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Russia

Russia set to test first serial S-400 SAM system next week-1

14:46 | 05/07/2007



(Clarifies the official's position in the lead, adds quotes, details, background in paras 4-10)

MOSCOW, July 5 (RIA Novosti) - Russia will conduct the first tests of its new S-400 Triumph air defense complex next week prior to its commissioning with the Air Force, an AF air defense chief said Thursday.

"The first serial [S-400] complex will be tested next week," Lieutenant General Alexander Gorkov said. "It has been transported to a testing ground together with crews."

The S-400 (NATO codename SA-21 Growler) is a new air defense missile system developed by the Almaz Central Design Bureau as an upgrade of the S-300 family.

It has been designed to intercept and destroy airborne targets at a distance of up to 400 kilometers (250 miles), or twice the range of the U.S. MIM-104 Patriot, and 2.5 times that of the S-300PMU-2.

"The first S-400 system, which will be put on combat duty near Moscow shortly after the test, will feature missiles with enhanced technical characteristics to sharply increase the combat capabilities of air defense around the Russian capital," Gorkov said.

The general said Russia planned to deploy new air defense systems primarily around all strategically important administrative and political centers in two stages by 2015.

During the second stage, which starts in 2010, Russia will add modernized versions of the S-400 with enhanced characteristics in comparison to the current model, he said.

In April, Colonel General Yury Solovyov, commander of the Air Defense Forces Special Command (former Moscow Military District Air Defense Command), said the Triumph could be used for limited purposes in missile and space defense, but that it is not designed to destroy intercontinental ballistic missiles.

However, he said the system is highly capable of destroying stealth aircraft, cruise missiles, and ballistic missiles with an effective range of up to 3,500 kilometers (2,200 miles) and a speed of up to 4.8 kilometers (3 miles) per second.

The Russian Air Defense Forces, which are part of the Air Force, currently deploy more than 30 regiments equipped with S-300 (NATO reporting name SA-10 Grumble) missile complexes, which will be gradually replaced with S-400 systems.

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