



Russian Information Operations to Leverage Competition in the Eastern Med

OE Watch Commentary: In June, the Arabic-language website of *Russia Today (RT Arabic)* published a handful of articles discussing “secret weapons” Egypt has procured from Russia since President Abdel Fattah Sisi gained power in 2013. For evidence, the articles rely on anonymous “military sources.” The accompanying excerpts provide some insight into the articles, which come at a time of growing Egyptian-Turkish hostility on the Libyan front, including 20 June statements by President Sisi that his troops were ready to intervene in Libya if Turkish-backed Libyan fighters crossed the Sirte-Jufra frontline. They also come as Israel continues to challenge Russian supremacy over Syria’s skies. One of the *RT Arabic* headlines synthesizes a Russian take on the strategic dynamics evolving between these four Eastern Mediterranean competitors: “The Egyptian Military Aims to Obtain Russian Weapons to Close Egypt’s Coast to Turkey and Israel.”



K-300P Bastion-P.

Source: Mil.ru via Wikimedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:K-300P_Bastion-P.jpg, CC BY 4.0

Egypt’s secret Russian weapons, according to *RT*’s anonymous sources, include an integrated air defense network anchored by the S-300 missile system, 9K720 Iskander SRBMs and the K-300P Bastion-P mobile coastal defense missile system. The articles claim that the Egyptian military is in possession of the former two and seeking expedited delivery of the Bastion system. Egypt’s desire to establish an A2/AD zone along its northern coast is logical, the articles note, given escalating tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean, particularly with Turkey.

Through information operations and weapons sales, Russia can leverage competition between Turkey and Egypt to its advantage and in the service of Russia’s own interests in the Eastern Mediterranean. Israel, whose military strategy is premised on having and maintaining a qualitative edge over its neighbors, is also likely to become more actively involved in the strategic maneuvering, particularly if its military advantage is significantly eroded. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)**

“Egypt has developed a major armament plan that includes secret weapons...”

Source:

“Strong Russian Weapons Emerge with the Egyptian Military in 2020... What Else is Hiding in Egypt’s Military Arsenal?” *RT Arabic*, 10 June 2020. <https://tinyurl.com/yd4596bx>

...many expect that Egypt is hiding weapons that have not yet appeared to the public... many experts confirm that Egypt has the S-300 air defense system, as some leaked photos showed the moment the system was shipped to Egypt, in addition to the presence of other weapons that have not been announced yet.

Source:

“The Egyptian Military Aims to Obtain Russian Weapons to Close Egypt’s Coast to Turkey and Israel,” *RT Arabic*, 13 June 2020. <https://tinyurl.com/y97tbb3a>

A military source confirmed to *RT* that the 2015 weapons contracts between Egypt and Russia included the “Bastion” system. The source noted that Egypt’s acquisition of these systems is logical and not surprising in the framework of a comprehensive development plan for the Egyptian navy that includes modern coastal defense systems to replace older systems.

Source:

“Does Egypt Have Secret Weapons and Why Does it Diversify its Weapons Sources?” *RT Arabic*, 21 June 2020. <https://tinyurl.com/y9loxsf>

The source noted that Egypt has developed a major armament plan that includes secret weapons, as Egypt does not announce all the weapons it possesses... “Egypt possesses other secret, undeclared weapons that are not announced or shown in military exercises and maneuvers, since the military system has many secrets that can be used to surprise enemies in wartime.”

Source:

“Has Egypt Obtained Russian Iskander Missiles? A Military Official Comments” *RT Arabic*, 21 June 2020. <https://tinyurl.com/y9loxsf>

Commenting on social media chatter about Egypt’s possession of Russian Iskander missiles, a military source confirmed to *RT* that the Egyptian army has secret weapons that are not being disclosed... He noted that in 2013, Egypt concluded a major deal with Russia, the first of its kind, to purchase “MiG-29” fighter jets that are stronger than the American “F-16,” in addition to the Buk, Tor and S-300 missile systems along with other radars that were not officially announced... an official source of the Russian Federation for Military Technical Cooperation announced that Moscow had for the first time supplied a North African-Middle Eastern country with the deadly Iskander tactical missiles. Egypt is the only country in the Middle East and North Africa at the same time.