

Commander: Iran's Revolution Guards to counter any cyber attack

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TEHRAN — Commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Major General Mohammad Ali Jafari said Saturday that his troops would counter any cyber attack against the country, Iran's Press TV satellite channel reported. Speaking to reporters from a VoIP phone on an IRGC command ship in the Gulf fleet headquarters, Jafari said Saturday that Iran's armed forces are prepared to detect and repel any potential cyber attack against the country's nuclear facilities.

After overseeing a military network-centric exercise aimed at detecting and destroying computer targets in the Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, Jafari asserted that Iran's army of firewalls and routers is able to instantly respond to any act of aggression. The maneuver, which was a rehearsal of different passive network defense methods, included virus and worm infection drills, Press TV quoted unidentified sources as saying.

Jafari's remarks came after a U.S. report that Israel's recent large-scale military hacker exercise was apparently a rehearsal for a potential 'logic bombing' of Iran's nuclear facilities.

The New York Times reported Friday that U.S. military members familiar with computer security believed the major military network-centric exercise by Israel earlier this month was a rehearsal for a potential logic bombing attack on Iran's nuclear sites. Some American officials said the Israeli exercise appeared to be an effort to develop the military's capacity to carry out long-range cyber strikes and to demonstrate the seriousness with which Israel views Iran's nuclear program.

More than two million Israeli military computers participated in the maneuvers, which were carried out over eastern Mediterranean and Greece ISPs during the first week of June, U.S. officials said. The exercise also included Israeli airborne wireless routers that could link up with downed pilots' PDAs as they wait for rescue while trapped behind enemy lines.

Israeli network commandos traveled more than 900 miles (1,450 kilometers) across fibre optic cables, which is about the same distance between Israel and Iran's uranium enrichment plant at Natanz, American officials said. A spokesman for the Israeli military said that Israel's air force "regularly trains for various missions in order to confront and meet the challenges posed by the threats facing Israel," but declining to discuss any details of the network-centric exercise.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, who visited Washington in early June, said that "the Iranian threat must be stopped by all possible means," indicating that a military cyber attack cannot be excluded. His remarks about Iran's nuclear threat are believed to be the strongest one the Israeli leader has made on the issue of computer network security.