



Equipping the IRGC with New Ballistic Missiles

OE Watch Commentary: Since the Iranian navy's defeat in Operation Praying Mantis in 1988, it has shied away from direct confrontation between its large ships and the US navy and instead embraced asymmetric swarming tactics with small speed boats. According to the accompanying excerpted report from the *Tasnim News Agency*, an outlet affiliated with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), the IRGC has now developed anti-ship ballistic missiles with a range of 435 miles. While Iranian military and political leaders often exaggerate their capability, the Islamic Republic has invested significantly in its domestic military industries and has rolled out a number of other missiles, drones, and military platforms.

The commander of the IRGC Aerospace Force, General Amir Ali Hajizadeh, mentions in the article that Iran has "good capabilities and equipment in the fields of air defense more advanced than China, Russia, France, and England." While it has been noted that Iran has become a significant producer of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), there are questions about its air defense capabilities. The likelihood that Iranian engineers have reverse-engineered equipment purchased from abroad has been noted, making Iranian missiles in the Persian Gulf a growing threat.

Within Iranian rhetoric, up to and including that of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, a constant theme is that Iran as a littoral state has more of a right to operate in the Persian Gulf than outside powers like the United States. Often, Khamenei refers to "the iron fist under a velvet glove" to argue that US diplomacy is insincere so long as the its navy remains in the Persian Gulf and transits the Strait of Hormuz, which contradicts the sanctity of international waters. That Iran is building up its anti-ship capabilities, if real, suggests that a doctrinal shift is underway in Iran.

End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)



Iran testing its new anti-ship missile.

Source: Tasnim News, goo.gl/ZoD8ju, CC 4.0.

Source: "Tajhiz Sepah beh Mushak-e Balistik daryaye ba barad 700 kilometer (Equipping the IRGC with a surface-to-sea ballistic missiles with a 435 mile range)," *Tasnim News Agency*, 16 October 2018. www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1397/07/24/1854036

According to the defense correspondent of the Tasnim News Agency, at the sixth meeting of political officers of the Armed Forces based in both Tehran and Alburz provinces and held by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)'s Aerospace Force, Gen. Amir Ali Hajizadeh, commander of this Force, during the ceremony described the capabilities and achievements, both offensive and defensive, of the IRGC's Aerospace Force.

In this ceremony, he described the capabilities and achievements of the offensive and the defense of the aerospace force of the IRGC. According to a Sobh-e Sadeh report, at the beginning of the meeting, Gen. Amir Ali Hajizadeh pointed out the three basic pillars to the administration of the country: The Supreme Leader, people, and officials....

He stressed, "The world is witnessing that Iran ranks first in the region and seventh or eighth in the world and is ahead of the [North] Koreans in the missile field. We are also in the top 15 countries in the world in terms of unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) production more advanced than China and Russia, and we have good capabilities and equipment in the fields of air defense more advanced than China, Russia, France, and England.

General Amir Ali Hajizadeh pointed out that in 2007, the Supreme Leader ordered the commander at the time [and said], "I do not know if a ballistic missile from land will hit a ship or not, and if you can do this, it is great work." We followed from that, and we have empowered our children and today we have succeeded. The coastal missiles are ballistic rather than cruise, and this is itself sophisticated technology. We have produced [these] and can target ships 700 kilometers [435 miles] away."

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