

Denied Russian S-300 missiles

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Russian S-300 - denied

Iran launches its huge Modafean-e (Defenders) Aseman-e-Velayat air defense exercise Sunday, Nov. 22, to protect its nuclear sites, after failing to persuade Russia to deliver the linchpin of its air defenses, S-300 missiles. For two weeks, high-ranking Iranian politicians and generals bombarded Moscow to make good on its contract to supply the key weapon, to no avail. Saturday, Nov. 21, Iran's air force commander Brig. Gen. Ahmad Mighani spoke at length about the highly sophisticated S-300, without which, DEBKAFfile's military sources say, Iran has no real defense against US and Israeli aerial or missile strikes against its nuclear installations.

Iran will hold its war games in the western and southern regions, which Iran estimates will be selected by the Americans and Israelis for attack, and cover an area of 600,000 sq. km. Iranian warplanes will simulate enemy jets zooming in to strike.

Our sources report that, aside from the Russian-made Tor-M 1 short-range interceptor, Iran's air defense systems are outdated and pretty useless against US stealth bombers or the Israeli air force's electronic jamming instruments. Syria likewise lacked the weapons for stopping Israel attack its North-Korean-made nuclear reactor two years ago. The Iranian air force has nowhere near the capacity to take on US or Israeli air might.

Lacking the crucial S-300, a senior Revolutionary Guards officer was reduced to threatening: "If Israel attacks Iran, Iranian missiles will explode in the heart of Tel Aviv!"

Iranian strategists are trying to make do with four devices:

1. As many nuclear installations as possible are being moved to secret subterranean sites - among them most of the research laboratories working on the development of nuclear weapons and missiles.
2. Bogus installations have been planted not far from genuine plants to mislead assailants.
3. Tehran's most powerful defense is the deterrent strength of its ballistic missiles and the missiles distributed to its Middle East allies, Syria, the Lebanese Hizballah and the Palestinian Hamas. Therefore, Iran's first response to attack will not be to attack Israeli population centers as the Revolutionary Guards officer threatened, but to strike the home bases of its air force, missile and radar as well as the Israel-based US military facilities, so that Israeli warplanes will have no facilities to come back to and its missiles are knocked off their launch pads.
4. Iran's means its air defense war game as a rejoinder for the joint US-Israel Juniper Cobra 10 anti-ballistic exercise which took place for two weeks earlier this month. Iran's leaders had to make good on their vow not to leave any American or Israeli military step in the region unanswered, although the anti-air exercise will expose the big hole in their defenses. Even if every last anti-air measure and device they possess is deployed, Iran's nuclear facilities will still be susceptible to attack, be they the uranium enrichment center at Natanz, the Isfahan fuel plants in Isfahan, the facilities in northern Tehran, or the reactors going up in Arak opposite the Straits of Hormuz.

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