

## Top Military Advisor: Iranian Missiles can Reach Ships in Persian Gulf

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### Top Military Advisor: Iranian Missiles can Reach Ships in Persian Gulf

TEHRAN (FNA)- A top adviser of the Supreme Leader of Islamic Revolution said that in the event of war no ship passing through the oil-rich Persian Gulf region would be beyond the reach of the country's missiles.

Iran, embroiled in a standoff with the West over its nuclear ambitions, has said it could respond to any military attack by closing the Strait of Hormoz at the southern end of the Persian Gulf through which about 40 percent of the world's traded oil passes.

The United States, whose Fifth Fleet is based in the Persian Gulf state of Bahrain, has vowed to keep shipping lanes opened.

The West accuses Tehran of seeking to build nuclear warheads but Iran insists its aim is to master technology to make electricity. Washington has not ruled out military action if diplomacy fails to end the row.

"At a time of war no ship can pass through the region of the Persian Gulf without being in the reach of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps' coast-to-sea missiles," Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi, a senior military adviser of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, said.

Rahim Safavi earlier this week said the Leader had put the IRGC in charge of defending the Persian Gulf against any enemy attacks and that they would not hesitate to "confront foreign forces".

The comments came amid persistent speculation about a possible US or Israeli strike on Iran's nuclear facilities.

Iran has dismissed reports of possible US or Israeli plans to strike the country, but says it would respond by attacking U.S. interests and Israel if any such assault was made.

Iran's air force and defense units held war games this week to test equipment and boost readiness.

Iran's armed forces comprise of the regular army and the IRGC, both of which are under the command of the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei.

The IRGC, which is formed of the three ground, naval and air forces, is mainly tasked with protecting border areas and defending the Islamic Republic against foreign and internal threats. The decision is expected to expand the IRGC's control in the strategic Persian Gulf which is also a major route for global oil exports.

The country's armed forces have several times declared their alertness to confront any military invasion and give a decisive reply, as Israel and the United States have recently heightened their threats of military action against Iran.

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### Iranian General Killed in Clashes with Rebels

TEHRAN (FNA)- Four members of the Iranian security forces, including a general, have been killed in clashes with rebels in southeastern Iran, a police official said on Friday.

"During clashes with armed rebels on Thursday night, Brigadier General Mohammad Sar-Golzaie was killed" in Sistan-Baluchestan province, a local police commander, Salah Asgari, told FNA.

He said the general was killed during mopping up operations in the Nosratabad area northwest of the provincial capital Zahedan.

He said three other soldiers had been killed in fighting in recent days without specifying where. "Several rebels were also

killed," he added.

Sistan-Baluchestan has seen a spate of attacks by terrorist group Jundullah (Soldiers of God) in recent years.

The province borders Afghanistan and Pakistan and is a major drug trafficking route.

Over three thousand Iranian police and security forces have been killed in clashes with drug traffickers in southeastern country since the 1978 Islamic Revolution.

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