

Iran test fires new long- and mid-range missiles

By [Global Research](#)

Global Research, July 09, 2008

www.chinaview.cn 9 July 2008

www.chinaview.cn 2008-07-09 15:23:07

Special Report: Iran Nuclear Crisis

·Iran's IRGC has successfully test fired new long- and mid-range missiles ·IRGC test fired a Shahab 3 missile, which can hit any target within a range of 2,000 km. ·Observers believe it is still possible the U. S. and Israel would attack Iranian targets. TEHRAN, July 9 (Xinhua) — Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has successfully test fired new long- and mid-range missiles in response to threats from the United States and Israel, Iran's satellite channel Press TV reported Wednesday.

A video grab from Al Alam television shows three of nine long- and medium-range missiles being fired during a test in Iran July 9, 2008

In military exercises dubbed Payambar-e Azam 3 (Great Prophet 3), the IRGC test fired a Shahab 3 missile, which can hit any target within a range of 2,000 km, Press TV said.

The Shahab 3 ballistic missile was equipped with a one-ton conventional warhead, it added.

Nine highly advanced missiles with improved accuracy were simultaneously tested, including the Zelzal and Fateh missiles with ranges of 400 km and 170 km respectively.

The Payambar-e Azam 3 war games were conducted by missile units of the IRGC's naval and air forces, Press TV reported.

IRGC Naval Commander Morteza Saffari said various missile, rocket and torpedo launchers as well as military vessels and land-to-sea missiles were tested during the exercises.

"The IRGC Navy is carrying out this maneuver to show it is fully prepared to counter any possible enemy aggression or adventurism," Saffari said.

"The maneuver also sends out a reassuring message to regional countries that together we can secure the Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz without the presence of foreign forces," he added.

IRGC Air Force Commander Hossein Salami told Press TV that the aim of the war games were to demonstrate "just how strong-willed the Islamic Republic is in defending its sovereignty against any challenges by those enemies that have used harsh and threatening words against Iran in recent weeks."

On Tuesday, an aide to Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said Iran would strike

Israeli city of Tel Aviv and the U.S. fleet in the Gulf as a first response to any attack against the Islamic republic.

“The Zionist regime (Israel) is pressuring White House officials to prepare a military attack against Iran,” Iran’s ISNA news agency quoted Ali Shirazi, Khamenei’s representative in the Revolutionary Guards navy division, as saying.

The war games came after IRGC Commander Major General Mohammad Ali Jafari said in late June that Tehran would impose controls on shipping in the strategic Strait of Hormuz if attacked.

The United States and its allies have accused Iran of trying to develop nuclear weapons under the cover of a civilian nuclear program. Iran has denied the U.S. charges and insists that its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes only.

The Bush administration said it focused on diplomacy to try to resolve Iran’s nuclear issue, but has insisted it will take “no option off the table.”

Some observers believe that it is still possible that the United States and Israel would attack Iranian targets for Tehran’s suspicious nuclear programs.

Khamenei aide: Iran to hit Tel Aviv and U.S. fleet in Gulf if attacked

TEHRAN, July 8 (Xinhua) — Iran would strike Tel Aviv and the U.S. fleet in the Gulf as a first response to any attack against the Islamic republic, an aide to Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said Tuesday.

“The Zionist regime (Israel) is pressuring White House officials to prepare a military attack against Iran,” Iran’s ISNA news agency quoted Ali Shirazi, Khamenei’s representative in the Revolutionary Guards navy division, as saying.

U.S. reaffirms diplomacy on Iran’s nuclear issue

WASHINGTON, July 8 (Xinhua) — The United States reaffirmed Tuesday diplomacy on trying to resolve Iran’s nuclear issue and said it is waiting to hear EU high representative Javier Solana’s talks with Iran.

“This is a process that we take seriously, committed to the diplomatic resolution of this issue,” State Department spokesman Gonzalo Gallegos said. Full story

Solana: breakthrough on Iran nuclear issue “difficult”

PARIS, July 7 (Xinhua) — European Union (EU) foreign policy chief Javier Solana has said he is not optimistic about the prospects of a breakthrough with Iran over its nuclear program.

Solana, who is here to attend a conference on boosting EU-NATO ties, told reporters on Monday he hoped to hold talks with Iran’s chief negotiator Saeed Jalili before the end of the month. Full story

Oil minister: No country dares to attack Iran

TEHRAN, July 5 (Xinhua) — Iranian Oil Minister Gholam-Hossein Nozari said Saturday that no country will ever dare to carry out an act of aggression against the Islamic Republic, Iran’s

satellite Press TV reported.

“Iran’s capabilities are such that no country can conceive of attacking it,” Nozari said.

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