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Ambassador Says Iran Doesn't Need North Korean Missiles

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Iran does not need to buy North Korean missiles to defend itself, the country's ambassador to Russia said Monday, following allegations in U.S. diplomatic cables released by WikiLeaks.org and provided to newspapers including The New York Times.

"Given Iran's military potential, we don't require such deliveries from North Korea," Ambassador Seyed Mahmoud Reza Sajjadi told reporters in Moscow. The WikiLeaks cables said Iran obtained 19 advanced missiles from North Korea with the potential capability of attacking Western Europe and Russia. He said he had "no information" about any such missile sales.

Iran will continue to enrich uranium to the 20 percent threshold needed for its medical program, a level the country plans to reach by September, Sajjadi said. The United States has won stiffer United Nations Security Council sanctions against Iran, which the White House and European countries say may be using its uranium-enrichment program to develop nuclear weapons.

Diplomatic cables posted by the Guardian newspaper, which also received advance copies from WikiLeaks, indicate that as far back as early 2008, Saudi Arabia and other Arab governments pressed the United States for attacks on Iran to stop it from getting a nuclear bomb, even as some expressed concern that a military strike may destabilize the region.

"All Arab countries in the Persian Gulf know that their real enemy is Israel," said Sajjadi, who declined to comment further on the report of Saudi Arabia urging a military strike on Iran.

He downplayed Russia's decision to cancel the sale of S-300 air-defense systems to Iran, in compliance with the UN sanctions, saying his country already has the means to defend itself from any attack.

The Russian air-defense systems would make Iran "invincible" to any attack by Israel, the Iranian state English-language satellite news channel Press TV said in June. Israel has declined to rule out a military strike against Iranian nuclear facilities.

Iran, which has the world's second-largest oil and gas reserves, says its nuclear program is peaceful and aimed at generating electricity for a growing population.

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