

## FACTBOX - How big is Iran's military?

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EDITORS' NOTE: Reuters and other foreign media are subject to Iranian restrictions on their ability to film or take pictures in Tehran. Members of the Iranian Army march past President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in a military parade in Tehran September 22, 2009. (REUTERS/Raheb Homavandi/Files)

Following are some details about Iran's military capability. The totals include equipment held by the Revolutionary Guards, which operate on land, at sea and in the air:

### FACTBOX - How big is Iran's military?

(Reuters) - Iran's armed forces launched five days of large-scale air defence military exercises on Sunday to show off the country's deterrence capabilities in the face of pressure from the West over its nuclear programme.

The display of military muscle comes at a time of rising tension between Iran and six major powers which fear Tehran's nuclear programme is aimed at producing nuclear weapons. Tehran denies this is the programme's purpose.

#### \* ARMED FORCES:

-- Iran has more than 523,000 personnel on active service. Major General Ataollah Salehi is the armed forces chief.

#### \* ARMY:

-- The army comprises about 350,000 men, including 220,000 conscripts. The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, viewed as the most loyal guardian of the ruling system, has another 125,000 men. In 2004 the army was organised in four corps, with four armoured divisions and six infantry divisions.

-- There are 1,600 tanks including some 100 Zulfiqar locally produced main battle tanks. A large number of Iran's tanks are elderly British-made Chieftains and U.S.-made M-60s.

-- Soviet-made T-54 and T-55s, T-59s, T-62s, and T-72s were also part of the inventory, all captured from Iraq or acquired from North Korea and China.

-- A report from the International Institute for Strategic Studies says that some of the tanks' serviceability may be in doubt.

-- There are around 640 armoured personnel carriers. There are 8,196 artillery pieces of which 2,010 are towed, and over 310 are self-propelled.

#### \* MISSILES:

-- In a 2007 parade to mark the anniversary of 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, Iran showed its Shahab 3 missile, saying it could travel 2,000 km (1,240 miles), enabling it to hit Israel and U.S. bases in the region.

Another missile at the parade, the Ghadr 1, can reach targets 1,800 km away. It was believed to be the first time it has been shown publicly. In November 2008, Iran said it test-fired a Sejil missile with a range of close to 2,000 km. In September this year, Iran said it tested "upgraded" Shahab 3 and Sejil versions.

-- Iranian officials have voiced growing frustration at Russia's failure so far to deliver the advanced S-300 missile defence system, which Israel and the United States do not want Tehran to have. The truck-mounted S-300PMU1 can shoot down cruise missiles and aircraft. Iranian officials say the Islamic Republic can produce a similar system itself and state television said a new anti-aircraft defence system would be tested during this week's manoeuvres.

#### \* NAVY:

-- There are 18,000 naval personnel. The navy has its headquarters at Bandar-e Abbas. Iran's navy has three Russian Kilo class submarines, three frigates and two corvettes.

-- As of 2001 the regular Iranian navy was in a state of overall obsolescence, and in poor shape because they had not been equipped with modern ships and weapons. The readiness of the three frigates is doubtful, and the two nearly 40-year-old corvettes do not have sophisticated weapons.

-- In late 2007 Iran launched a new locally made submarine and a navy frigate named Jamaran. Jane's Defence Weekly has reported that Iran was also building missile-launching frigates copied from 275-tonne Kaman fast attack missile craft originally purchased from France in the late 1970s.

\* AIR FORCE:

-- The air force has some 30,000 personnel and 319 combat aircraft. However, serviceability may be as low as around 60 percent for U.S. aircraft types and 80 percent for Russian aircraft. There are F-14 and MiG 29 aircraft. There are also some aircraft impounded from Iraq -- Russian-built Sukhoi Su-24s and 25s. Iran also has transport aircraft and helicopters.

-- In September 2007, Iran said it had tested two new domestically-produced jet fighters. State television said the Saegheh was a new generation of the Azarakhsh (Lightning) fighter. Iran said it was being built on an industrial scale.

Sources: Reuters/Military Balance 2008/www.globalsecurity.org/Jane's Defence Weekly

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