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Iran Tests Own S-300 Missile

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TEHRAN, Iran — Iran has successfully tested its own version of a missile system that Russia declined to supply amid concerns that Tehran might be seeking nuclear weapons, a military official was quoted as saying Thursday.

Russia infuriated Iran in September when it canceled the S-300 missile order after heavy lobbying from the United States and Israel, which said the system could be used to help Iran shield its nuclear facilities from possible future air strikes.

State-run Press TV quoted a commander of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards as saying Tehran had adapted another Russian-made missile system to perform like the more sophisticated S-300.

"We have developed the system by upgrading systems like the S-200, and we have tested it successfully," Brigadier General Mohammad Hassan Mansourian said, according to Press TV's web site.

Some Western analysts doubt Iran's ability to replicate the S-300, a precision, mobile, long-range air defense system that can detect, track and destroy ballistic missiles, cruise missiles

and low-flying aircraft.

But some Western officials suspect Iran's development of more sophisticated missiles could serve the goal of attaining a deliverable nuclear weapon.

President Dmitry Medvedev banned delivery of the S-300s in September, saying it would violate expanded UN sanctions over Iran's refusal to curb a nuclear program many countries fear is aimed at making a bomb, a charge it denies.

Medvedev met Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad later Thursday at a summit of Caspian Sea states in Azerbaijan where the issue of reopening nuclear talks was likely to be raised.

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