

Iran 'ready to attack US bases'

Iran declared on Wednesday that it can destroy nearby US military bases and strike Israel within minutes of an attack on the Islamic Republic, reflecting tensions over Iran's suspect nuclear program.

04 Jul 2012: By: Associated Press

The veiled threat came during a military drill that has included the firing of ballistic missiles.

The elite Revolutionary Guards, conducting the war games in Iran's central desert, said that the missiles were aimed at mock-ups of foreign military bases.

Israel and the US have hinted at the possibility of military strikes against Iran if sanctions and diplomacy do not rein in Iran's nuclear development programme. The West suspects Iran may be aiming to build nuclear weapons. Iran insists its programme is for peaceful purposes.

The semiofficial Fars news agency quoted Gen. Ami Ali Hajizadeh of the Revolutionary Guards as saying US bases are in range of Iran's missiles and could be hit in retaliatory strikes. He referred to Israel as "occupied territories."

"Measures have been taken so that we could destroy all these bases in the early minutes of an attack," said Hajizadeh, chief of the Guards' airspace division.

Israeli officials refused to comment. There was no immediate comment from Washington.

Hajizadeh said the Guards also successfully test fired an anti-ship missile that could sink US warships in the Gulf. Gen. Hajizadeh told state TV that the shore-to-sea ballistic missile, called "Persian Gulf," has a range of 300 kilometers (180 miles).

State TV showed video of the launching of a white missile that hit a huge target in Gulf waters.

The US Navy's 5th Fleet is based in Bahrain, an island in the Gulf about 200 kilometres (120 miles) from Iran, well within range of Iranian missiles.

On Tuesday Iran said it launched a variety of missiles during the desert drill, including Shahab-3 missiles with a range of 1,200 miles that could reach Israel and southern Europe.

Source: AP