Iran’s short-range missile can reach US fleet in Gulf – Revolutionary Guards deputy commander

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The deputy commander of Iran’s Revolutionary Guards has said that the US fleet in the Gulf is already within striking distance of his country’s short range missiles, adding that the US could not sustain a new war in the region.

“Even our short-range missiles can easily reach (US) warships in the Gulf,” Mohammad Saleh Jokar, the IRGC’s deputy for parliamentary affairs, was quoted by the Fars news agency as saying Friday. Jokar added that the US would be unable to sustain a conflict with Iran on account of financial, personnel and social reasons.

It marks the latest escalation in a war of words between the two countries as tensions mount amid renewed sanctions and political pressure from the US, along with a build-up of US forces in the region.

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“Iran is not after a conflict in the region but has always defended its interests powerfully and will do so now too,” Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said Thursday.

US carriers always deploy as part of a battlegroup so Iran’s large fleet of smaller fast boats would find it very difficult to get within striking distance without themselves being destroyed by US surface warships.

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The guided missile destroyers USS *Gonzalez* and USS *McFaul* recently joined the USS *Abraham Lincoln* Strike Group on stand-by off the coast of Oman.

In recent years, Iran has developed the Khalij Fars (‘Persian Gulf’) anti-ship ballistic missile, which uses infrared guidance to slam a 1,433lb warhead into moving naval targets. Iran also unveiled the Mach 4 version of the Khalij Fars, the Hormuz -1 and -2 which is designed to seek out enemy radar systems and destroy them.

The Persian Gulf is quite narrow (ranging from 35 miles to 220 miles across in parts), for a carrier battle group and could afford the IRGC the opportunity to amass launchers within range of the US fleet with relative ease.

The consequences of any armed conflict between Iran and the US *“would be literally incalculable”* according to James Jatras, a former US diplomat and GOP Senate policy adviser.

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“One doesn’t really know where this goes next – let’s suppose Iran strikes the UAE or the Saudi oil fields or strikes the Israelis ... then what do those parties do next?” Jatras told RT.com, emphasizing that the conflict would quickly escalate to include US regional allies in the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Israel.

“Especially the Israelis who everybody knows have nuclear weapons. Although I doubt very much they would use those unless they were really down to an existential threat.”

Jatras also warned that *“Moscow and Beijing would be foolish to stand back and watch the US take another piece off the chessboard”* despite Pompeo’s attempts at warning the Kremlin against involvement in any potential conflict with Iran.