZA PERIPHERY - SDEROT, ASHKELON, AND NETIVOT - WILL BE DEFENSELESS. THE SAME IS TRUE OF THE TOWNS IN THE NORTH, FROM NAHARIYA THROUGH MA'ALOT TO SAFED AND KIRYAT SHMONAH (UNQUOTE).

5. (U) IN CONTRAST, THE TEAM OF EXPERTS RECOMMENDED THE LASER-BASED SKYGUARD SYSTEM, WHICH THEY MAINTAIN CAN BE DEPLOYED IN ISRAEL WITHIN 18 MONTHS. ACCORDING TO THIS TEAM, SKYGUARD DOESN'T SUFFER FROM THE PROBLEM OF MINIMUM RANGE, AND THE THREAT WILL BE DESTROYED WITHIN SIX SECONDS OF LAUNCH AND THREE SECONDS FROM DETECTION. THESE EXPERTS FURTHER SAID THAT SKYGUARD COULD ALSO INTERCEPT MORTARS AS WELL AS CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL WARHEADS.

6. (U) THIS LETTER IS SIGNED BY EXPERTS AND FORMER MILITARY LEADERS, INCLUDING - PROFESSOR GIDEON ((SHAPSKI)); PROFESSOR ARIEL ((COHEN)), PHYSICS AND LASER EXPERT; PROFESSOR YESHAYA ((NEVENTSAL)), PHYSICIST FROM HEBREW UNIVERSITY; PROFESSOR MOSHE ((GROSSMAN)) FROM THE ISRAEL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY; BRIG GEN (RET) ZVI ((SHOR)), FORMER FINANCIAL ADVISOR TO THE CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF; DR. ODED ((AMICHAI)), ONE OF THE NAUTILUS PROJECT ENTREPRENEURS; COL (RET) YOSSI ((ARAZI)); COL ((RET) OFER ((LAVI)); AND DR. AZRIEL ((LORVER)), AIR AND SPACE ENGINEERING EXPERT. THE DEFENSE MINISTER'S OFFICE SAID THAT (QUOTE) A RESPONSE WILL BE SENT DIRECTLY TO THE ADDRESSOR (UNQUOTE).

7. (U) IN CONTRAST TO WHAT THE LETTER DESCRIBES, THE MINISTRY OF

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DEFENSE EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH THE PROGRESS OF THE IRON DOME, NOTING THAT THE PAST MONTH SHOWED TWO SUCCESSFUL TESTS DURING WHICH THE SYSTEM STRUCK TWO INBOUND ROCKETS.

(b)(1);(b)(3):10 USC 424;Sec. 1.4(c)

ADMIN

BT

(b)(3):10 USC 424

(b)(1);Sec. 1.4(c);Sec. 1.4(b);Sec. 1.4(d)

2. (U)

(b)(3):10 USC 424

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Withheld pursuant to exemption

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of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act