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# Expert: Iranian missile could reach Europe, beyond

*Tal Inbar says decision to reveal the missiles represents a strategic change*

• By BEN HARTMAN

A new Iranian long-range missile could extend Iran's strike capability to a wide swath of Europe and potentially far beyond, an Israeli analyst said this week.

Tal Inbar, the head of space research at the Fisher Institute for Air and Space Strategic Studies in Herzliya, said that with their 2,500 km. range, the Soumar missile unveiled by the Islamic Republic on Sunday "entails a 25 percent increase in the range of Iran's missiles, and if we consider the future possibility that the missiles would be deployed on ships and submarines, we see the ability to project their power worldwide."

In an email sent on Sunday, Inbar said that revealing the missiles - which could potentially hit cities in eastern Europe and southern Europe and cover a large portion of north Africa, - represents a strategic change on the part of Iran which previously had portrayed its long-range missiles as defensive, meant to protect its interests in the region.

The missile is believed to be a reverse-engineered version of the Soviet/Russian Kh-55 missile. The cruise missile flies at a



A WOMAN walks past as Iranian-made missiles are displayed during a war exhibition held by Iran's Revolutionary Guard near the Iranian parliament in southern Tehran in September, 2011. (Reuters)

subsonic speed, but because it travels at low altitude, it is much harder to detect.

In his message, Inbar also wrote that the missiles could have an impact on the issue of missile defense systems in Europe, in that Russia has traditionally been opposed to such a program and has argued that Iranian missiles would not be able to reach Europe or the United States.

"This is why the Iranian step [to reveal the missiles] is very interesting - if the

Russians were not aware of this move," he wrote.

The missile was revealed by Iran's Defense Ministry on Sunday, the first time it has done so publicly.

Inbar said that the timing of the revelation is significant, since it comes amid international negotiations aimed at curbing Iran's nuclear program, during which Iran has stated that its missile capabilities will not be subject to the negotiations.