

Dubai police chief warns against Western attack on Iran

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Dubai's influential police chief has said Western powers should be warned that their relations with Gulf Arab states would suffer if they launch a military strike on Iran over its nuclear programme.

General Dhahi Khalfan Tamim, whose remarks often reflect the views of the political establishment in the United Arab Emirates, said Gulf "leaders should tell America and the West that 'an attack would have negative consequences for our relations with you.'"

Tamim, who was speaking at a forum on Friday night, was arguing for closer Gulf Arab ties with Iran and advocating that it join the Gulf Cooperation Council, whose six member states are close US allies.

"Iran should be a member of the GCC," he said. "I wonder why Iran, a neighbouring and Muslim country, with which we are linked by solid relations, does not become a member of the GCC."

"We feel great concern about voices in the West, particularly in the United States, speaking of an eventual strike against Iran," added, expressing discomfort with the prospect of Iran effectively closing off the Straits of Ormuz, through which one quarter of the world's petroleum is shipped.

His remarks come as tensions are growing between the West and Iran, which denies claims that it is using its civil nuclear programme as a cover for developing atomic weapons.

The UN Security Council has already slapped two sets of sanctions on Tehran for ignoring resolutions calling for it to stop enriching uranium, and is considering more measures.

The United States, while insisting it is seeking a diplomatic solution to the impasse, has repeatedly said that all options, including military force, are on the table.

And French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner recently said the West should brace itself for possible war with Iran.

Dubai is a constituent member of the United Arab Emirates, and its emir, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum, is its prime minister. The other GCC members are Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Saudi Arabia.