



Missile Defense Briefing Report: No. 335

March 31, 2015 **Richard M. Harrison**

Related Categories: Europe; India; Iran; Israel; North Korea

NEW INDO-ISRAELI MISSILE DEFENSE COOPERATION

After relying on Russian-made air defenses for over three decades, India is growing closer to a new missile defense partner. The country has teamed with Israel to upgrade the Indian Army's land version of the medium-range surface-to-air missile (MRSAM) system. Israeli and Indian contractors will develop various subsystems jointly, but the surface-to-air defense system will be produced indigenously, like most Indian systems. The two nations are already cooperating on an airborne version of the MRSAM, to be adopted by India's Air Force in the near future. (*Defense News*, February 26, 2015)

NORTH KOREA'S MISSILE PROGRESS UNNERVES U.S.

Things are heating up in the Asia Pacific. North Korea recently fired two short range missiles reportedly in response to U.S. and South Korean military exercises. Simultaneously, DPRK officials have warned that the country has the ability to deter the U.S. from intervening in its affairs through a preemptive nuclear strike. While this bluster is not new, the U.S. military is increasingly concerned about North Korea's strategic capabilities, as the so-called "Hermit Kingdom" continues to increase the range and accuracy of its ballistic missile arsenal. In response, U.S. officials have advocated for greater missile defense cooperation among surrounding nations. (Reuters, March 5, 2015)

IRAN PLAYS DEFENSE...

Tehran plans to unveil a long-range air defense system this spring. The indigenously-developed Talash-3 (Endeavor-3) system expands on previous capabilities and will enable Iran to engage "any kind of enemy targets," a regional military commander has said. The Talash system is integrated with the country's existing air defenses, consisting of Russian-made S-200s, and can engage incoming missiles as far away as 200 kilometers. (Tehran Tasnim, March 7, 2015; Sputnik News, March 7, 2015)

...AND OFFENSE

Iran's defensive capabilities are not the only things gaining strength, however. As deliberations over Iran's nuclear program drag on, the Islamic Republic is forging ahead with its long-range missile program. Most recently, Iran's Defense Ministry unveiled its newest long-range missile, the Soumar, which has a 2,500-kilometer range, giving it the ability to hit cities in Eastern and Southern Europe, as well as a large portion of North Africa. According to Tal Inbar, the head of space research at the Fisher Institute for Air and Space Strategic Studies in Herzliya, Israel, the new missile is a reverse engineered version of the Soviet/Russian Kh-55 missile. Tehran has made clear that its missile program will not be part of the current negotiations underway with the P5+1. (*Jerusalem Post*, March 9, 2015)

SEOUL EXAMINES ITS OPTIONS

Despite North Korean provocations, the South Korean government can't seem to come to a consensus regarding missile defense cooperation with the United States. Lawmakers in Seoul openly agree that the sale and deployment of a U.S. Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) battery, previously discussed with Washington, would bolster their defenses against aggression from their northern neighbor. However, a ROK Defense Ministry spokesman has stated that the agency "has no plan" currently to purchase such a capability. But while cooperation with the U.S. on missile defense remains an open question, Seoul's investments in defending against ballistic missile attack are not; the South Korean government is actively developing its own Korea Air and Missile Defense (KAMD) to serve as a supplement (or an alternative) to cooperation with Washington. (*Seoul Korea Herald*, March 9, 2015)

IN POLAND, MISSILE DEFENSE AS A CHECK ON RUSSIAN AGGRESSION

Amid ongoing conflict in Ukraine, nearby Poland is turning to missile defense as a hedge against Russian adventurism. Warsaw is currently soliciting bids to construct a mid-range missile defense system for defense of the nation. The process is fast-tracked, with a decision expected within the next few weeks - a testament to Polish worries over potential Kremlin advances. Those in contention for the \$5 billion bid include U.S. firm Raytheon and France's Thales conglomerate. (*London Daily Mail*, March 10, 2015)