

## Iran tests missiles "able to sink big warships"

Thu Feb 8, 2007 7:03 AM ET

By Edmund Blair

TEHRAN (Reuters) - Iran's Revolutionary Guards test-fired missiles on Thursday that a commander said could sink "big warships" in the Gulf, the Sea of Oman and the northern Indian Ocean, the state broadcaster said.

Iran is at loggerheads with the United States over its disputed nuclear program and what Washington calls its meddling in Iraq. The United States has ordered a second aircraft carrier to the Gulf to step up pressure on Iran.

"These missiles, with a maximum range of 350 km (220 miles), can hit different kinds of big warships in all of the Persian Gulf, all of the Sea of Oman and the north of the Indian Ocean," senior Revolutionary Guards naval commander Ali Fadavi said.

Fadavi was also quoted by the state broadcaster's Web site as saying that the 500-kg (1,100-lb) warhead of this missile had the capacity to sink "all kinds of big warships".

State television said the missile tests, staged on the second day of war-games by the Guards' naval and air units, were "to show that Iran is able to confront any possible threats".

The Revolutionary Guards are an ideological wing of the Islamic Republic's armed forces and have a command structure separate from the regular military. They regularly hold exercises in the Gulf area that are widely seen as deliberate demonstrations of military power.

### GULF CHOKE POINT

Military experts say Iranian forces are no technological match for the U.S. military but could still cause havoc in the Gulf and the narrow Strait of Hormuz, a choke point through which two-fifths of the world's traded oil passes.

The state broadcaster's Web site identified the missile as an anti-ship SSN-4, which Web sites and Jane's information group describe as a ballistic missile that has been around since the 1960s and is fired from submarines when on the surface.

The Web sites say the SSN-4 has a range of up to 550 km or more. One Web site, [www.navweaps.com](http://www.navweaps.com), said it had a maximum payload of 1,370 kg, much bigger than the 500-kg warhead described by Fadavi.

Television showed images of a missile launched from land and hitting the upper structure of a ship at sea. But the one fired appeared different from designs and descriptions of an SSN-4 projectile given on the Web sites.

Guards air force commander Hossein Salami suggested on Wednesday that the two days of training also included equipment related to the Russian-made TOR-M1 anti-aircraft missile system. But it did not appear to involve testing those missiles.

Last month, Russia said it had completed delivery of the TOR-M1 system to Iran. Washington said the sale undermined regional security. Moscow says the missiles are only short-range and purely defensive.

Washington accuses the Iran of seeking to develop atomic weapons, a charge Iran denies. Tehran also dismisses allegations that it is backing militants in Iraq.

(Additional reporting by the Editorial Reference Unit in London)