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Iran will strike Israel nuclear sites if attacked

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TEHRAN - Iran has the capability to strike arch-foe Israel's nuclear sites firmly and will do so if it comes under attack, the head of the elite Revolutionary Guards Corps said on Saturday.

Asked by Iran's Arabic language television channel Al-Alam whether Iran has the ability to strike Israeli nuclear sites, Mohammad Ali Jafari said: "Yes, definitely we have this capability because of the advances we have made in the past two years to carry out such a task."

"We have said that all of Israel's soil is under the coverage of our missiles. We have such capability and can certainly respond to any attack" by Israel.

Jafari said Iran will give a "firm and precise" answer if attacked by Israel.

"We are not responsible for this regime and other enemies' foolishness. If they strike Iran, our answer will be firm and precise. They will have no answer when Iran bombards them and sends several of its missiles."

His comments come a day before the annual day of the Guards.

Jafari issued a similar statement in March.

Relations between the two arch-foes have deteriorated in the past four years under the rule of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Israel, although widely believed to have nuclear weapons itself, is strongly against Iran's controversial nuclear programme.

Global powers feel Iran's nuclear drive is aimed at seeking atomic weapons. Tehran denies the charge.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad announced in May that Iran had successfully test-fired a new medium-range missile, Sejil-2, drawing a warning from Israel that Europe too should now worry about the Islamic republic's ballistic programme.

US Defence Secretary Robert Gates said the test appeared to have been successful and his information was that the missile will have a range of approximately 2,000 to 2,500 kilometres (1,200 to 1,500 miles).