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Moscow markets cruise missile launched from a freight container

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Russia's Club-K Freight Container cruise missile

This relatively cheap, extra-smart, easy-to-use Club-K Container Missile System, which Moscow has put on the open market, allows cruise missiles concealed in freight containers to be launched from a prepositioned or moving land or sea platform. It is virtually undetectable by radar until activated. No wonder, Iran and Venezuela were keenly interested when the Club-K was put on the market at the Defense Services Asia exhibition in Malaysia this week for \$15 million.

Western military experts are calling it a "real maritime fear for anyone with a waterfront." The container-cum-missiles, carried by a ship, fishing vessel or truck can approach a targeted coast, highway or international railway and strike behind the target's missile defenses without alerting radar monitors or even surveillance drones and satellites.

In Iranian hands, it would make the targeting of its nuclear facilities very difficult. Able to wipe out an aircraft carrier up to 400 kilometers away, the system's manufacturer, Novator, is directing its marketing tactics at anyone under threat of military action from the United States. One expert accused the Russians of proliferating ballistic missiles on an unheard-of scale.

At the Malaysian exhibition, the marketing film showed the Club-K being activated from an ordinary truck. (See picture.) The truck pulls up, whereupon the container roof lifts up to reveal four 3?-54?E, 3?-54?E1 and 3?-14?E cruise missiles ready to fire. The operator then pushes a button and the missiles, which have a range of 350 km, are launched without further preparation.

DEBKAfile's military sources warn that the sale of Club-K cruise missile systems to Iran or Syria and their transfer to Hizballah would give them an edge substantial enough to be a game-changer into the Middle East balance of strength. They are capable of surreptitiously approaching Israeli, Iraqi and any other coastlines in the region, and send missiles flying against an American, Arab or Israeli strategic or military target before their targets know they are under attack.

The missile specialist Novator, which maintains a manufacturing plant in Yekaterinburg in the Ural Mountains, produces an array of missiles against air, sea and land targets, including

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