

## Political

*update:* Iran tests long range missiles – 10 July

### Key points:

- Iran tests long range missiles that put all main cities in Israel within reach of attack.
- UK Foreign Office condemns the missile testing and reiterates demand for Iran to cease uranium enrichment.
- Solana expected to visit Iran to discuss package of incentives offered to Iran by the international community.

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### Latest developments

- Iran's Revolutionary Guard test-fired a number of long and medium range missiles and torpedoes today (10 July) following the firing of nine missiles yesterday (9 July) during a military training exercise.
- Iranian officials said that the tests were a response to US and Israeli threats of an attack on Iranian nuclear facilities.
- The missile barrage included a new version of the Shahab-3 missile, which has a range of 1,250 miles (2,000 kilometres) and is armed with a 1 tonne conventional warhead. That missile would put Israel, Turkey, the Arabian Peninsula, Afghanistan and Pakistan within striking distance.
- The official Iranian news agency, IRNA, quoted General Hossein Salami, the Air Force commander of the elite Guards as saying "Our hands are always on the trigger and our missiles are ready for launch." (9 July).

### Background

- The range of Iran's Shahab-3 missile means Iran could hit all of Israel's major cities including Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, with a combined metropolitan population of over three million.
- The tests come after an aide to Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei warned on Tuesday (8 July) that Iran would "set fire" to Israel and the US Navy in the Gulf as its first response to any American or Israeli attack on its nuclear programme.
- Israeli government spokesman, Mark Regev, said on Wednesday (9 July) that Israel does not desire hostility and conflict with Iran but added that the Iranian nuclear programme and the Iranian ballistic missile programme "is a matter of grave concern."
- Commenting on Iran's missile tests, a spokesman for the Foreign Office (FCO) said on Wednesday (9 July):

"These tests are unwelcome and only serve to reinforce our concerns about Iranian intentions. We have to question: why does Iran need such long-range missiles? What we have seen just underlines the need for Iran to comply with its international obligations on the nuclear issue."  
(9/7/2008)

- According to Iranian sources European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana is scheduled to visit Tehran on 19 July to discuss a package of proposals drawn up by

six major world powers aimed at ending the nuclear standoff. The visit has not yet been confirmed by the EU.

- The offer of technological and economic incentives was delivered to Iran on 14 June by Solana on behalf of the EU, Germany and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. Foremost is a proposal to help Iran develop a civilian nuclear programme with light water reactors, which are less prone to diversion into bomb-making than Iran's current technology.
- Alongside the offer of incentives, the EU formally agreed a new set of sanctions against Iran on 23 June. The new sanctions include a freeze on assets and funds connected to Bank Melli, Iran's biggest bank, which will not be allowed to operate in Europe. Other new measures include a travel ban on some experts dealing with nuclear work. Ali-Asqar Soltanieh, Iran's envoy to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), on 18 June termed the additional planned sanctions against Iran as "illegal" and reiterated that Iran would not suspend its uranium enrichment programme.
- In the latest board meeting of the IAEA, Iran was heavily criticised for failing to answer key allegations about the extent of its nuclear programme as well as withholding information about engineering work and testing with a possible military dimension.
- Iran's missile tests were conducted at the main thoroughfare of the Strait of Hormuz, a strategic waterway where around 40 percent of the world's oil passes through. The strategic positioning of the missile tests contributed to a rise in crude oil prices on the same day to almost \$2 a barrel.