



The Meir Amit Intelligence and
Terrorism Information Center

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Most of the weapons found aboard the M/V Victoria en route to the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip were of Iranian manufacture, including mortar shells and anti-ship C-704 missiles. The shipment is another example of Iran's strategy of smuggling weapons, with Syrian collaboration, to the terrorist organizations.



Farsi instruction manual for the C-704 anti-ship missile, found aboard the M/V *Victoria*. In black is the emblem of Iran, in blue, of the Revolutionary Guards.

Overview

1. On the morning of March 15, 2011, 200 miles (108 nautical miles) west of Israel's coast, an IDF navy force inspected the **cargo ship M/V *Victoria***. **The ship was sailing from the Syrian port of Latakia to the Turkish port of Mersin, and from there would continue to the Egyptian port of Alexandria.**
2. **The *Victoria* was carrying containers holding some 50 tons of weapons destined for the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip.** The weapons were in **three containers, concealed behind bales of cotton and sacks of lentils.** There were 60 mm and 120 mm mortar shells, C-704 anti-ship missiles, and ammunition for Kalashnikov assault rifles. Most of the weapons, including the C-704 missiles, were manufactured in Iran.
3. It was the first time **anti-ship missiles were captured, destined for the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip.** They would have **endangered Israeli military and civilian vessels as well as Israeli strategic targets in the Ashdod-Ashqelon region at a range of the missiles is 35 kilometers (19 nautical miles).** They were accompanied by instruction manuals written in Farsi. On the covers were **the emblems of Iran and the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, proof of the source of the weapons and of the Revolutionary Guards' Al-Quds Force's involvement** in the attempted smuggling **with the collaboration of Syria and the Palestinian terrorist organizations.**
4. Additionally, on **March 9, 2011, the British announced they had seized a significant shipment of Iranian arms in Afghanistan; and the Egyptians stopped an arms shipment from Sudan, which in all probability was intended for terrorist groups in Egypt or the Gaza Strip.**
5. Shipping weapons aboard the *Victoria* is a gross violation of the sanctions imposed on Iran by the UN Security council. It is also a violation of civilian naval security and transportation regulations governing the shipping of dangerous materials.



Display at the port of Ashdod of the weapons found aboard the M/V *Victoria* (IDF Spokesman, March 16, 2011).



Weapons hidden behind bales of cotton and sacks of lentils

Iranian involvement in the attempted smuggling

6. Providing weapons for terrorist organizations, opposition forces, subversive elements and foreign countries is an important factor in Iranian strategy, which **seeks to establish and lead** an extremist camp, promote terrorism and subversion, and **achieve regional hegemony in the focal areas of the Middle East** (among them Lebanon, the Gaza Strip, Iraq, Yemen, Bahrain) **and abroad** (among them East and West Africa, Latin America, Central Asia).

7. **It is another example of Iran's strategic endeavor** to smuggle weapons to their destinations by sea, air and over land. **The Iranians continually learn lessons from interceptions of their arms shipments.** The smuggling system is **supervised and directed by the Iranian leadership and carried out by the Quds Force of the Revolutionary Guards**, Iran's main tool for exporting its Islamic revolution.¹ **They work in close collaboration with Syria's security system and terrorist groups acting as Iranian proxies** and promoting Iranian goals from Lebanon and the Gaza Strip to Iraq and Afghanistan.

8. **One of Iran's favorite routes for smuggling weapons is by sea.** Recently, following sanctions imposed on its large shipping companies (HDS, IRISL), it began using **international companies (especially European)** without informing them of the nature of the cargos. **To that end, Iran forms shell corporations and counterfeits documents which list the cargos as innocent merchandise** (milk powder, polyethylene, pencils, cotton, lentils, rocks for construction, etc.). Two examples were Iran's recent attempts to smuggle arms to Hezbollah in Lebanon in August 2010 and to groups in Gambia, West Africa, in July 2010.

¹ For further information see the March 15, 2011 ITIC bulletin, " In recent months two more Iranian attempts to ship weapons were exposed... " at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/iran_e106.pdf

9. An initial comparison of the affair of the *Victoria* and Iran's previous smuggling affairs indicates the following;

1) **Iran invests great efforts in smuggling weapons to the terrorist organizations operating in the Gaza Strip** (especially Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad) to support the reconstruction and upgrading of their military infrastructures. **Special emphasis is placed on supplying them with advanced rocket and missile capabilities as strategic threats to Israel** (Fajr 5 rockets which can reach the center of Israel, and anti-ship missiles which are a threat to Israeli vessels and strategic targets north of the Gaza Strip).

2) **Syria, Iran's main partner in the radical camp, has an important role in the Iranian arms smuggling network.** Syria's geopolitical position makes it an **important relay station for the weapons en route to various destinations** (Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad in the Gaza Strip). In our assessment, the Syrian leadership and lower levels are involved in shipping the arms to their final destinations. For shipping by sea the **port of Latakia** is particularly important, the port from which the M/V *Victoria* set sail and to which the M/V *Finland* (which carried arms from Iran to Hezbollah via Italy) was supposed to sail.

3) **International (including European) shipping companies are used by Iran to transport weapons,** without their receiving genuine information about the contents of the cargos their ships are carrying (although following the previous exposures of weapons they should be aware of the potential danger of doing business with Iran). For example, the M/V *Victoria* was operated by the French CMA-CGM, the third largest shipping company in the world, as was the M/V *Everest*, which transported arms from Iran to Gambia. The M/V *Finland*, which transported arms from Iran to Hezbollah via Italy was owned by a Greek company and operated by the Italian MSC. **In every instance the weapons were hidden by innocent merchandise.**

4) **The timing of the M/V *Victoria* smuggling attempt** coincided with the internal uprisings in the Arab countries, **including Egypt,** which is an important route for smuggling arms into the Gaza Strip. It can be assumed that Iran and Syria are exploiting the current situation **to arm the terrorist organizations operating in the Gaza Strip. The announcement issued by Egypt of the March 13 capture of five vehicles carrying weapons from Sudan,** apparently destined for the Gaza Strip, **may be another indication of Iranian-Syrian effort.** Assuming that to be the case, in our assessment Iran and its allies in the radical camp, using fraud and concealment, will continue smuggling weapons.

Weapons found aboard the M/V Victoria

Overview

10. The three containers found aboard the M/V *Victoria* held approximately fifty tons of weapons. According to the initial count, they were the following:

- 1) **230 120 mm mortar shells manufactured in Iran** accompanied by a range table.
- 2) **2,270 M-61 60 mm mortar shells** accompanied by a range table. According to the table the type of fuse involved was the AZ111-A2, **developed and manufactured by Iran**.
- 3) **Six C-704 anti-ship missiles manufactured in Iran, two naval radars and operating stations for the anti-ship missiles.**
- 4) **66,960 7.62 caliber bullets for Kalashnikov assault rifles.**
- 5) **Instruction manuals in Farsi** and range cards for operating the systems.



Weapons found aboard the ship (IDF Spokesman, March 16, 2011). Lower left: Iranian defense minister Vahidi reviewing C-704 anti-ship missiles at the factory in Iran (Fars News Agency, Iran, March 7, 2011).

11. Prominent among the weapons were **six C-704 anti-ship missiles**, manufactured in Iran based on Chinese technology. **The missiles were stamped "Nasser," their Iranian name. They use a radar homing system and have a range of 35 kilometers (20 nautical miles).** They missiles are light and easy to fire. **Their possession by the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip would have endangered Israeli naval and civilian vessels, as well as ships arriving at the port of Ashdod and strategic targets in the area.**

12. **The missiles were accompanied by instruction manuals written in Farsi. The emblems of Iran and the Revolutionary Guards appeared** (on the front cover). According to the range cards, the fuses for the 60 mm mortar shells are AZ111-A2, developed in accordance with the requirements of the Iranian army and manufactured in Iran (*Jane's Ammunition Handbook*). The missiles were accompanied by accessories such as traverse, elevation, monitoring and control systems.

Technical specifications of the weapons seized

C-704 anti-ship missiles

Guidance system: "Fire and forget" radar navigation

Country of manufacture: China/Iran

Range: 35 kilometers (20 nautical miles)

Overall weight: 360 kilograms, or 793.6 pounds

Warhead weight: 128 kilograms, or 282.2 pounds

Velocity: Slightly less than speed of sound



C-704 anti-ship missile (fresh.co.il website, March 16, 2011).



Anti-ship missiles found aboard the ship (IDF Spokesman, March 16, 2011).



The C-704 (NASR 1) anti-ship missiles found aboard the ship (IDF Spokesman, March 16, 2011).

Radar monitoring and control stations for the anti-ship missiles



Radar monitoring and control stations on board the ship (IDF Spokesman, March 16, 2011).

60 mm M-61 mortar shells



60 mm mortar shell

Diameter: 60 mm

Maximum range: 2.56 kilometers, or 1.6 miles

Type of explosive: TNT



Boxes of mortar shells found aboard the ship.

Range table for 60 mm mortar shells

PACKING LIST 60 MM H.E MORTAR							
LOT :20.p				YEAR: 2008			
FUZE : AZ111-A2		LOT :24/ 2008		CASE NUMBER : 27 ^A / 502			
PRIMER BASE		LOT :34/2007		PACKER: 2117			
IGNITION CARTRIDGE		LOT :7/ 2008		INSPECTOR : 1194			
PROPELLANT Charge		LOT :3/ 2008		DATE OF PACKING JUL 2009			
FIRING TABLE FOR 60 mm MORTAR (90 DEG = 1600 MIL RANGE DISPLAYED BY METER)							
CHARGE 0		CHARGE 1		CHARGE 2		CHARGE 3	
RANGE M	ANGLE MIL	RANGE M	ANGLE MIL	RANGE M	ANGLE MIL	RANGE M	ANGLE MIL
250	1410	700	1334	1375	1212	1950	1136
275	1398	725	1325	1400	1203	1975	1127
300	1386	750	1317	1425	1192	2000	1118
325	1371	775	1308	1450	1182	2025	1109
350	1356	800	1298	1475	1171	2050	1099
375	1339	825	1288	1500	1160	2075	1089
400	1320	850	1278	1525	1148	2100	1078
425	1300	875	1267	1550	1136	2125	1068
450	1278	900	1255	1575	1123	2150	1056
475	1255	925	1243	1600	1110	2175	1045
500	1229	950	1231	1625	1097	2200	1033
525	1201	975	1217	1650	1083	2225	1021
550	1171	1000	1204	1675	1068	2250	1008
575	1138	1025	1189	1700	1052	2275	995
600	1101	1050	1174	1725	1036	2300	981
625	1061	1075	1158	1750	1019	2325	967
650	1018	1100	1141	1776	1002	2350	952
675	969	1125	1123	1800	983	2375	937
700	913	1150	1104	1825	963	2400	920
725	850	1175	1084	1850	942	2425	903
743	800	1200	1063	1875	920	2450	885
		1225	1040	1900	897	2475	867
		1250	1016	1925	872	2500	847
		1275	990	1950	845	2525	826
		1300	963	1975	815	2554	800
		1325	933	1987	800		
		1350	900				
		1375	864				
		1400	823				
		1414	800				

TEMPERATURE 20° C & PRESSURE 87 K. Pa & SEA LEVEL 900 m

120 mm mortar shells

Diameter: 120 mm

Weight: 16.7 kilograms, or 36.8 pounds

Filling: 2.15, or 4.74 pounds of Comp B (a mixture of TNT and RDX)

Range: 10 kilometers, or 6.2 miles



Left: Crates of mortar shells. Right: 120 mm mortar shells.

Range table for 120 mm mortar shells

سرعت اولیه ۲۴۸ متر در ثانیه
خروج ۷
شامل خروج ۶ + ۱ زود
۱۲۰ م خروج

1	2	3	4	5	6	۵۰٪ محیط		9	10	تصحیحات لازم جهت به اختلافات شرایط مادی				15	16	
						طول	عرض			ارتفاع	زاویه* فرود	به برد				برد بدون خروج موشنی
												به خط	به برد			
متر	0/00	00	0/00	00	sec.	m	m	m	0/00	m	m	m	0/00	Meter	Meter	
5800	1327.1	75	5.7	19°	66.6			5017	1352	17.0	12	- 2.8		2543	5800	
5900	1321.4		5.8		66.5			4999	1347	17.9	12	- 2.5		2591	5900	
6000	1315.8	74	5.9	20°	66.3	60	60	4974	1342	18.2	12	- 2.2		2638	6000	
4100	1309.7		6.0		66.2			4952	1337	18.6	12	- 1.9		2687	6100	
4200	1303.7		6.0		65.8			4928	1331	18.9	12	- 1.5		2734	6200	
4300	1297.7		6.1		65.4			4904	1326	19.2	12	- 1.2		2782	6300	
4400	1291.5		6.2		65.2			4880	1321	19.5	12	- 0.9		2831	6400	
4500	1285.3	72	6.3	21°	65.5	81	68	4855	1316	19.9	11	- 0.5		2880	6500	
6600	1279.0		6.4		65.4			4828	1310	20.2	11	0.2		2929	6600	
6700	1272.0		6.5		65.2			4802	1305	20.5	11	0.1		2978	6700	
6800	1266.1		6.6		65.0			4774	1299	20.8	10	0.1		3027	6800	
6900	1259.5		6.7		64.8			4745	1293	21.2	10	0.6		3077	6900	
7000	1252.8	70	6.9	21°	64.8	77	63	4716	1288	21.5	10	1.2		3127	7000	
7100	1246.9		7.0		64.4			4685	1282	21.8	9	1.6		3179	7100	
7200	1240.9		7.1		64.2			4659	1276	22.2	9	1.9		3229	7200	
7300	1234.8		7.3		64.0			4621	1270	22.5	9	2.3		3280	7300	
7400	1228.5		7.4		63.7			4588	1263	22.6	8	2.7		3332	7400	
7500	1217.1	69	7.6	25°	63.5	71	65	4552	1257	23.1	8	3.1		3384	7500	
7600	1209.5		7.8		63.3			4517	1251	23.5	7	3.5		3437	7600	
7700	1201.7		8.0		63.0			4480	1244	23.8	7	3.9		3489	7700	
7800	1193.7		8.2		62.7			4441	1237	24.1	6	4.1		3543	7800	
7900	1185.5		8.4		62.4			4401	1230	24.5	5	4.7		3597	7900	
8000	1177.0	66	8.7	29°	62.1	69	63	4359	1223	24.8	5	5.1		3652	8000	
8100	1168.3		9.0		61.8			4315	1215	25.1	4	5.5		3707	8100	
8200	1159.4		9.3		61.5			4270	1207	25.4	4	6.0		3763	8200	
8300	1150.1		9.6		61.2			4222	1199	25.7	2	6.4		3820	8300	
8400	1140.4		10.0		60.8			4172	1191	26.0	1	6.9		3877	8400	
8500	1130.4	64	10.5	33°	60.4	96	60	4120	1182	26.4	0	7.3		3935	8500	
8600	1119.3		11.0		60.0			4064	1173	26.7	0	7.8		3995	8600	
8700	1109.0		11.6		59.4			4005	1164	27.0	0	8.3		4055	8700	
8800	1097.4		12.3		58.1			3943	1153	27.3	2	8.0		4117	8800	
8900	1085.2		13.1		56.7			3876	1142	27.6	3	9.3		4180	8900	
9000	1072.1	60	14.3	48°	56.1	47	37	3804	1131	27.8	5	9.8		4244	9000	
9100	1058.0		15.4		57.5			3725	1118	28.1	4	10.4		4313	9100	
9200	1042.5		17.2		56.9			3639	1100	28.4	4	10.9		4383	9200	
9300	1025.4		19.7		56.1			3542	1080	28.6	10	11.5		4456	9300	
9400	1005.7		23.7		55.2			3430	1057	29.0	12	12.2		4535	9400	
9500	982.0	55	32.0	1006°	54.1	35	51	3294	1037	29.6	15	12.9		4621	9500	
9600	950.0		40.5		52.4			3110	1015	29.0	18	13.8		4723	9600	
9681	884.2	50	49.4	494°	48.4	33	47	2730	950	28.6	20	15.2		4880	9681	
9600	815.8		31.6		46.8			2147	877	27.3	34	16.1		4566	9600	
9500	784.2	44	31.0	1017°	46.1	34	42	2166	847	26.7	30	16.5		4079	9500	

7.62 caliber ammunition for Kalashnikov assault rifles



Ammunition for Kalashnikov assault rifles, 7.62 caliber, found on board the ship.

The M/V Victoria and its route

13. The M/V *Victoria* belongs to the German company Peter Döhle Schiffahrts-KG and is operated by the French shipping company CMA-CGM. It set sail from the Syrian port of Latakia and its final destination was the Egyptian port of Alexandria. It had a stopover at the south Turkey port of Mersin.



Left: M/V Victoria (maintraffic.com archive). Right: The Victoria led to the port of Ashdod (IDF Spokesman's website, March 15, 2011).

14. The ship was constructed to transport containers and was built in 2004. It is owned by Peter Döhle Schiffahrts-KG, Hamburg, which has been in operation since 1956. It is **operated by the French shipping company CMA-CGM and flies the Liberian flag.**

15. **The French CMA-CGM is the third largest company shipping cargo in the world and the largest in France.** It owns 396 ships and sails 170 different routes and has 650 agencies and offices around the globe. Its directors are Rudolf Saadé (born in 1970), son of the founder, Jacques Saadé (born in Beirut in 1937), and Farid Salem (born in Beirut in 1939 (CMA-CGM website).

16. The M/V *Victoria* was not the first CMA-CGM vessel exploited by Iran to smuggle arms. **In October 2010 the Nigerian security forces exposed a cargo of 13 containers of weapons aboard the M/V *Everest*, which sailed from Iran to the Nigerian port of Apapa** in July and was en route to Gambia. **The ship belonged to the Iranian Behineh Trading Company, apparently connected to a Quds Force operative** (who was later arrested in Nigeria) and **was operated by the French CMA-CGM**, flying the flag of the Marshall Islands.

Initial responses to the capture of the arms ship

1. Senior Iranian leaders strongly denied the country's involvement in shipping the weapons:²

1) **Ahmad Vahidi**, the Iranian defense minister, stated that the recent events in the Arab countries caused the "super powers" to "fabricate" news to ease the pressure exerted on them (IRNA News Agency, March 16, 2011).

2) **Attallah Salehi**, commander of the Iranian army, denied that Iran was the source of the weapons found aboard that ship or that they were destined for the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip. He accused "the regime occupying Jerusalem" [i.e., Israel] of concocting and spreading lies. He also said he hoped the "Zionist regime drowns in the Mediterranean Sea" after "the fall of the Egyptian Pharaoh" (IRNA News Agency, March 16, 2011).

3) **The Turkish paper Hürriyet** was informative. It reported that despite the fact that the ship had passed through the Turkish port of Mersin, the Israeli authorities noted that Turkey was not linked to the affair (Hürriyet, March 17, 2011).

2. On the night of March 15 the Turkish authorities ordered a cargo plane flying from Iran to Syria and passing over Turkish air space to land at the southeastern airfield of Diyarbakir. The plane was escorted to its landing by two Turkish fighter planes. Turkish army forces inspected the plane (Hürriyet, March 16, 2011). After the inspection the plane was permitted to continue on the official claims that nothing suspicious had been found (Dogan News Agency, March 16, 2011).

² Iran also denied involvement in the previously exposed attempts to smuggle weapons, even when incontrovertible proof was found.



The Iranian plane at the airport in southeastern Turkey (cihan website, March 16, 2011).

3. On March 15, 2011, **Egypt announced that two days previously it had intercepted five vehicles carrying weapons from Sudan, apparently destined for the Gaza Strip.** They had been intercepted on the Egyptian-Sudanese border and **contained a large quantity of mortar shells, hand grenades, rifles and explosives.**

4. So far **Hamas spokesmen** have made only short announcements, quoted by the Israeli media, stating that the weapons were not destined for Hamas (Haaretz and the Jerusalem Post, March 17, 2011).