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Iran builds S-300-style anti-aircraft

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Iran's Defense Ministry says it has built a long-range anti-aircraft system capable of simultaneously striking multiple enemy targets.

Iran's Defense Minister Mostafa Mohammad-Najjar said Wednesday that the new anti-aircraft missile defense system has been domestically produced.

The system is capable of intercepting multiple missiles and aircraft at once, at high altitude and long range.

"This long-range anti-aircraft system can identify and track multiple targets and is capable of simultaneously destroying them from a long distance," Brigadier General Mohammad-Najjar said at the Islamic Revolution's military achievements exhibition.

The Iranian minister added that the country's defense experts have also been successful in the domestic production of basic material for building surface-to-surface and surface-to-air missiles.

The cited capacities of the newly-built Iranian missile calls to mind the Russian S-300 surface-to-air missile defense system.

The advance version of the controversial S-300 system, the S-300PMU1 (SA-20 Gargoyles), can intercept 100 ballistic missiles and aircraft at once, at low and high altitudes within a range of over 150 km.

According to earlier reports, Iran has been negotiating a deal with Russia to obtain the sophisticated defense system. However, neither side has so far issued an official confirmation on the delivery of the S-300 to Iran.

Iran's increased mastery of missile technology comes amid widespread speculation about an Israeli military strike on Iran.

The New York Times cited one of the newly-installed US administration officials speaking on condition of anonymity, as saying last week that "the first big foreign crisis of the Obama presidency is a really nasty confrontation, either because the Israelis strike or because we won't let them."

Earlier in January *The Times* reported that the Israeli government had sought bunker-busting bombs from former president George W. Bush, and demanded refueling capability and overflight rights over Iraq to take out Iran's main nuclear enrichment plant at Natanz.

The former president, however, deflected the secret Israeli request and revealed that -- as an alternative -- new covert actions intended to sabotage Iran's nuclear program had been authorized.

The West has confronted Iran over its enrichment program, saying it is ultimately meant to build nuclear weapons.

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) signatory Tehran insists that its nuclear program is aimed at generating electricity.

The UN nuclear watchdog responsible for investigating Iran's nuclear program said in its most recent report that there is no link between the use of nuclear material and the "alleged studies" of weaponization attributed to Iran by the West.

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