

## US Army Says Chinese Missiles Coming to Iraq from Iran

Contributed by Administrator  
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Chinese missiles smuggled through Iran into Iraq: US by Ammar Karim

The US military on Sunday said its troops had found Chinese-made missiles which they believe were smuggled into Iraq by groups in Iran in order to arm groups fighting US-led forces.

"We have seen ordnance and weapons that come from other places, but we assess that they have come through Iran," US military spokesman Admiral Mark Fox told reporters.

"There are missiles that are actually manufactured in China that we assess come through Iran as well."

Fox also alleged Iranian agents continue to smuggle Iranian made armour piercing bombs -- explosively-formed penetrators (EFPs) -- to Iraqi extremist groups across the country's long border.

"We do feel that there are networks of EFPs that are coming from Iran," he said, adding the troops had detained two suspects believed to be linked to the Iranian Revolutionary Guards' covert Qods Force.

"We have detained two suspects near the Iran-Iraq border just this weekend that we suspect to be part of the IRGC-Qods Force network," he said.

The US military has repeatedly accused Iranian linked groups of training Iraqi extremists in the use of EFPs.

Since May 2004, when the EFPs emerged on the Iraqi battlefield, more than 200 US soldiers have been killed by these bombs which fire a fist-sized chunk of molten metal that can cut through even a heavily armoured vehicle.

Tehran denies being behind any weapons smuggling, but Fox insisted that weapons seized by Iraqi and US forces are clearly of Iranian manufacture.

"They are distinctive ... in particular mortars, mortar pins, some of the residue that you see from the mortar attacks that are distinctly and uniquely Iranian," he said.

"Also the technologies associated with some of the improvised-explosive devices, some of the triggering mechanisms and also some of the techniques and also the technology associated with manufacture of EFPs are distinctly and uniquely Iranian."

The military maintains that many of the extremist groups trained by alleged Iranian agents are Shiite militants who have broken away from the Mahdi Army, the Iraqi militia loyal to anti-American cleric Moqtada al-Sadr.

Fox, nevertheless said that the broader organisation -- which is a powerful political and religious movement as well as a militia -- is not in itself a terrorist outfit.

"As I described earlier there are secret cells, rogue elements of Jaish al-Mahdi that we consider to be extremists, to be terrorists or that are not answerable to any higher authority and are in fact as I said rogue," Fox said.

"We have not necessarily felt that the entire large organisation of JAM is like that," he said, using the common US abbreviation for the Mahdi Army.

"We understand that there are factions or splinters or pieces of JAM that are still decent and hardworking and members of society that are not like that."

Meanwhile, the US general in charge of training Iraqi security forces said on Sunday the military was adopting a step-by-step approach and not working towards a "precise date" for completion of the training.

The Iraqi troops are being trained "one division at a time, one province at a time, one situation at a time," Lieutenant General James Dubik told AFP.

"There is no blanket answer ... they are in much better shape this year than last year. That doesn't mean we can give a precise date for any transition."

Dubik, who toured bases in the restive cities of Baquba and Samarra along with Iraqi Defence Minister Abdel Qadir Jassem Mohammed on Sunday, said the Iraqi troops there were "becoming stronger every single day."

A White House report earlier this month submitted to the US Congress criticised Iraq for failing to successfully prepare its forces for taking over the security in the country.

A well-armed and trained Iraqi force is seen as the cornerstone for an eventual withdrawal of US-led troops.

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## Military Intelligence

China company has reportedly developed a thermo-baric fuel air explosive warhead for the RPG-7 handheld anti-tank grenade launcher

And where in the world is RPG CENTRAL?

Two months ago, Chinese arms company Xinshidai (New Era) displayed its latest weapons products at the International Defense Exhibition arms show in Abu Dhabi, seeking to establish its own niche in the world's lucrative arms market. Xinshidai is a conglomerate of several Chinese state-run armament manufacturing enterprises. Given Xinshidai's interest in expanding its presence in the Middle Eastern market and its ties to Iran, the possibility exists that weaponry sold to the region could "bleed" into Iraq. Xinshidai's prior record of flouting international regulations on arms trafficking makes it unlikely that the company would insist on tight export controls. Especially worrying is that the company has reportedly developed a thermo-baric fuel air explosive warhead for the RPG-7 handheld anti-tank grenade launcher; the warhead is known as the WPF 2004. Xinshidai's new shoulder-fired warhead weighs seven pounds and has a reported accuracy range of 650 feet (International Defense Review, March 16).

The new missile warheads would allow users an increased capability not only against buildings, but also against forces deployed in bunkers or underground facilities.

The warhead's explosive potential is far greater than a conventional round and could collapse a multi-story building while killing all inside. Since the Middle East is now China's fourth largest trading partner, and given Xinshidai's past role in illicit arms sales, it is possible that the new weaponry will eventually emerge in Iraq and be used against U.S. forces. Indeed, in September 2004, the U.S. Federal Register announced that Xinshidai was to be subjected to two years of U.S. sanctions for illicit sales of missiles and related goods to Iran. The Russian-made RPG-7 is the most widely used RPG in the world and is a favorite among insurgents.

Adding the WPF 2004 warhead to the RPG-7 would pose an even greater threat to counter-insurgent forces. In 1993, for example, RPG-7s downed the U.S. Black Hawk helicopters in Mogadishu during Operation Restore Hope. In Iraq, guerrillas regularly use the RPG-7; according to an April 1 report in Mafkarat al-Islam, Iraqi guerrillas launched an attack with RPG-7s in al-Hasy, just south of Fallujah, and allegedly killed four Iraqi soldiers. Moreover, Turkey just recently uncovered an arms cache belonging to the PKK that was well-stocked with RPG-7s, believed to have been brought into southeastern Turkey through northern Iraq (Today's Zaman, April 5).

Given their relative inexpensiveness and availability, RPG-7s modified with the WPF 2004 warhead could give Iraqi insurgents a significant new cost-effective element in their arsenal of weapons to combat coalition forces. While it is too early to tell, a previously sanctioned Chinese armaments company seeking to expand its market share in the Middle East with longstanding trade ties to Iran, combined with porous Iraqi borders, leads to the unsettling conclusion that it is perhaps only a matter of time before such inexpensive and potent weapons enter the insurgents' arsenal. Dr. John C. K. Daly is a freelance writer who received his Ph.D. in Russian and Middle Eastern Studies from the University of London.

[http://vwt.d2g.com:8081/2007/04/china\\_company\\_has\\_reportedly\\_d.html](http://vwt.d2g.com:8081/2007/04/china_company_has_reportedly_d.html)

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Fears That New Chinese Warhead Could Seep into Iraq

By John C.k. Daly

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Xinshidai's new shoulder-fired warhead weighs seven pounds and has a reported accuracy range of 650 feet (International Defense Review, March 16). The new missile warheads would allow users an increased capability not only against buildings, but also against forces deployed in bunkers or underground facilities. The warhead's explosive potential is far greater than a conventional round and could collapse a multi-story building while killing all inside. Since the Middle East is now China's fourth largest trading partner, and given Xinshidai's past role in illicit arms sales, it is possible that the new weaponry will eventually emerge in Iraq and be used against U.S. forces. Indeed, in September 2004, the U.S. Federal Register announced that Xinshidai was to be subjected to two years of U.S. sanctions for illicit sales of missiles and related goods to Iran.

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