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Israeli pressure and the coming elections in the USA have resulted in an agreement that will allow the Israeli air force to enhance the capabilities of the electronic warfare (EW) systems to be incorporated with its Lockheed Martin F-35 stealth aircraft.

Sources say that earlier this week, Washington reached an agreement with Lockheed on a \$450 million programme to enhance the EW equipment on the conventional take-off and landing F-35As it will deliver to Israel from 2017.

The advance is likely to be achieved by allowing Israeli-made systems to interface with the aircraft's standard EW suite.

The Israeli air force originally wanted to equip its initial batch of 20 F-35s with locally developed radar and EW systems.

While the inclusion of the Northrop Grumman APG-81 active electronically scanned array was not negotiable, Israel maintained pressure over its desire to integrate domestically produced self-protection equipment, as it has previously done with its Lockheed F-16 fighters.

Another of the air force's so-far unresolved demands is to gain the ability to maintain its own F-35s in Israel.