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## Defense exports reach record

**For the first time, the US is Israel's largest defense customer.**

Ran Dagoni, Washington 28 May 08 16:08

"Defense News" reports that Israel's defense companies signed contracts worth \$5.6 billion in 2007 - an all-time high for the country's defense exports. According to the Ministry of Defense SIBAT - Foreign Defense Assistance and Defense Export Organization, and the ministry's Armaments R&D Administration, last year's sales were \$700 million greater than the \$4.87 billion in 2006, the previous record.

"Defense News" quotes SIBAT director general Yossi Ben Hanan as saying that Israel's defense exports had totaled \$11 billion in the past two years.

He said that this was an amazing achievement for a small country that does not manufacture large platforms. The achievement underscored Israel's added value for the defense and aerospace markets and made the country one of the world's top four arms suppliers.

Ben-Hannan said the trade gives a valuable boost to Israel's economy. Every billion dollars in new contracts creates another 20,000 jobs, he said.

SIBAT noted that, for the first time, the US was Israel's largest arms customer, signing contracts worth \$1.5 billion in 2007, \$400 million more than in 2006. Israel's top defense exporter to the US last year was [Plasan Sasa Ltd.](#), a manufacturer of armor add-on kits for vehicles, which had \$800 million in sales to the US.

[Elbit Systems Ltd.](#) (Nasdaq: [ESLT](#); TASE: [ESLT](#)) was in second place with \$700 million in US sales, mostly through its Fort Worth

subsidiary, Elbit Systems of America LLC. As a US company, it is not included in SIBAT's list.

India was Israel's second largest defense customer, with \$800 million worth of new procurement contracts in 2007.

Israel exports mostly radar systems, drones and anti-tank missiles to India, Turkey, Britain, the United States and other countries.

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