

# Russia's S-300 Surface to Air Missile, Already Deployed and Functional in Syria?

The Ordnance Bothering the "Allies."

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In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

*According to reports, Russia's S-300 Surface to Air Missile system is to be delivered and deployed to Syria.*

*Israel has responded with veiled threats. In the words of Israel's Minister for Military Affairs Moshe Ya'alon:*

*"Clearly this move is a threat to us... At this stage I can't say there is an escalation. The shipments have not been sent on their way yet. And I hope that they will not be sent.. if God forbid they do reach Syria, we will know what to do."*

*President Assad confirmed that the S-300 had been delivered.*

It is important to put these reports in a historical context. Moscow's announcement has been casually described as an impromptu "retaliation" to the lifting of the EU arms embargo.

This rash interpretation of the mainstream media ignores the nature of military planning. The deployment of the S-300 Surface to Air Missile system in Syria has been on the drawing board of the Russian Ministry of Defense since 2006.

Moscow announced in June 2006 that it would deploy the S-300PMU air defense to protect its Naval base in Tartus in Southern Syria. It was understood that this deployment would also protect Syrian airspace.

The report points to the deployment of S-300PMU, while confirming that the "[s-300] systems will not be turned over to the Syrians. They will be manned and serviced by Russian personnel. (([Kommerzant in Russian](#), emphasis added))".

Moscow's stated intent, however, was "to deploy an air defense system around the base - to provide air cover for the base itself and a substantial part of Syrian territory." (emphasis added)

According to our sources, Russia and Damascus reached an agreement on modernizing Syria's air defenses. Its medium-range S-125 air defense systems will be upgraded to the Pechora-2A level. The upgrade will certainly improve Syrian air defense, which uses hardware supplied to Syria back in the 1980s. Moscow is prepared to offer Syria more sophisticated medium-range Buk-M1s

as well. Close-range Strelts systems sold to Damascus last year are all the Syrian air defense system has to show by way of sophisticated gear at this point (these systems use Igla SAMs). ([Kommerzant \(Russian\) July 28, 2006](#))

## Recent Developments

There is reason to believe that major components of the S-300 air defense system have been delivered and deployed in Syria in the course of the last 18 months.

There are indications that components of the S-300 system are already functional. According to [Arun Shavetz \(November 24, 2011\)](#), Russian technical advisers arrived in Syria in November 2011 to “help the Syrians set up an array of S-300 missiles”.

The report also indicates that an advanced radar system was installed in all key Syrian military and industrial installations. “The radar system also covers areas north and south of Syria, where it will be able to detect movement of troops or aircraft towards the Syrian border. The radar targets include much of Israel, as well as the Incirlik military base in Turkey, which is used by NATO.” (Ibid)

Almost a year ago, in June 2012, Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak pressured Moscow to cancel the sale of the S-300 to Syria. Russian President Vladimir Putin during his visit to Israel confirmed the suspension of the sale of S-300 (See [Israel convinces Russia to cancel Syrian S-300 missile deal: official, Xinhua, June 28, 2012](#))

While there is no official confirmation that the S-300 is already functional, Syria possesses the [Pechora-2M air defense system](#), which US military sources admit would constitute “a threat”, namely an obstacle, in the case “a no fly zone” were implemented in relation to Syria. The Pechora-2M is a sophisticated multiple target system which can also be used against cruise missiles.

Had this air defense not been in place, the implementation of a US-NATO led “no fly zone” would no doubt have been contemplated at an earlier date.



## Description

The Pechora-2M is a surface-to-air anti-aircraft short-range missile system designed for destruction of aircraft, cruise missiles, assault helicopters and other air targets at ground, low and medium altitudes.

Ground to air defense Russian Pechora 2M deployed to Syria (above)

Moreover, in response to the US-allied missile deployments of Patriot missiles in Turkey, Russia delivered advanced Iskander missiles to Syria, which are now fully operational.

[The Iskander is described as a surface-to-surface missile](#) system “that no missile defense system can trace or destroy”:

The superior Iskander can travel at hypersonic speed of over 1.3 miles per second (Mach 6-7) and has a range of over 280 miles with pinpoint accuracy of destroying targets with its 1,500-pound warhead, [a nightmare for any missile defense system](#).



Iskander Mach 6-7

Michel Chossudovsky, Global Research, May 30, 2013

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## ANNEX

We bring to the attention of Global Research readers a report which describes the nature of Russia's S-300V Surface to Air missile system. Note this system is different from the one being installed in Syria.

MissileThreat.com

<http://missilethreat.com/defense-systems/s-300v-sa-12a-gladiator-sa-12b-giant/>

*The S-300V, also known by its NATO designation, SA-12, is an advanced Russian surface-to-air missile system.*

*Two versions currently exist: the Gladiator (NATO: SA-12A), capable of destroying ballistic missiles, and the Giant (NATO: SA-12B), for use against aircraft and cruise missiles. Since the early 1990s, the Russians have sold thousands of S-300Vs throughout Asia, Europe, and the Middle East.*

## **S-300V (SA-12A Gladiator, SA-12B Giant)**

From: [Russia](#)

Possessed By:

[Russia](#) Warhead: HE

Range: A: 6 – 75km; B: 13 – 100km

Basing: Land, Mobile

Status: [Operational](#)



The S-300V was developed by the Antey Corporation, one of the former Soviet Union's largest defense companies. It was designed mainly as an anti-ballistic missile system, although it also has the ability to target and destroy aircraft and cruise missiles, similar to the U.S. Patriot. The S-300V was first deployed in 1986 and was so successful that, by the late 1980s, the Soviet military was ordering an average of three to four battalions each year.<sup>1</sup> During the 1990s, Antey improved the capability of the S-300V, giving the system the ability to engage targets flying at ranges of up to 100 kilometers.<sup>2</sup>

From the beginning, the S-300V was designed as a dual-missile system, incorporating two missiles differing in dimension, range, and purpose. The smaller of the two, the Gladiator, is primarily an anti-aircraft missile. At 7.0 meters long, 0.72 meters wide, and weighing 2,500 kilograms, it flies at 1.7 kilometers per second and can destroy aircraft located 6-75 kilometers away at altitudes of 25-25,000 meters. Each Gladiator carries a 150-kilogram high explosive warhead.<sup>3</sup>

By contrast, the Giant is designed to destroy tactical ballistic missiles and cruise missiles, although it can also shoot down aircraft. At 8.5 meters long, 0.9 meters wide, and weighing 4,600 kilograms, it approaches its targets at 2.4 kilometers per second. It can engage cruise missiles and aircraft at ranges of 13-100 kilometers and at altitudes of 1-30 kilometers (20-40 kilometers against ballistic missiles). Like the Gladiator, each Giant is equipped with a 150-kilogram high explosive warhead.<sup>4</sup>



Both S-300V missiles are guided by the Russian 9S19M2 phased-array sector-scan radar, which is capable of scanning an area of 90-degrees every second. According to Antey officials, the radar detects targets between 20-175 kilometers with an accuracy of 200-300 meters. The 9S19M2 can track up to 16 incoming ballistic missiles, aircraft, or cruise missiles while simultaneously foiling up to six jamming devices.<sup>5</sup> Both S-300V missile variants plus the radar system are transported on mobile launchers.

Over the years, the Russians have tested the S-300V against a wide array of targets. Antey officials claim that, in a recent series of tests in early 1997, the Gladiator and Giant interceptors successfully destroyed more than 60 ballistic and cruise missiles. Among the target missiles were Scud Bs modified to simulate Iraq's Al-Hussein short-range ballistic missile used in the Persian Gulf War. In a series of tests, S-300V had a single-shot kill probability of 0.4 to 0.7 against tactical ballistic missiles. An average of 1.5 to 1.75 interceptors are required to bring down a single target.<sup>6</sup>

In 1998, Antey unveiled a modification of the S-300V, nicknamed the "Antey-2500." Known as the S-300VM while in development, the upgraded model contains two types of missiles with maximum velocities of 1.7 and 2.6 kilometers per second. The modified system is capable of simultaneously engaging 24 targets at a range of 40-200 kilometers and altitudes from 25 meters to 30 kilometers. It can detect, track, and destroy tactical ballistic missiles with ranges up to 2,500 kilometers, hence its name, Antey-2500.<sup>7</sup>

Over the past decade, Russia has deployed thousands of S-300V and Antey-2500 missiles around its key military and industrial complexes. In addition, it has exported these systems throughout Asia, Europe, and the Middle East as a means of financing its ailing economy in the wake of the Soviet Union's 1991 collapse. According to *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, "in the worldwide competition to sell ballistic missile defense systems, the Russian Antey Corp.'s S-300V is a main contender."<sup>8</sup> The advantage for buyers of Russian surface-to-air missiles is that, unlike buying from the U.S., there are no political strings attached and, more often than not, the weapons are significantly cheaper than their U.S. counterparts.<sup>9</sup>

In 1996, for instance, Russia marketed the S-300V system in the United Arab Emirates in direct competition with the U.S., which had been selling Patriot missiles to the UAE for several years. Russia offered heavy discounted S-300V missiles to the UAE, essentially selling them at half their normal cost, in return for UAE's forgiveness of long-term Russian debt. The Russia-UAE deal, however, angered the U.S. and soured its relations with Russia.<sup>10</sup>

The S-300V has also played a role in larger, more lucrative arms dealings between Russia and other nuclear powers. In February 2002, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Ilya Klebanov led a delegation to New Delhi, India, to negotiate a hefty arms deal, the focal point of which was the sale of S-300V missiles.<sup>11</sup> Over the years, as one of Russia's largest and most frequent weapons buyers, India has equipped almost two-thirds of its armed forces with Russian hardware.<sup>12</sup> In February 2004, Russia formally offered to sell the defense system to India.<sup>13</sup> Recent tensions between India and Pakistan, both of which possess nuclear weapons, ensure that the S-300V and other anti-ballistic missile systems will figure prominently in future arms dealings.<sup>14</sup>

Likewise, it was reported in December 2003 that Moscow intends to supply Iran, a potential nuclear power, with \$1.6 billion worth of weapons, the bulk of which will be either S-300V or Antey-2500 surface-to-air missiles. Iran has been lobbying for Russia to sell it a defense shield since the late 1990s. It plans to use the missiles to protect its key industrial region Esfahan, its naval base at Bandar Abbas (on the Persian Gulf), oil terminals at Abadan and Khorramshahr, and its nuclear power station at Bushehr.<sup>15</sup> The U.S., needless to say, voiced

its strong objections to the Russia-Iran deal and, at one point, even threatened sanctions.

Despite these objections, it appears that Russia has no plans to stop marketing its S-300V missiles, as well as other weapons, throughout Asia, Europe, and the Middle East in the coming years.

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2. Robert Wall, "Russia's Premier SAMs Seen Proliferating Soon," Aviation Week & Space Technology, 27 September 1999. [↵](#)
3. Novichkov, et al.; Missile.index. [↵](#)
4. Ibid. [↵](#)
5. Novichkov, et al. [↵](#)
6. Ibid. [↵](#)
7. "Russia's Antey Offers Upgraded SA-12 For Export," Aerospace Daily, 28 May 1998. [↵](#)
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9. Carlo Kopp, "Next-Generation SAMs For Asia A Wake-Up Call For Australia," Australian Aviation, 1 October 2003. [↵](#)
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11. "Russia: Moscow Begins Arms Trade Negotiations With New Delhi," Periscope Daily Defense News Capsules, 6 February 2002. [↵](#)
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13. "Russia Offers S-300V SAM Anti-Missile System To India," The Press Trust of India Limited, 5 February 2004. [↵](#)
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15. Aleksandr Reutov, "Iran Yields To IAEA To Gain Time," Kommersant, 19 December 2003. [↵](#)

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