

IRGC and Defense Ministry to Cooperate on Enhancing Iran's Missile Power



Major General Gholam Ali Rashid

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By Karen Kaya
OE Watch Commentary

The accompanying passages provide insight into the new Iranian government's defense priorities. The first article discusses a recent meeting between the new Minister of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics of Iran, Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani, and the Commander of the unified combatant command headquarters of the Iranian Armed Forces (under direct command of its General Staff), Major General Gholam Ali Rashid. Rashid is a former deputy chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The second article discusses the new government's national security and foreign policy priorities.

The first article is from *Fars News Agency*, an Iranian semi-official news agency, and it notes a focus on developing advanced weapons with the capability to "surprise enemies," as well as increased cooperation between the Army and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC). The article also notes recent comments by the Commander of the IRGC Aerospace Force, Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh, who announced his intention to broaden cooperation with the Defense Ministry to enhance Iran's missile power during the new government's term. These comments were reciprocated by Defense Minister Ashtiani, who also announced his readiness "to take big steps toward providing and meeting the defense and military needs of the Armed Forces, especially the IRGC's Aerospace Force."

The second article is from *Kayhan Life*, an independent media outlet focusing on Iran, and it discusses Defense Minister Ashtiani's 16 August speech in which he appeared in front of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee to discuss his four-year plan for Iran's Defense Ministry and Armed Forces Logistics. The article notes one of his main priorities is to develop the Islamic Republic's missile, air defense, unmanned aerial vehicle, cyber and modern warfare capabilities. Another priority is to strengthen the "Axis of Resistance... alliance" among Iran, Lebanese Hezbollah, and Syria, while also supporting Iran's allies in Latin America and Africa. The article points out that this aligns with the priorities of the new President of Iran, Ebrahim Raisi, who, in his previous post as the head of Iran's Judiciary, repeatedly called for increased support for the Axis of Resistance, the Syrian regime, Lebanese Hezbollah, and the Popular Mobilization Forces in Iraq. Ashtiani also notes a focus on boosting the country's capability to "battle industrial espionage and sabotage."

“Commander of the IRGC Aerospace Force Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh announced plans to broaden cooperation with the Defense Ministry to enhance Iran's missile power.”

Source: “Senior Iranian Commander Urges Production of “Surprising” Weapons,” *Fars News Agency* (Iranian semi-official news agency), 14 September 2021. <https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000623000450/Senir-Iranian-Cmmander-Urges-Prdcin-f-%E2%80%9CSrprising%E2%80%9D-Weapns>

Commander of Khatam ol-Anbia Headquarters Major General Gholam Ali Rashid in a meeting with new Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani called for more efforts to develop advanced weapons with the capability to surprise enemies.

“God willing, you will take large steps in order to fulfill the orders of the commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces (Ayatollah Khamenei), with a revolutionary and jihadi approach, to develop defensive and offensive capabilities, specially in priority areas, and produce weapons with advanced technologies and surprising capabilities for battling enemies,” General Rashid said.

He also expressed the hope that the level of interactions between the Army and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) would further enhance during General Ashtiani's tenure.

Earlier this month, Commander of the IRGC Aerospace Force Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh announced plans to broaden cooperation with the Defense Ministry to enhance Iran's missile power.... “God willing, cooperation in the field of upgrading the IRGC missile power will be expanded during the new term of the Defense Ministry,” he added. General Ashtiani, for his part, voiced his ministry's readiness to interact and cooperate closely with the IRGC's Aerospace Force. “With the extensive industrial and production capacities and platforms in the Ministry, we will be able to take big steps toward providing and meeting the defense and military needs of the Armed Forces, especially the IRGC's Aerospace Force,” he said.

Continued: IRGC and Defense Ministry to Cooperate on Enhancing Iran's Missile Power

Source: "ANALYSIS: What are the New Iranian Government's Defense Priorities?" Kayhan life (an independent media outlet focusing on Iran), 25 August 2021. <https://kayhanlife.com/special-reports/analysis-what-are-the-new-iranian-governments-defense-priorities/>

President Ebrahim Raisi's defense minister-designate, Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani, appeared in front of the Majlis' (Iranian Parliament) National Security and Foreign Policy Committee on Aug. 16 to speak about his four-year plan for the Islamic Republic Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics.

General Ashtiani told Majlis deputies that one of his priorities was "to maintain and increase the Islamic Republic's defense superiority in the region by developing its missile, air defense, unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), cyber and modern warfare capabilities."

General Ashtiani added that strengthening the Axis of Resistance — an alliance between Iran, Lebanese Hezbollah, and the Syrian government of President Bashar al-Assad — as well as supporting the Islamic Republic's allies in Latin America and Africa and boosting the country's defense capabilities to "battle industrial espionage and sabotage" were part of the ministry's four-year plan.

Ashtiani's priorities for the Defense Ministry align with Mr. Raisi's policies, which have always been part of the state's broader agenda, but the defense minister-designate has openly stressed the need to "battle industrial espionage and sabotage."

In his previous post as the head of Iran's Judiciary, Mr. Raisi repeatedly called for more significant support for the Axis of Resistance, the Syrian regime, Lebanese Hezbollah, and the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF).

The PMF is an Iraqi state-sponsored umbrella organization of 40 militia groups, primarily Shia Muslim, but also including Sunni Muslim, Christian, and Yazidi groups.

While former Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif famously described himself as a "representative of the state," political insiders have dubbed President Raisi's Foreign Minister-designate Hossein Amir-Abdollahian as a "resistance diplomat." Mr. Abdollahian has been a staunch supporter of the country's missile program and regional activities — policies aimed at extracting concessions from the West.

After his inauguration, President Raisi's first official meeting was with the leaders and senior officials of the Axis of Resistance and Iranian-backed militias.

In a meeting with the chairperson of the PMF, Falih Al-Fayyadh, on Aug. 8, the commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), Major General Hossein Salami, said: "America's demise in Iraq has begun, and we, in the Axis of Resistance, stand with you in this epic battle."

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