

SURFACE-TO-AIR

Iranian S-300 sale delayed by technical problems

BY DAVID C ISBY

The Russian sale of S-300 series (SA-20 'Gargoyle') surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) to Iran will proceed and delays in delivery have been due to unspecified "technical problems", Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov told the Interfax news agency on 19 February.

This in effect confirmed an earlier statement by Iran's ambassador to the Russian Federation, Mahmoud Reza Sajadi, who told a press conference in Moscow on 4 February that Russia has assured Iran "that they will meet their obligations" and that "Iran is ready to receive these systems".

Prior to the Ryabkov statement, recent Russian actions regarding the S-300 delivery had been uncertain but had pointed towards delivery. The director general of Rosoboronexport, the Russian state arms export agency, Anatoly Isaikin, told reporters in Moscow on 28 January that there would be no international ban or sanctions that would prevent the delivery of S-300s to Iran.

On 28 January, an Interfax-AVN report quoted an unidentified "Russian official" as saying that while the contract for the sale of S-300s was signed, Russia did not confirm its validity and Iran had not made any payments. This was

contradicted on 13 February, when the deputy secretary of the Russian Security Council, Vladimir Nazarov, stated that the contract for S-300s, signed in 2005, must be implemented.

On 15 February, Leonid Slutsky, deputy chairman of the Russian State Duma Foreign Affairs Committee, told the Itar-Tass news service that any sanctions imposed on Iran would probably be applied to its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes and would not affect the S-300 sale. He characterised the S-300 as "a purely defensive weapon".

However, on 18 February, following Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's two day-visit to Moscow, the deputy director of Rosoboronexport, Alexander Fomin, speaking in New Delhi, was quoted in the Russian press as saying the S-300 delivery to Iran had been delayed by technical problems.

Iran will soon reveal an indigenous SAM system "whose capability matches or even surpasses the S-300", Brigadier General Heshmatollah Kasiri, deputy commander of the Khatam ol-Anbia air defence base, was quoted by Iran's state-run official news agency on 8 February. He also stated that Iran is producing indigenous air defence radars, including those operating in the VHF (very high frequency) band. ●

SURFACE-TO-AIR

S-125-2TM makes first live-firing

The Belarus company Tetraedr has provided *Jane's* with a photograph of the first live-firing of a rebuilt and upgraded S-125-2TM Pechora-2TM (SA-3 'Goa') surface-to-air missile system, writes Miroslav Gyürösi.

Conducted in the country of an unidentified customer on 15 December, the firing was conducted as part of the handover of the first modernised system.

For the demonstration, two missiles were loaded onto the launcher, but only one was fired. The other was available as a backup.

Crewed by the customer's personnel, the system engaged a target that was simulating a helicopter. The interception took place only 17 m above the ground and at a range of 7.5 km. Following the trial, the customer expressed satisfaction with the results and signed the documentation for acceptance of the system and for the upgrading of further systems.

The firing was part of a two-day programme of trials. Only one Pechora round was fired, but the company reported that 11 live firings were also



The missile leaves the launcher of the first upgraded S-125-2TM Pechora-2TM (SA-3 'Goa') surface-to-air missile system. Tetraedr: 1331530

conducted using the modernised 9K33-1 Osa-1 version of the 9K33M3 Osa-AKM (SA-8 'Gecko') mobile surface-to-air missile system. Conducted by the customer's combat crews against different targets, all 11 resulted in a successful engagement using the first missile launched.

Tetraedr has won other orders for the S-125-2TM Pechora-2TM. During 2010 it plans to conduct further live-firings of the system in two countries. ●

AIR-TO-SURFACE

USAF and USN to co-develop new cruise missile

US Air Force (USAF) efforts to build a new family of long-range strike weapons will include a new cruise missile to be developed in a joint effort by the USAF and US Navy (USN), according to a top USAF official, writes Caitlin Harrington.

USAF Secretary Michael Donley said that studies on long-range strike conducted by the USAF and industry have tended to focus on the development of a new bomber. Now, he said, it is time for more attention to be paid to other long-range strike capabilities, such as a standoff cruise missile that could operate from air or sea.

"This is a subject that seems to be a very good one for follow-on air force and navy discussions in terms of standoff missiles ... and whether those missiles are fast-moving or slow-moving," he told reporters on 18 February at the Air Force Association's annual conference in Orlando.

Donley also elaborated on what a "family" of long-range strike systems might be able to do, citing electronic warfare, intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance, and standoff and penetrating capabilities.

"There have been studies on what a bomber ought to look like ... but we had not looked at a long-range strike platform in the context of enabling capabilities and how this fits into the long-range strike context," he said.

The 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review called on the USAF and the USN to collaborate on an air-sea battle concept that would include researching the possibility of a joint standoff cruise missile. ●

SURFACE-TO-AIR

Ukraine to deploy more SAM units

Ukraine will establish additional surface-to-air missile (SAM) sub-units and more radar sub-units in the future, its Air Force commander Colonel General Ivan Rusnak announced in a 29 January defence ministry press release, writes David C Isby.

The announcement did not specify what types of SAMs would equip the new sub-units or how Ukraine would procure them. Ukraine currently operates SAMs of Russian origin.

Col Gen Rusnak stated that this force expansion would lead to the end of the current practice of using mobile SAM systems to defend high-value targets. He also said that the creation of an automated air defence command-and-control system, integrated with those of other services, was a priority. ●