

Obama We could penetrate Irans new Russian



Location **Maine**
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Obama: We could penetrate Iran's new Russian-made S-300 air-defense system, if we wanted to

Maybe that's true and maybe it isn't -- well, no, actually it's almost certainly true -- but since both sides understand there's zero chance O would ever attack Iran, what does it matter? Even as saber-rattling, this is ineffective because there's no credible threat of force to support it.

That's why Netanyahu is so concerned about Russia's sale of the system to Iran. The question at this point isn't whether the U.S. Air Force could beat the S-300. The question is whether the IAF could.

"Even if they've got some air defense systems, if we had to, we could penetrate them," Obama told MSNBC late Tuesday.

The US president urged to keep things "in perspective," noting that the US defense budget was "somewhere just a little under \$600 billion. Theirs is a little over \$17 billion."

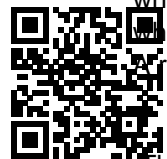
"This is a sale that's been pending for six years," Obama said. "It's of concern, we object to it, particularly because right now we're still negotiating [a nuclear agreement]."

Martin Dempsey shrugged off the S-300 as a potential deterrent to U.S. war plans but one USAF commander told the Daily Beast recently that the missile system would neutralize Israel's ability to attack Iran without U.S. help, which means Netanyahu's hands would be tied until January 2017 at the earliest. One defense expert at AEI says that Israel could still do some damage against the S-300, but unless and until it has F-35s to operate, it may be forced to attack mainly with ballistic missiles now,

which will reduce the damage it can do to Iran's nuclear sites. Israel first faced the prospect of the S-300 being installed in a neighboring enemy state two years ago, when Putin agreed to give it to Iran as a down payment on U.S./Israel's deal. Israel's defense ministry "has been at the time the only technology 'champions' in the region," a report by the intelligence laboratory said, "that might have been able to do it."

The Israelis excel in electronic warfare. In 1982, they "blinded" Soviet-supplied Syrian anti-aircraft units in Lebanon, then destroyed 19 of them without Israeli losses. Similar technology helped Israeli jets destroy a suspected nuclear reactor in Syria in 2007 and, this year, to hit Syrian targets on at least three occasions to prevent what intelligence sources called attempts to move advanced weaponry to Hezbollah.

A source close to Russia's defense ministry agreed that the Israelis "likely have a million ways to combat the S-300 electronically". But he questioned their feasibility because they had not been tested in war.



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Robert Hewson, an IHS Jane's air power analyst, predicted Israeli prowess would prevail in Syria while cautioning that the S-300 would be the most formidable air defense system it had ever faced. "Israel has had nasty surprises from these things before," he said, noting its steep losses to the Soviet anti-aircraft missiles used by Syria and Egypt in the 1973 war.

So the good news is that the IAF has seen this threat coming for a long time and has been preparing for years. The bad news is that no one knows for sure if whatever they've got cooking will actually work. It's always foolish to bet against the Israeli military, but the problem here is even bigger potentially than a nuclear Iran: If the S-300 proves effective against Israeli air assets, it could be smuggled by Iran to Syria and Lebanon, where Hezbollah could use it to threaten passenger jets flying into Tel Aviv.

To boost your spirits, here's footage of the S-300 in action. I'm pretty sure it works better than this most of the time. Exit question: Would Obama share American technology to counter the S-300 with Israel to support an IAF attack? Assuming Israel doesn't already have it, I mean.

<https://youtu.be/1s77cqabHsM>