

## Iran plans to produce missile defense systems similar to Russia's S-300

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Iran intends to produce missile defense systems similar to Russia's S-300 system, the county's PressTV channel said on Thursday, quoting Iranian Defense Minister Brig. Gen. Ahmad Vahidi.

Answering the question on whether Iran has plans to produce an S-300 defense system, Vahidi said, "We don't need to produce the S-300 system, but we have plans on the agenda to produce similar weapons."

The minister also said Iran has developed a medium-range air defense system.

"All parts of the system have been domestically produced," the TV channel quoted him as saying.

He said the defense system had "three radars and a domestically produced missile that has high agility and a range of more than 40 kilometers."

Russia and Iran signed a contract on the delivery of Russia's S-300 missile defense systems to the Islamic Republic in December 2005. There have been no official announcements concerning the start of deliveries.

In February, speaker of the Russian parliament's upper house, Sergei Mironov, pledged that Moscow would fulfill its obligations, saying the delay in deliveries was due to "technical" problems.

"We have bilateral agreements with Iran, Russia has always fulfilled its international agreements. That is why the delivery of this defense complex, let me stress it, is a matter of time," he said.

Iran's ambassador to Russia, Seyyed Mahmoud-Reza Sajjadi, told the Islamic republic's Mehr news agency on Wednesday "Russian officials are committed to their [S-300] deal with Iran."

The advanced version of the S-300 missile system, called S-300PMU1, has a range of over 150 kilometers (over 100 miles) and can intercept ballistic missiles and aircraft at low and high altitudes, making the system an effective tool for warding off possible air strikes.

The Russian-Iranian deal has alarmed the United States and Israel, which have consistently refused to rule out the possibility of military action against Tehran if it refuses to halt its controversial uranium enrichment program. The S-300 systems could greatly improve Iranian defenses against any air strike on its strategically important sites, including nuclear facilities.

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