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UNCLASSIFIED REPORT ON
MILITARY POWER OF IRAN
April 2010

Congressionally Directed Action (CDA) – Military Power of Iran

Section 1245 of the Fiscal Year National Defense Authorization Act requires the Secretary of Defense to submit an unclassified and classified report to Congress on the current and future military strategy of Iran. Below is the unclassified report in response to the congressional direction.

Goals of Iranian Strategy

Since the revolution, Iran's first priority has consistently remained the survival of the regime. Iran also seeks to become the strongest and most influential country in the Middle East and to influence world affairs. The theocratic leadership's ideological goal is to be able to export its theocratic form of government, its version of Shia Islam, and stand up for the "oppressed" according to their religious interpretations of the law. In recent years, Iran's ideological goals have taken a back seat to pragmatic considerations.

To ensure regime survival, Iran's security strategy is based first on deterring an attack. For years it has publicly discussed its "20-Million Man Army" and its asymmetric warfare doctrine as deterrents to any would-be invader. Iran has also extended its outreach and support to governments and dissident groups that oppose U.S. interests. Diplomacy, economic leverage, soft power, and active sponsorship of terrorist and paramilitary groups are tools Iran uses to drive its aggressive foreign policy. In particular, it uses terrorism to pressure or intimidate other countries and more broadly to leverage it as a strategic deterrent. The most notable example of this strategy includes Iran's support for Lebanese Hizballah as well as its influence over proxy groups in Iraq.

Iran's military strategy is designed to defend against external or "hard" threats from the United States and Israel. Iran's principles of military strategy include deterrence, asymmetrical retaliation, and attrition warfare. Iran's nuclear program and its willingness to keep open the possibility of developing nuclear weapons is a central part of its deterrent strategy. Iran can conduct limited offensive operations with its strategic ballistic missile program and improved naval forces.

Trends in Iranian Strategy

According to press statements, Iran's 20 year outlook plan (2005-2025) provides the framework for the policies of the 5 year plan (2010-2015) and seeks to make Iran a "top regional power." Among other objectives, the 5 year plan seeks to expand bilateral, regional, and international relations, strengthen Iran's ties with friendly states, and enhance Iran's defense and deterrent capabilities.

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Iran seeks to increase its stature by countering U.S. influence and expanding ties with regional actors while advocating Islamic solidarity. It also seeks to demonstrate to the world its "resistance" to the West. Iran is attempting to secure political, economic, and security influence in Iraq and Afghanistan while undermining U.S. efforts by supporting various political groups, providing developmental and humanitarian assistance, and furnishing lethal aid to Iraqi Shia militants and Afghan insurgents. In an attempt to increase influence in the Levant, Iran provides weapons, training and money to Lebanese Hizballah, its strategic partner. Iran has also signed economic and security agreements with other nations, particularly in Latin America and Africa, and is attempting to do the same in the broader Middle East region.

The Iranian regime uses the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps- Qods Force (IRGC-QF) to clandestinely exert military, political, and economic power to advance Iranian national interests abroad. IRGC-QF global activities include: gathering tactical intelligence; conducting covert diplomacy; providing training, arms, and financial support to surrogate groups and terrorist organizations; and facilitating some of Iran's provision of humanitarian and economic support to Islamic causes.

Iran provides Lebanese Hizballah and Palestinian terrorist groups – notably, HAMAS, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP-GC) – with funding, weapons, and training to oppose Israel and disrupt the Middle East Peace Process. The IRGC-QF is Iran's primary vehicle for providing materiel and lethal support to Lebanese Hizballah, which Iran views as an essential partner for advancing its regional policy objectives.

Iranian Strategy in the Region

Iraq. Iran continues to drive a multi-pronged strategy in Iraq, including continued support to select Iraqi surrogate groups. The IRGC-QF Ramazan Corps is responsible for carrying out Iran's policy in Iraq. To more effectively execute Iran's policy, the IRGC-QF posts its officers in Iran's diplomatic missions throughout Iraq, including Iran's outgoing Ambassador to Iraq, Hassan Kazemi-Qomi. The incoming Ambassador to Iraq, Hassan Danafar, is also a Qods Force officer.

Iran continues to provide money, weapons and training to select Iraqi Shia militants and terrorists despite pledges by senior Iranian officials to stop such support. The weapons include:

- Explosively Formed Penetrators (EFPs) with radio-controlled, remote arming and passive infrared detonators
- Improvised Explosive Devices (IED)
- Anti-aircraft weapons
- mortars
- 107 and 122 millimeter rockets
- rocket-propelled grenades and launchers
- explosives

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- small arms.

Iran also offers strategic and operational guidance to militias and terrorist groups to target U.S. Forces in Iraq and undermine U.S. interests. In addition to providing arms and support, IRGC-QF is responsible for training Iraqi insurgents in Iran, sometimes using Lebanese Hizballah instructors. Lebanese Hizballah provides insurgents with the training, tactics and technology to conduct kidnappings, small unit tactical operations and employ sophisticated IEDs. In addition to weapons and support, Iran continues training Shia militants in the use of IEDs, EFPs, and the counter-measures designed to defeat these weapons and the networks that design, build, emplace and fund them draw persistent counter-responses. The flow of new IED technologies and highly creative emplacement and employment methods underscore the enemy's ability to adapt and react quickly and efficiently to CF countermeasures.

Afghanistan. Iran continues to actively try and influence events in Afghanistan through a multi-faceted approach involving support for the Karzai government, economic and cultural outreach to the population, while covertly supporting various insurgent groups and political opposition groups. Tehran's support for the Government of Afghanistan is reflected in its diplomatic presence as well as numerous Iranian NGOs active in the country. Tehran has also pledged over a billion dollars in aid, but has actually paid only a small fraction. Iran has used the threat of repatriating the large Afghan refugee population residing in Iran as a lever to influence the Government of Afghanistan, especially in the harsh winter months. Iranian officials met with President Karzai and his main opponent Abdullah throughout the campaign and worked hard to appear as the consensus maker during the post election period. Tehran has also leveraged long time relationships with numerous officials such as Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Ismail Khan, both of whom lived in Iran for a period of time. Arms caches have been recently uncovered with large amounts of Iranian manufactured weapons, to include 107mm rockets, which we assess IRGC-QF delivered to Afghan militants. While it is difficult to determine the exact time the arms were brought into Afghanistan, their recent manufacture date suggests lethal support is ongoing. Tehran's support to the Taliban is inconsistent with their historic enmity, but fits with Iran's strategy of backing many groups to ensure that it will have a positive relationship with the eventual leaders.

Lebanon. Iran has been involved in Lebanon since the early days of the Islamic Republic, especially seeking to expand ties with the country's large Shia population. The IRGC played an instrumental role in the establishment of Lebanese Hizballah in 1982 and has continued to be vital to the development of the organization. The IRGC-QF provides financial, weapons, training, and logistical support to Lebanese Hizballah. In turn, Lebanese Hizballah has trained Iraqi insurgents in Iraq, Iran and Lebanon, providing them with the training, tactics and technology to conduct kidnappings, small unit tactical operations and employ sophisticated improvised explosive devices (IEDs), incorporating lessons learned from operations in southern Lebanon.

Size and Capabilities of Iranian Conventional Forces

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According to the Constitution of the Islamic Republic, the Supreme Leader, is commander-in-chief of the armed forces, which consist of three main components: the regular military (sometimes referred to as the Artesh); the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) or Pasdaran, and the Law Enforcement Force (LEF). These forces are responsible for defending Iran's borders and providing for internal security. The LEF is formally subordinate to the Ministry of Interior, and plays a key role in internal security and frontier security.

Ground Forces

The strength of the Islamic Republic of Iran Ground Force (IRIGF) is estimated at 220,000 personnel, 4 armored, 6 infantry, 2 commando divisions; several independent armor, infantry, airborne, commando brigades, and artillery groups.

The strength of the IRGC Ground Resistance Forces (IRGC-GRF) is estimated at 130,000 personnel, 31 Provincial Corps (two in Tehran Province) generally comprised of armor and infantry brigades, and artillery groups. Additionally, each brigade is allocated ten Basij battalions, called Imam Hossein Battalions, which will support the brigade in its combat operations.

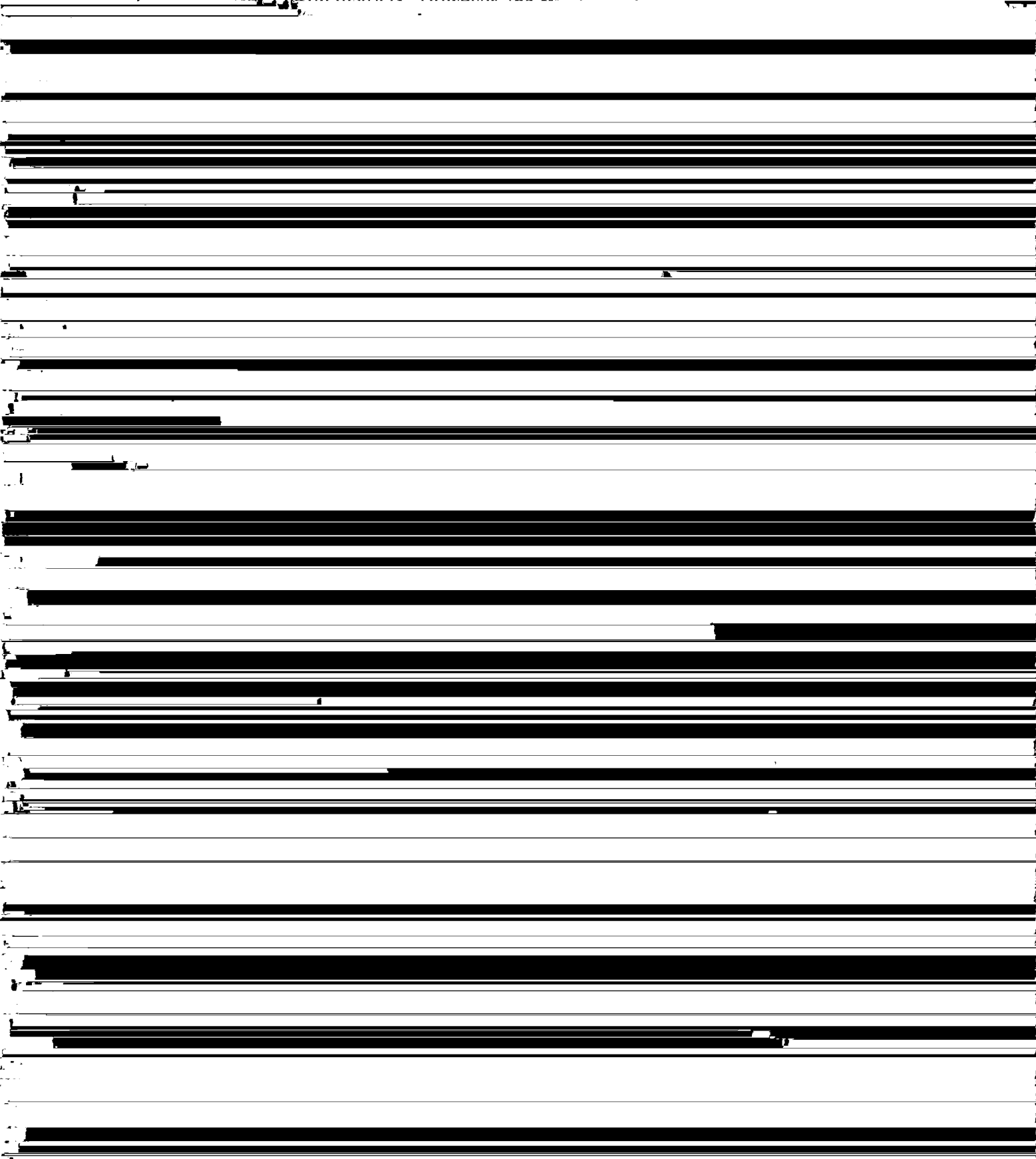
Ground Systems	Estimated Inventory
Tanks	1,800 - 1,900
Armored Vehicles	1,800 - 1,900
Artillery	2,300 - 2,800
Multiple Rocket Launchers	900
Mortars	5,000+
Air Defense Artillery	1,100+
Man Portable Air Defense Systems	Numerous
Anti-Tanks Weapons	Numerous

Iranian Ground Systems

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Naval Forces.

The strength of the Islamic Republic of Iran Navy (IRIN) is estimated at 18,000 personnel with 4 naval districts. However, the



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U.S.-supplied aircraft flying. While Iran has not procured new aircraft in over 10 years, it has been seeking to meet some of its requirements by developing its own indigenous combat aircraft, most of which are derivatives of U.S.-built F-5A Freedom Fighters and F-5E Tiger IIs. One noteworthy project is the twin-tailed Saeqeh (Thunderbolt), of which several examples have apparently been built.

Iran's exercises and military literature make it clear that its air planners understand the value of airborne early warning and C4I systems, airborne intelligence, electronic warfare platforms, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and airborne refueling. Where UAVs are concerned, Iran has an active program and two families of reconnaissance, target and lethal UAVs. However, the IRIAF has not been able to progress in other areas. For instance, the IRIAF's lone airborne early warning and control system (AWACS) platform crashed in September 2009, killing all seven people on board. Iran is also building indigenous precision-guided munitions for the IRIAF, but recent large-scale exercises showed fighters delivering conventional unguided munitions.

Air Defense

The strength of the air defense forces is estimated at 12,000 personnel, a headquarters and five regional air defense sectors, small, but growing number, of surface-air-missile (SAM) sites, as well as numerous anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) sites.

- Major SAM systems include: I-HAWK, CSA-1, SA-5, SA-6, SA-15, FM-80, Rapier
- AAA gun systems include: 100mm, 57mm, 35mm, 23mm guns

In 2009, Iran established a separate air defense force under the command of BG Ahmad Miqani, as a fourth force in the Artesh. The new service consolidates equipment and personnel under a single commander and has authority over both regular and IRGC air defense units. Iranian officials gave a number of reasons for creating an air defense force, including the need to better defend the nuclear sites, improve the maneuverability and capability of the air defense forces, and consolidating information-gathering and air defense forces in a single service. Iran is unlikely to seek to develop a fully integrated nationwide air defense system. Instead, it seems to prefer a point defense strategy, with its strongest defenses located around key strategic centers.

Tehran continues to invest heavily in advanced air defenses, and the potential acquisition of the Russian SA-20 surface-air-missile system (SAM) remains a major part of its air defense modernization efforts. Iran's procurement of modern SAMs with automated command, control and communications systems will be a significant upgrade to existing Iranian air defense capabilities and improve its ability to protect senior leadership and key nuclear and industrial facilities. Iran acquired modern TOR-M1 short range surface-to-air missiles in 2007 and has displayed newly acquired and indigenously built radar systems at its Holy Defense Week parade.

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Effectiveness of Iranian Conventional Forces

Iran maintains very sizeable military forces, but they would be relatively ineffective against a direct assault by well trained, sophisticated military such as that of the United States or its allies. At present, Iran's forces are sufficient to deter or defend against conventional threats from Iran's weaker neighbors, such as post-war Iraq, the GCC, Azerbaijan and Afghanistan, but lack the air power and logistical ability to project power much beyond Iran's borders or to confront regional powers such as Turkey or Israel.

Iranian Military Doctrine

Iran has historically placed the majority of its conventional force strength to include armor, mechanized infantry, and infantry units close to its borders with Iraq and Turkey. This reflects Iran's perception of threats and defensive military doctrine, which is designed to slow an invasion and force a diplomatic solution to hostilities. Iranian military training and public statements echo this defensive doctrine of delay and attrition. Iran continues to build its capability to counter more advanced adversaries, including the recent merger of the Basij Resistance Forces (600,000 estimated personnel) with the IRGC ground forces.

Military Funding

According to the 2010 Military Balance, Iran's total defense spending is about 2.8 percent of GDP –approximately \$9.6 billion in FY2008-09. Iran's defense spending as a share of GDP is relatively low compared to the rest of the region. However, we do not have precise information on how much funding is allocated to each branch of Iran's military or to special operations forces. Additionally, defense spending may not necessarily reflect all of Iran's expenditures in defense-related activities.

Special Forces and IRGC-Qods Force

Iran established the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps – Qods Force (IRGC-QF) in 1990 as an elite unit within the IRGC. Although its operations sometimes appear at odds with the public voice of the Iranian regime, it is not a rogue outfit; it receives direction from the highest levels of government, and its leaders report directly, albeit informally, to Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, employing complementary diplomatic and paramilitary strategies

The IRGC-QF stations operatives in foreign embassies, charities, and religious/cultural institutions to foster relationships with people, often building on existing socio-economic ties with the well established Shia Diaspora. At the same time, IRGC-QF engages in paramilitary operations to support extremists and destabilize unfriendly regimes. IRGC and IRGC-QF have been involved in or behind some of the deadliest terrorist attacks of the past 2 decades, including the 1983 and 1984 bombings of the U.S. Embassy and annex in Beirut, the 1983 bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut, the 1994 attack on the AMIA Jewish Community Center in Buenos Aires, the 1996 Khobar Towers

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bombing in Saudi Arabia, and many of the insurgent attacks on Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces in Iraq since 2003. It generally directs and supports the groups that actually execute the attacks, thereby maintaining plausible deniability within the international community.

Support for these extremists takes the form of providing arms, funding, and paramilitary training. In this, IRGC-QF is not constrained by ideology; many of the groups it supports do not share, and sometimes openly oppose, Iranian revolutionary principles, but Iran supports them because they share common interests or enemies.

IRGC-QF maintains operational capabilities around the world. It is well established in the Middle East and North Africa, and recent years have witnessed an increased presence in Latin America, particularly Venezuela. If U.S. involvement in conflicts in these regions deepens, contact with the IRGC-QF, directly or through extremist groups it supports, will be more frequent and consequential.

Each Provincial Corps in the IRGCGRF possesses a unit, called Saberin, which has limited special operations capabilities. These units rotate to the northwest to perform counter-insurgency against Kurdish PJAK and to the southeast to operate against Jundallah.

Iranian Support to Terrorists and Regional Militant Groups

We assess with high confidence that over the last three decades, Iran has methodically cultivated a network of sponsored terrorist surrogates capable of conducting effective, plausibly deniable attacks against Israel and the United States.

We judge Tehran provides support to terrorist and militant groups to support Iran's strategic interests in each situation. Elements of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) have provided direct support to terrorist groups, assisting in the planning of terrorist acts or enhancing terrorist group capabilities. Through the IRGC-QF Iran provides material support to terrorist or militant groups such as: HAMAS, Lebanese Hizballah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Taliban, and Iraqi Shia groups. In addition to the underlying relationship and Iran's strategic goals, the operating environment also factors into the type, quality, and quantity of aid Iran provide to a terrorist or insurgent group.

Iran, through its longstanding relationship with Lebanese Hizballah, maintains a capability to strike Israel directly and threaten Israeli and U.S. interests in the region.

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militant groups with weapons and training. Inside Iran, the IRGC-QF or Lebanese Hizballah-led training includes: small arms, reconnaissance, small unit tactics, and communications. Some individuals or groups receive more specialized training in assassinations, kidnappings, or explosives. Iranian materiel assistance and training increased the lethality of roadside Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) and improvised rockets, enhancing the capabilities of the supported groups.

Iran's support to Palestinian groups—including HAMAS, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command—produced improvements in the groups' capabilities and increased the threat to Israeli and U.S. interests in the region. Iranian training and material support assisted HAMAS in the development of the Qassam rocket, extending the range to 40km. Iran continues to supply weapons, money, and weapons components to Palestinian extremist groups that are then smuggled into Gaza through tunnels in the Philadelphi corridor. Iran may have assisted Gaza-based Palestinian groups in producing rockets whose range may now exceed 40km.

The IRGC-QF provided limited and measured lethal support to select Afghan insurgent and terrorist groups since at least 2006. Iranian supplied 107mm rockets, plastic explosives, and mortar rounds that have been recovered in Taliban-affiliated cache locations. We judge Iranian lethal aid and financial assistance potentially increase these groups' operational capabilities.

Iranian Unconventional Capabilities

Iran's unconventional forces, to include its paramilitary forces that are trained according to its asymmetric warfare doctrine, would present a formidable force on Iranian territory. These forces would include commando and special forces units, smaller specially trained teams embedded within the conventional force units, selected Basij forces, and combat patrols of the Law Enforcement Forces. The combined numbers of personnel could exceed one million.

However, Iran has a limited capability to project force beyond its borders. Attacks on U.S. forces in other countries would likely be limited to surrogates or small numbers of trained personnel disguised as civilians.

Iranian Funding for Special Operations Forces

According to the 2010 Military Balance, Iran's total defense spending is about 2.8 percent of GDP or approximately \$9.6 billion in FY2008-09. Iran's defense spending as a share of GDP is relatively low compared to the rest of the region. However, we do not have precise information on how much funding is allocated to each branch of Iran's military, its special operations forces, and terrorist groups.

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Iranian Nuclear Weapons Capabilities and Developments

Iran is developing technological capabilities applicable to nuclear weapons and, at a minimum, is keeping open the option to develop nuclear weapons, if it chooses to do so. Iran continues its uranium enrichment and heavy water nuclear reactor activities in violation of multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions and also continues to develop ballistic missiles which could be adapted to deliver nuclear weapons.

Iran has installed over 8,000 centrifuges at Natanz and accumulated more than enough low enriched uranium for a nuclear weapon, if further enriched and processed. However, according to the IAEA, Iran also appears to be experiencing some problems at Natanz and is only operating about half of the installed centrifuges, which constrains its ability to produce larger quantities of low-enriched uranium.

For several years, Iran has been constructing an underground enrichment facility near Qom, and has stated it intends to begin enrichment operations there in 2011. Iran has been building this facility in contravention of U.N. resolutions and in violation of its international nuclear safeguards obligations.

Tehran has also refused to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency's requests for access to facilities, documents, and personnel as part of its investigation of Iran's past nuclear weapons-related work. Iran's nuclear activities and related lack of openness with the international community pose a significant threat to the peace and stability of the Middle East.

Iran has gone to lengths to protect its nuclear infrastructure from physical destruction and has placed an emphasis on a number of factors to include locating facilities in buried, hardened facilities and is attempting to acquire sophisticated air defense systems, like the Russian S300, to be installed at nuclear installations.

Iranian Missile Capabilities

Ballistic Missiles

Regular Iranian ballistic missile training continues throughout the country. Iran continues to develop ballistic missiles that can range regional adversaries, Israel, and central Europe, including Iranian claims of an extended-range variant of the Shahab-3 and a 2,000-km medium range ballistic missile (MRBM), the Ashura. Beyond the steady growth in its missile and rocket inventories, Iran has boosted the lethality and effectiveness of existing systems with accuracy improvements and new sub-munition payloads.

Missile	Deployed	Range (mi)	Propellant Type	Deployment Mode
Tondar	Yes	93	1 st Solid / 2 nd Liquid	Road-Mobile
Fateh-110	Yes	120+	Solid	Road-Mobile
Shahab 1	Yes	185	Liquid	Road-Mobile
Shahab 2	Yes	310	Liquid	Road-Mobile
Shahab 3	Yes	800	Liquid	Road-Mobile
Shahab 3 Variant	Possibly	1200+	Liquid	Road-Mobile
Sejil MRBM	No	1200+	Solid	Undetermined

Iranian Ballistic Missiles

With sufficient foreign assistance, Iran could probably develop and test an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) capable of reaching the United States by 2015. Iran could also have an intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM) capable of threatening Europe. In late 2008 and early 2009, Iran launched the Safir, a multi-stage space launch vehicle, which indicates progress in some technologies relevant to ICBMs.

Over the past two decades, Iran has placed a significant emphasis on developing and fielding ballistic missiles to counter perceived threats from Israel and coalition forces in the Middle East and to project power in the region. Iran actively began acquisition and production programs in the 1980s during the Iran-Iraq war to address its inability to counter Iraqi missile attacks. In developing and expanding its missile program, Iran has received assistance from North Korea and China. At present, Iran is assessed to have the largest deployed ballistic missile force in the Middle East with approximately 1000 missiles that range from 90–1200 miles. To demonstrate its missile capabilities; Iran has conducted a total of four highly publicized exercises (“Noble Prophet”), since 2006.

Short-range ballistic missiles provide Tehran with an effective mobile capability to strike coalition forces in the region. Iran continues to improve the survivability of these systems through technological advances and...

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Iran has also developed medium-range ballistic missiles to target Israel and continues to increase the range, lethality, and accuracy of these systems. For example, the Shahab 3, based on the North Korean No Dong, can reach all of Israel. The Ashura or "Sejil" is an indigenous, two-stage missile that is in development. It uses solid-propellant technology, which reduces the launch preparation time and footprint.

Cruise Missiles

Coastal defense cruise missiles (CDCMs) are an important layer in Iran's defense of or denial of access to the Gulf and Strait of Hormuz. Iran can attack targeted ships with anti-ship cruise missiles (ASCMs) from its own shores, islands, and oil platforms using relatively small mobile launchers.

The C801/802 is Iran's primary CDCM, first imported from China in 1995. The C801/802 is capable of engaging targets at a range of six nautical miles, and has greater accuracy, a lower cruising altitude, and a faster set-up time than the Seersucker missile Iran used during the Iran-Iraq War. The C801/802 allows Iran to target any point within the Strait of Hormuz and much of the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman. Iran has also worked with China to develop shorter range missiles, including the C701, for deployment in narrow geographic environments.

Iran can readily deploy its mobile CDCM launchers anywhere along its coast. These systems have auto control and radar homing guidance systems, and some can target using a remote air link. Mobile CDCMs, combined with multiple rocket launchers (MRLs), coastal artillery, and ballistic missiles, Iran hopes to overwhelm enemy air defenses.

Iranian Funding for Nuclear Weapons and Ballistic Missiles

We have no information on Iran's missile funding nuclear or weapons program budget.