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Moscow in Secret Talks to Supply Missiles to Iran-Backed Houthis – Reuters

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Houthi supporters at an anti-U.S. and Israel protest in Yemen. **Yahya Arhab / EPA / TASS**

Moscow has been secretly negotiating the delivery of anti-ship cruise missiles to Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi militias, Reuters reported Tuesday, citing anonymous Western and regional sources.

"Russia is negotiating with the Houthis for the transfer of [P-800] Yakhont supersonic anti-ship missiles," a Western intelligence told Reuters.

The talks are reportedly brokered by Iran, though Tehran seeks to avoid direct involvement. A senior U.S. official suggested these negotiations are linked to Western actions in Ukraine, implying Moscow's interest in supplying the arms stems from potential Western support for Ukraine to strike deeper into Russian territory.

Russian President Vladimir Putin previously threatened to arm other nations with similar

weapons if the West provided Ukraine with long-range arms.

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The Yakhont missile, with a range of 300 kilometers (186 miles), can fly just above sea level at twice the speed of sound, making it a significant threat. Experts said its deployment would alter regional security dynamics, especially given past Houthi missile strikes that disrupted Red Sea shipping.

Russia has reportedly held at least two meetings with the Houthis in Tehran in 2024, with more talks expected.

Houthi spokesman Mohamed Abdel-Salam denied knowledge of the discussions, while U.S. officials have expressed concern to Saudi Arabia and Moscow, Reuters reported.

"The Saudis are alarmed, we are alarmed, and other regional partners are alarmed," a U.S. official was quoted as saying, emphasizing the potential for the Houthis to escalate disruptions in the Red Sea.

In July, The Wall Street Journal, citing U.S. intelligence, reported that Russia might be planning to deliver anti-ship missiles to the Houthis. According to the newspaper, Washington launched a "confidential push" using an undisclosed "third country" to stop Russia.

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