

Iran has remote-controlled launch pads

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Preparing for a possible American or Israeli strike on its nuclear installations, Iran has developed a remote-controlled launch system that can be used to operate dozens of unmanned Shihab ballistic missile launchers in underground bunkers, The Jerusalem Post has learned.

After recent upgrades, the Shihab-3 ballistic missiles are believed to have a target range of 2,000-kilometers. The missile was initially developed with a 1,300-km. range.

According to informed Western sources, the remote-controlled launch system was developed by the Iranians in conjunction with North Korea and by employing Chinese technology. Iranian Revolutionary Guards Commander Yayha Rahim Safavi said recently that Iran had equipped its Shihab missiles with an advanced guidance system that can control them after they are launched.

Israeli defense officials recently said if Iran were attacked, it would most likely respond by launching Shihab missiles at Israel or US targets in the region. The officials said Israel's Arrow missile defense system was capable of intercepting all of Iran's operational missiles.

Also Tuesday, senior Israeli defense officials expressed doubt that another round of sanctions would be imposed on Iran, which continues to enrich uranium and develop its nuclear program in defiance of the United Nations Security Council.

"The economic sanctions have proven themselves as having an impact on Iran," a senior official said. "But without Russia or China, it is doubtful that the UN will succeed in passing another round of sanctions."

Ahead of this possibility, Iran's top nuclear negotiator, Ali Larijani, warned Tuesday that any new UN sanctions would doom Iran's cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency and render talks with it "fruitless."

According to state television, Larijani also accused the United States of trying to undermine the progress made so far between Iran and the IAEA, to increase tensions and pave the way for new sanctions.

The comments came as senior IAEA and Iranian officials reported progress after a second day of key talks in Teheran, in efforts to resolve the remaining issues surrounding Iran's nuclear enrichment program.

by Yaakov Katz , THE JERUSALEM POST Aug. 22, 2007

AP contributed to this report.

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Range of the Shihab-3

<http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/iran/shahab-3.htm>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shahab-3>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran%27s_missile_forces