

Iran says Shahab-3 missile has longer than reported range

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14/07/2008 21:29 TEHRAN, July 14 (RIA Novosti) - Iran's Shahab-3 missiles have a range greater than the reported 2,000 km (1,240 miles), Iran's Fars news agency said on Monday, quoting the country's deputy defense minister.

Iran successfully launched last week an upgraded Shahab-3 ballistic missile as part of the Great Prophet III military exercises in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, drawing a new wave of international criticism.

"The recently tested Shahab-3 ballistic missile has a flight range of over 2,000 kilometers and features a high kill probability," Brig.-Gen. Nasrollah Ezzati said.

"Our rockets could be a factor in preventing possible aggression from Iran's enemies, and also level out the balance of power in the region," he added.

He did not specify the range of the rocket. The earlier reported 2,000 km would mean that Iran could strike at Israel, and U.S. bases in the Persian Gulf.

The Iranian missile tests came after the Israeli Air Force conducted military exercises involving over 100 fighters in early June. The exercises were widely seen as a 'dress rehearsal' for an attack on Iranian nuclear facilities.

The United States has not also ruled out a military strike against Iran if the Islamic Republic refuses to halt its nuclear program, which Western countries believe is a cover for a weapons program. Iran says it needs the program to produce electricity.

Iran has reacted to rumors of an imminent attack by Israel and/or the U.S. by promising to deliver a "powerful blow" to any aggressor.

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For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca