

# Iran unveils Mohajer-10 advanced drone

## Ballistic, Cruise missile production up significantly in two years



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi (C) speaks in front of a part of Iran's missile arsenal on display in Tehran, Iran, on August 22, 2023. **IRNA**

### Honoring Gen. Soleimani

Iran separately said it had provided two types of ballistic missiles to its army and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps on Tuesday, including one named after General Soleimani.

The mass addition of strategic missiles of Khorramshahr and Haj Qassem to the armed forces occurred with the presence and order of President Raisi, according to ISNA.

On the sidelines of visiting the exhibition of the latest technological and advanced achievements of the Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces, the president expressed hope that "the efforts of all of us will increase the country's dignity, honor and authority".

"Today, we can firmly introduce Iran as an advanced and technologic nation to the world," Raisi said in comments aired on state television.

He reiterated Iran's stance about friendly relations with "all countries in the world," adding that Iran's armed forces will cut off any hand that reaches out in an attempt to invade Iran.

### Increased missile production

Iran's defense minister announced that in the past two years, the production of solid fuel ballistic missiles, as well as air defense

and cruise missiles have jumped by 64, 45, and 100 percent, respectively.

In a message marking Defense Industry Day, Mohammad Reza Ashtiani enumerated multiple achievements in the country's defense sector over the past two years.

According to Ashtiani, Iranian experts have managed to reduce the probability of their ballistic missiles missing their targets for less than 35 meters and increase their range to 2,000 kilometers.

In air defense, he added, several systems have been developed in order to deal with low-altitude targets and cruise missiles.

Ashtiani further noted that the experts have designed and manufactured Nasr and Ghadir air-based cruise missiles (with a range of 35 to 200 kilometers) as well as Talaiyeh ground attack missiles with a range of more than 1000 kilometers.

In the field of drones, the Defense Ministry is seriously pursuing the development of the fifth generation of strategic drones under a "drone leap" program, which also involves the development of artificial intelligence along with support, electronic warfare, and signal collection missions.

He also reported a 30 percent increase in the development of different types of speedboats.

### National Desk

Iran has built an advanced homemade drone named Mohajer-10 with an enhanced flight range and duration as well as a greater payload.

The drone has an operational range of 2,000 km (1,240 miles) and can fly for up to 24 hours. Its payload can reach 300 kg (661 pounds), double the capacity of the Mohajer-6 drone, allowing it to carry all kinds of bombs and ammunition, Reuters reported.

The new drone can fly at an altitude of 7,000 meters (23,000 feet). It can travel at speeds of up to 210 kilometers per hour (130 miles per hour) and is equipped with updated electronic and intelligence systems.

The predecessor Mohajer-6 drone can hold 150 kilograms of weapons and fly for 12 hours. The previous model also had a lower flight altitude of 5,400 meters and a speed of 200 kilometers per hour.

US officials have accused Iran of providing Mohajer-6 drones, among other unmanned aerial vehicles, to Russia in its war against Ukraine. Tehran vehemently denies this.

Western governments have in recent months expanded biting sanctions on Iran over the alleged arms sales, AFP wrote.

A video released on Tuesday by Iranian media displayed the drone among other military hardware, with text saying "prepare your shelters" in both Hebrew and Persian. The Mohajer-10 drone was introduced at a ceremony

in Tehran attended by President Ebrahim Raisi, celebrating the achievements of Iran's defense industry.

"Mohajer" means "immigrant" in Farsi and has been a drone line manufactured by the Islamic Republic since 1985.

### Is it reverse-engineered?

The Associated Press claimed that the Mohajer-10 drone resembles America's armed MQ-9 Reaper. Iran has in the past captured US drones

openly support the secession of the Turkic-speaking populations of northeastern Iran. Otherwise, in equal measure, it would have to recognise Nagorno-Karabakh/Artsakh to the Armenians.

The fact that during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict, Iran, for one thing, agreed with the hand-off of the disputed territories to Baku despite its long-lasting relations with Armenia and, for another, proposed a mediation format to stop hostilities proved that Tehran tried multiple times to mediate and stabilise the Southern Caucasus.

The recent Azerbaijani attempt to connect Nakhichevan to Azerbaijan through the Armenian Syunik region will serve Ankara's goal of connecting Turkey to Azerbaijan, the Caspian Sea, and the Central Asian republics. For Iran, this would mean being cut out from energy corridors and losing its land connection to Russia and Armenia, a door through which Tehran can access the Eurasian Economic Union markets.

Although in the past Ankara and Tehran have found a convergence of policies regarding opposition to an independent Kurdistan and support for creating an independent Palestinian state, the recent Azerbaijan-Turkey-Israel axis represents a threat to Iran, particularly now that Azeri President Ilham Aliyev announced on April 29, 2023, that the Turkish military company Baykar will establish a Bayraktar centre in Azerbaijan.

Aliyev stated that Selcuk Bayraktar, the Director of the Baykar company, presented him with a model of the company's new product, Kizil Elma, its first jet-powered unmanned combat aerial vehicle (UCAV), which is more lethal than

the famed TB2. Aliyev expressed his hope that shortly, Kizil Elma will also be in the sky over Azerbaijan. The new UCAV is a low-observable vehicle and could represent a threat to the Islamic Republic of Iran. This, together with Azerbaijan's expansionist attitude towards Armenia and northeastern Iran, leads to the destabilisation of the South Caucasus. In addition, Turkey pushed the development of the Azerbaijan-KRG relationship. Notably, Tel Aviv and Erbil also have strong ties. To conclude, although Iran and Turkey have the potential to work together. However, the possibility of their collaboration appears distant at present. This is imputed to Turkey's international policy pursuits in the Caucasus, Middle East, and Central Asia, along with Ankara's backing of Baku and Tel Aviv, which represents a danger to Tehran.

## Turkey's goal of ...

Moreover, both Iran and Turkey have the potential to establish their territory as regional transit and energy hubs. In the past, Iran planned to supply gas to Europe via Turkey, but the Turkish government was limiting their delivery capacity. Ankara perceives Iran's vast oil and gas reservoir as a threat to its regional role.

Besides economic and strategic interests, the two states have important ideological differences. The Ottoman-Safavid conflict and the divide between Shia and Sunni played a role in these distinctions. In 1514, Selim I imposed an economic land and sea blockade on the Iranian silk trade and persuaded leading Sunni religious leaders to issue fatwas against his Shia opponents, condemning them as heretics. This set

the stage for a long-lasting Sunni-Shia divide between the Ottoman and the Safavid Empire. During his march through Ottoman territory and into Iran, Selim massacred up to forty thousand of his own empire's Shia believers. Nowadays, things have not changed significantly. In 2016, when the operation to liberate Mosul began (since 2014 the city had become the headquarters of the self-proclaimed caliphate of the Islamic State in northern Iraq) Ankara reaffirmed the Sunni identity of the city, triggering a clash with the Iraqi authorities, which feared a demographic change in Iraq. It is important to underline that the creation of the Shia crescent in the Middle East has been a disadvantage for Turkey and its foreign strategy.

While Ankara and Tehran have forged different cooperation agreements on trade and regional security on a diplomatic level, Turkey's policy of opposing Iran remains. Azerbaijan has become one of the primary tools Ankara uses to threaten Iran's stability. While other Turkic-speaking countries, such as Kazakhstan (which is also part of the Organisation of Turkic States), have many times stressed the need to enhance cooperation with Iran, Baku is exploiting the northeastern Iranian Turkish minority to destabilise the country. On August 12, 2023, the South Azerbaijan Culture Centre in Baku held a conference on "Promotion and problems of South Azerbaijan culture" sponsored by the APA GROUP and the World Union of Young Turkish Writers. Moreover, the Cultural Centre of South Azerbaijan will or-

ganise the "Cultural Days of South Azerbaijan" in Izmir, Turkey, from September 23 to 30, 2023. By 'South Azerbaijan,' Baku and Ankara mean to refer to the northeastern provinces of Iran inhabited by a large Turkic-speaking community. By using this expression, they underline that such a region should be part of Azerbaijan and separate from the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Although the Turkic-speaking peoples within Iran have, like any other minority, their own language and culture alongside the Persian one. The support that this secessionist group is receiving is a violation of international law on territorial sovereignty. Conferences like the previously-mentioned one on the culture of 'South Azerbaijan' can be considered part of the soft power used by Azerbaijan and Turkey to destabilise the northeastern Iranian provinces. Nevertheless, Ankara cannot

openly support the secession of the Turkic-speaking populations of northeastern Iran. Otherwise, in equal measure, it would have to recognise Nagorno-Karabakh/Artsakh to the Armenians.

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