

Iranian missiles land within 20 miles of ship, 100 miles from Nimitz strike group in Indian Ocean: officials

Officials say at least one missile landed 20 miles from a commercial vessel.

EXCLUSIVE: Long-range missiles from Iran splashed down close to a commercial ship in the Indian Ocean Saturday and 100 miles from the Nimitz aircraft carrier strike group, Fox News has learned, in the latest example of rising tensions in the region.

U.S. officials say at least one of the missiles landed 20 miles from the commercial vessel but refused to offer more specifics about the ship, citing privacy concerns. The officials requested anonymity to discuss sensitive intelligence.

Iran tests missiles frequently. Senior U.S. military officials say 100 miles was a long way from the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz. Another source says these missiles did not cause alarm, and this was a fairly standard routine exercise.

Twenty miles near a commercial vessel is more concerning, but not seen as a threat by the U.S. military, another source said.

At least two Iranian ballistic missiles exploded on impact when they hit the ocean, sending shards of debris in all directions.



The aircraft carrier USS Nimitz (CVN 68) steams ahead while participating in Malabar 2020 in the North Arabian Sea. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Keenan Daniels)

“We were expecting the missile launch,” one official said, but there was some concern just how close Iran was willing to push the envelope.

In May of last year, the Iranian Navy said more than a dozen people died during training when it hit one of its own warships with a missile, Forbes reported.

While 100 miles is well over the horizon and not visible from the aircraft carrier or its escort ships, American spy satellites orbiting high above in space tracked the missile launch from the Islamic Republic. It’s not immediately clear if the AN/SPY-1 radar aboard the guided-missile cruiser escorting the aircraft carrier Nimitz tracked the launch.

Nimitz has remained in the northern Arabian Sea on the orders of President Trump through the inauguration. Earlier this month, the Pentagon reversed course and ordered the Nimitz not to return home, but instead to turn around and remain in the region. The aircraft carrier put to sea in early April from Washington state after the crew quarantined onboard pierside for two weeks.

Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) claims its’ long-range ballistic missiles fired off Saturday morning flew more than 1,000 miles into the northern

portion of the Indian Ocean — just days before President Trump leaves office.

President-elect Joe Biden has expressed a desire to return the United States to the landmark nuclear deal with Iran that Trump abandoned.

Iranian forces have conducted a host of military exercises in recent days, including firing cruise missiles from Southeast Iran into the sea.

Earlier this week, in a show of force, an American guided-missile submarine armed with more than 150 Tomahawk cruise missiles lurked near Iranian naval exercises near the Strait of Hormuz.

An Iranian helicopter filmed the USS Georgia, which the submarine crept along at periscope depth. The “feather” behind the periscope was visible on the surface, as well as the broad outline of the submarine just beneath the surface. The video released in Iranian media made the submarine appear like a massive, manmade Great White shark in the clear water.

The U.S. Navy’s 5th Fleet, for the first time in nearly a decade, released photos of the submarine transiting the Strait of Hormuz near Iran in late December along with a pair of U.S. guided-missile cruisers.

The Iranian missile launches Saturday come days after the one-year anniversary of Iran firing ballistic missiles at a base in Iraq housing American troops. No Americans were killed, but more than 100 suffered head injuries. The Iranian attack came five days after U.S. forces killed Iran’s most powerful general, Qassem Soleimani, in Baghdad while he was leaving the airport, along with Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, leader of Iran’s proxy forces inside Iraq.

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In recent days, Iran has released new videos of both the killing of Soleimani in the U.S. drone strike ordered by President Trump and of the ballistic missile barrage fired into Iraq last year.

In December, more than 20 rockets were fired at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, the largest attack on the American diplomatic compound in a decade, officials said. There was concern Iran would strike again in the days leading up to the one-year anniversary of the U.S. killing of Soleimani.

Lucas Y. Tomlinson is a Pentagon correspondent for Fox News Channel. Follow him on Twitter: @LucasFoxNews

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