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New Threats

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THE IRANIAN WAY TO THE STARS: WHY IRAN'S SPACE PROGRAMME CAN BE DANGEROUS FOR INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

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The article covers international and security dimensions of the Iranian space programme, which is rather successful despite economic sanctions. The article considers how the launches of the Iranian-made satellites from Iranian territory in 2009–2020 could accelerate Iran's programme of the intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) construction and how the potential threat of Iranian ICBMs could affect the security of NATO, Middle East countries, and other key players in the international arena. The correlation between the Iranian space and nuclear programmes will be also discussed. The article will consider international efforts to reduce security challenges from the Iranian space programme and further prospects of its development.

During the last two decades, Iran has remained under international pressure because of its nuclear programme, which could undermine the non-proliferation regime. The Iranian space programme is connected with its military nuclear projects because, thanks to its space-related activities, Iran has already constructed intermediate ballistic missiles, Shahab-3 and Shahab-4, which are able to deliver nuclear warheads to targets in Israel and South and Eastern Europe. Moreover, after launching several space satellites, Iran came very close to obtaining technologies needed to create intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), which will be capable of reaching targets in the United States.

Furthermore, Iran is not a signatory to the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR).¹ Therefore, the Iranian space programme remains a matter of a deep concern for the United States and its allies. Iranian success in developing the space programme and ballistic missile technologies was one of the reasons why the United States renewed economic sanctions against Tehran, although Iran limited its nuclear programme according to its obligations under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) signed in 2015 and the nuclear deal between Iran and China, France, Germany, Russia, United Kingdom, and the United States (P5+1).

1 S. Shay, *Iran and the Middle East space race*, "Israel Hayom", 4 May 2020
[https://www.israelhayom.com/opinions/_trashed-7/; access: 10 August 2020].

History of the Iranian Space Programme

Iran managed to become one of the 24 founding members of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), which was set up in 1958.² In the 1970s, Iran started its space programme, but it was stopped shortly after because of the Islamic Revolution of 1979. At this time, Iran had complicated relations with all countries that possessed advanced space-related technologies and could not benefit the international cooperation in this field. Also in 1980–1988, Iran was at war with Iraq and did not have resources to develop a space programme.

However, in the 1990s, the history of the current space programme of Iran began. It could be divided into three stages.³ During the first stage, in the 1990s–early 2000s, Iran conducted research activities and used foreign assistance (mostly Russian) to develop its space programme. During the second stage, in 2009–2020, Iran launched homemade satellites and conducted space-related activities despite the international sanctions and growing isolation. The current, third, stage began in 2020, after Iran launched its first military satellite and pushed its space programme to a new level.

In 1997, Iran announced its launcher projects, Earth observation satellites, and

telecommunications satellites.⁴ The same year Russia reportedly sold to Iran components from the SS-4, a Soviet medium-range ballistic missile that had a known maximum range of 2,000 km.⁵ This deal with Russia “helped Iran save years” in the development of the Shahab-3 missile, according to a CIA report in 2000.⁶ Later, the Shahab-3 missile formed the basis of the Safir space rocket.⁷



The current, third, stage began in 2020, after Iran launched its first military satellite and pushed its space programme to a new level

In 2003, Iran confirmed its intentions to further develop the space programme by creating the Iranian Space Agency (ISA). At this time, Russia continued to train Iranian rocket scientists and provide satellite components to Iran. On 27 October 2005, Russia and Iran jointly launched a research satellite from Plesetsk, Russia. This first Iranian satellite, Sina-1, was built by a Russian company Polyot and launched aboard a Russian-made Kosmos 3M rocket. After this launch, Iran became the 43rd country to possess satellites.⁸

However, under international pressure, Russia curtailed its cooperation with

- 2 *The Iranian Space Program*, “Space Legal Issues”, 10 April 2019 [<https://www.spacelegalissues.com/space-law-the-iranian-space-program/> access: 10 August 2020].
- 3 A. Hanna, *Iran’s Ambitious Space Program*, “The Iran Primer”, United States Institute of Peace, 23 June 2020 [<https://iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2020/jun/23/iran%E2%80%99s-ambitious-space-program> access: 10 August 2020].
- 4 *The Iranian Space Program*, n2.
- 5 *Shahab-4*, Federation of American Scientists (FAS) [<https://fas.org/nuke/guide/iran/missile/shahab-4.htm> access: 10 August 2020].
- 6 Statement by John A. Lauder, Director, DCI Nonproliferation Center of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on Russian Proliferation to Iran’s Weapons of Mass Destruction and Missile Programs, Central Intelligence Agency, 5 October 2000 [https://www.cia.gov/news-information/speeches-testimony/2000/lauder_WMD_100500.html access: 10 August 2020].
- 7 Hanna, n3.
- 8 *First Iranian Satellite Launched*, “BBC News”, 27 October 2005 [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4381436.stm access: 10 August 2020].

Iran on space-related activities. In March 2008, the UN Security Council Resolution 1803 restricted the transfer of “sensitive technologies” that could be used for Iranian nuclear and ballistic programmes.⁹ In June 2010, another Security Council Resolution, 1929, banned all countries from transferring ballistic missile technologies to Iran.¹⁰ As a result, in 2009, Russia declared that it had no plans to help Iran to launch another satellite.¹¹

Nevertheless, Iran managed to launch the satellite without foreign assistance. In February 2009, Iran became the first Islamic country – and ninth country in the world – to launch a homemade satellite into orbit from its territory.¹²

During 2010s, Iran launched other satellites and, according to its officials, managed to successfully launch a monkey into space and return it safely to Earth.¹³ However, many Western observers were not convinced that

Iran’s launch of a monkey was successful, because the monkey shown in the recovery photos was different from the one shown in pre-launch pictures.¹⁴ Nevertheless, Iran announced plans to send humans into space.¹⁵ However, in 2017, because of high costs (up to 20 billion USD),¹⁶ Iran cancelled these plans.¹⁷ Iranian officials, however, still hope to send Iranian astronauts into space in cooperation with foreign countries.¹⁸

On 22 April 2020, Iran launched its first military satellite, Nour-1.¹⁹ This was a new turning point in the history of the Iranian space programme. Now Iran is reportedly able to conduct intelligence activities using space technologies. Iran tested this new ability for the first time during a large-scale military exercise in the Persian Gulf on 28 July 2020, when it tested manned and unmanned reconnaissance capabilities in a war game, while the entire operation was monitored by its first military satellite Nour-1.²⁰

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- 9 *Resolution 1803 (2008) adopted by the Security Council at its 5848th meeting, on 3 March 2008*, IAEA [https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/uncsc_res1803-2008.pdf access: 10 August 2020].
 - 10 *Resolution 1929 (2010) adopted by the Security Council at its 6335th meeting, on 9 June 2010*, IAEA [https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/uncsc_res1929-2010.pdf access: 10 August 2020].
 - 11 S. Weinberger, *Russians Say 'Nyet' to Another Iranian Satellite*, “Wired”, 25 June 2009 [<https://www.wired.com/2009/06/russians-say-nyet-to-another-iranian-satellite/> access: 10 August 2020].
 - 12 *Iran Launches First Domestically Produced Satellite*, “Guardian”, 3 February 2009 [<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/feb/03/iran-satellite-launch-omid> access: 10 August 2020].
 - 13 M. Kramer, *Iran Says It Launched a Second Monkey into Space*, 16 December 2013 [<https://www.space.com/23979-iran-space-monkey-launch.html> access: 10 August 2020].
 - 14 C. Moskowitz, *Did Iran Really Launch a Monkey Into Space?* “Space.com”, 4 February 2013 [<https://www.space.com/19629-iran-space-monkey-launch-questions.html> access: 10 August 2020].
 - 15 *Iran Plans to Send Humans into Space in 10 Years*, “Tehran Times”, 6 October 2010 [<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/227961/iran-plans-to-send-humans-into-space-in-10-years> access: 10 August 2020].
 - 16 *Iran Cancels Project for Sending Human into Space*, “The Times of Israel”, 1 June 2017 [<https://www.timesofisrael.com/iran-cancels-project-for-sending-human-into-space/> access: 10 August 2020].
 - 17 *Iran’s Piloted Program*, “GlobalSecurity.org” [<https://www.globalsecurity.org/world/iran/piloted.htm> access: 10 August 2020].
 - 18 *Iran Pursuing Plans to Send Astronauts into Space*, “FARS News Agency”, 5 October 2019 [<https://en.farsnews.ir/newstext.aspx?nn=13980713000832> access: 10 August 2020].
 - 19 J. Borger, *Iran Reportedly Launches First Military Satellite as Trump Makes Threats*, “Guardian”, 22 April 2020 [<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/22/iran-us-satellite-navy-boats-trump> access: 10 August 2020].
 - 20 *Iran Conducts Large-Scale Drills amid Flaring Tensions with US*, “Al-Monitor”, 28 July 2020 [<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2020/07/iran-drills-persian-gulf-missiles-replica-us-naval-carrier.html#ixzz6UjZPkIkr> access: 10 August 2020].

However, analysts say the intelligence capability of the first Iranian military satellite is rather limited because it appears to have a relatively low-resolution camera.²¹ US General Jay Raymond doubted in his tweet that Iranian satellite could provide any intelligence information, although he admitted that the satellite most likely had been launched.²² Anyway, the launch of Nour-1 means that Iran has moved closer to obtaining ICBMs capable of delivering nuclear warheads to targets on different continents.

This new success of the Iranian space programme was achieved a few months after the US State Department announced the United States was imposing sanctions on the Iranian Space Agency.²³ After the launch of Nour-1, US officials again criticised the Iranian space-related activities.²⁴

Correlation between Iran's Space and Nuclear Programmes

Thus, the Iranian space programme is potentially dangerous, but the scale of this danger depends on Iran's decision whether to obtain or not to obtain nuclear weapons. If Iran is not going to produce nuclear warheads, its space and missile programme will still cause some tensions. However, the risks for international security will remain rather low and could be eliminated in the

future if a new deal with Iran is reached. If Iran decides to acquire nuclear weapons, it will mean that, thanks to the achievements of the Iranian space programme, these weapons would be dangerous for the entire world. So we have to discuss again the highly debated question on whether Iran really will go nuclear.



If Iran is not going to produce nuclear warheads, its space and missile programme will still cause some tensions. However, the risks for international security will remain rather low and could be eliminated in the future if a new deal with Iran is reached

According to the International Atomic Agency (IAEA) reports, until 2019, Iran followed its obligations under the JCPOA,²⁵ which limited its nuclear programme and put it under international control. This fact could prove that Iran did not have intentions to possess nuclear weapons. Tehran suspended fulfilling all JCPOA provisions only after the United States conducted an operation to kill the high-ranking Iranian general Kasem Soleimani in January 2020²⁶

21 S. Erwin, *Pompeo Blasts Iran's Space Program in Wake of Military Satellite Launch*, "Spacenews.com", 26 April 2020 [<https://spacenews.com/pompeo-blasts-irans-space-program-in-wake-of-military-satellite-launch/> access: 10 August 2020].

22 Gen. Jay Raymond, @SpaceForceSCO, "Twitter", 26 April 2020 [<https://twitter.com/SpaceForceSCO/status/1254158221243277315> access: 10 August 2020].

23 *New Sanctions Designations on Iran's Space Program*, U.S. Department of State", 3 September 2019 [<https://www.state.gov/new-sanctions-designations-on-irans-space-program/> access: 10 August 2020].

24 T. Axelrod, *Pompeo Condemns Iran's Launch of Military Satellite*, "The Hill", 25 April 2020 [<https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/494634-pompeo-condemns-irans-launch-of-military-satellite> access: 10 August 2020].

25 *Iran Fulfilling Commitments Under JCPOA: IAEA Chief*, "Tasnim News Agency", 10 November 2018 [<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2018/11/10/1872144/iran-fulfilling-commitments-under-jcpoa-iaea-chief> access: 10 August 2020].

26 J. Haltiwanger, *Iran Is Withdrawing From the 2015 Nuclear Deal After Trump Ordered Deadly Strike on Its Top General*, "Business Insider", 5 January 2020 [<https://www.businessinsider.com/iran-fully-withdrawing-2015-nuclear-deal-amid-nsions-with-us-2020-1> access: 10 August 2020].

and when the United States itself was not participating in that deal anymore. Thus, current Iranian activities to enrich uranium and limit IAEA control could be assessed as an attempt to pressure Washington to come back to the JCPOA or at least to force European countries not to support US economic sanctions.

Iran is still enriching uranium only up to 4.5%²⁷ and does not attempt to enrich it to a much higher percentage, which is necessary for producing a bomb²⁸. Furthermore, according to the latest IAEA report, Iran continues to provisionally apply the Additional Protocol to its Safeguards Agreement with IAEA and cooperate with the agency on inspecting its current nuclear activities²⁹. Thus, it can be assumed that Iran has decided not to go nuclear.

On the other hand, if Iran is not going to obtain nuclear weapons, it remains unclear why it spends so much effort and money on developing a space programme and producing ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear warheads. The actual collapse of the JCPOA increases the danger of Iran's going nuclear. Even during the times when the JCPOA successfully worked in 2015–2017, there was still a potential danger that Iran could go nuclear, and that was another reason why the United States decided to stop its participation in the nuclear deal with Iran. The JCPOA curtailed the Iranian programme, but it still allowed Iran to remain rather close to the nuclear threshold.

According to analysts, the JCPOA allowed Iran to maintain such a developed nuclear infrastructure, which could be used to produce a nuclear bomb in one year only.³⁰ Thus, the JCPOA was based not on real technical guarantees that Iran would not be able to obtain nuclear weapons soon but on Iran's promise not to do so. However, due to the long period of conflict relations, the United States and some of its allies (Israel and the Gulf monarchies) deeply distrust Iran and could not rely on its promises only. Iranian space and missile programmes, which continued after reaching the nuclear deal in 2015, only increased this distrust and pushed the Trump administration to withdraw from the JCPOA in May 2018.

It appears that other participants of the JCPOA, in contrast to the Trump administration, do not believe that Iran is ready to bear all the high costs and risks of obtaining nuclear weapons. The EU countries, and even more so Russia and China, advocate for saving the JCPOA and are interested in developing good relations with Iran. It appears that both Moscow and Beijing assess the probability of acquiring nuclear bombs by Iran as very low, because they understand that Iran would not be ready to live with nuclear weapons in almost complete isolation like North Korea. Moreover, if Iran went nuclear, it would probably find itself even in a much worse situation than North Korea, which is supported by China.

Unlike North Korea, nuclear-armed Iran would likely not be supported by anyone. In 2010, when the conservative

27 *Iran Stockpiled Enriched Uranium at Nearly 8 Times the Limit* — UN, "Deutsche Welle", 5 June 2020 [https://www.dw.com/en/iran-stockpiled-enriched-uranium-at-nearly-8-times-the-limit-un/a-53701845 access: 10 August 2020].

28 *Will the Iran Nuclear Deal Survive?* "YouTube Channel of the International Institute for Strategic Studies" [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AgTR87tAlmc access: 10 August 2020].

29 Report by the Director General, *Verification and Monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran in Light of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 (2015)*, IAEA Board of Governors, 5 June 2020, p. 7 [https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/20/06/gov2020-26.pdf access: 10 August 2020].

30 F. Murphy, A. Mohammed, *Explainer: How Close Is Iran to Producing a Nuclear Bomb?* "Reuters", 17 January 2020 [https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-nuclear-explainer/explainer-how-close-is-iran-to-producing-a-nuclear-bomb-idUSKBN1ZG22P access: 10 August 2020].

administration of the Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad refused to make any concessions in the nuclear field, China and Russia did not veto the UN resolution 1929, which imposed economic sanctions on Iran. Although even then Russia still doubted that Iran really would go nuclear, Moscow suspended the delivery of S-300 rockets³¹ to Iran and stopped cooperating with it on missile technologies. Thus, if Iran obtained nuclear weapons, Russia and China most likely would join the strict international economic sanctions.

Going nuclear would be a catastrophic scenario for the current ruling elite in Iran, and the regime of ayatollahs seems to be rational enough to understand this. Further development of the nuclear and space programmes could be explained by the regime's desire to distract public attention from the economic problems by increasing national prestige and pride. Moreover, the new achievements in the nuclear and missile programmes could be used by Tehran as a bargaining chip in further negotiations with the West.

It appears that Russia and China are taking these considerations into account and do not perceive the Iranian nuclear and space programmes as a real threat or as an obstacle to receiving benefits from economic cooperation with Iran. EU states also seem not to believe that Iran will go nuclear. However, the launch of an Iranian military satellite in April 2020 may change the position of Europe,³² as it was condemned

by the EU. The French Foreign Ministry stated that "this launch directly contributes to the extremely troubling progress made by Iran in its ballistic missile program" and is not in conformity with the UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which approved the nuclear deal with Iran in July 2015.³³ Germany stated that the Iranian missile and space programme had a destabilising impact on the Middle East region.³⁴ Now the EU does not have a unique position regarding the nuclear and missile programmes of Iran. While still trying to save the nuclear deal with Iran, the EU countries criticise Tehran for its missile and space programmes.



Further development of the nuclear and space programmes could be explained by the regime's desire to distract public attention from the economic problems by increasing national prestige and pride. Moreover, the new achievements in the nuclear and missile programmes could be used by Tehran as a bargaining chip in further negotiations with the West

For the United States, the relations with Iran will likely remain complicated even if Joe Biden wins in the presidential election in November 2020. Biden played a positive role in securing congressional approval for the

31 *Russia to Repay Iran for Cancelled Missile Order*, "BBC News", 7 October 2010 [<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-11495172> access: 10 August 2020].

32 M. Dagher, *Iran Changes the Rules of the Game With Satellite Launch*, Washington Institute, 1 May 2020 [<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/fikraforum/view/Nur-Satellite-Space-Missile-U.S.-Iran-Security> access: 10 August 2020].

33 *Resolution 2231 (2015) adopted by the Security Council at its 7488th meeting, on 20 July 2015* [[https://www.undocs.org/S/RES/2231\(2015\)](https://www.undocs.org/S/RES/2231(2015)) access: 10 August 2020].

34 O. Jalilov, *Iran Slams U.S., Europe Stances on Satellite Launch*, "Caspian News", 26 April 2020 [<https://caspiannews.com/news-detail/iran-slams-us-europe-stances-on-satellite-launch-2020-4-25-15/> access: 10 August 2020].

JCPOA during the Obama administration.³⁵ Nevertheless, the recent achievements of the Iranian space programme make today's Iran look more dangerous than it was in 2015 during the signing of the JCPOA. Thus, achieving a new nuclear deal with Iran, in case Biden wins, would be still complicated.

Nevertheless, even if Washington, similarly to Moscow and Beijing, believed that Tehran was not going to obtain nuclear weapons, the United States would feel uncomfortable about lifting the sanctions on Iran. Even without any nuclear and space programmes, Iran would still be dangerous for the United States. The United States keeps military forces in Syria and Iraq, where pro-Iranian paramilitary troops are fighting against them. The US allies Israel and Saudi Arabia are also fighting against pro-Iranian groups in Lebanon and Yemen. As a result, Washington and its allies fear that if they lifted the sanctions, Iran would obtain more funds and use them to increase support of pro-Iranian groups in the Middle East and further destabilise the situation in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen, and probably in some other countries. For example, Iran is also able to destabilise the situation in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf monarchies by manipulating by the Shia minorities in these countries.

Possible Options to Reduce the Danger of Iran's Space Programme

Thus, the USA and its allies in the Middle East region are interested in pressuring Iran by economic sanctions to avoid a situation where economically strong and rich Iran can

conduct devastating proxy wars in a dozen countries. Achievements of the Iranian space and nuclear programmes create a reason for the White House to sanction Iran and prevent a scenario in which Iran becomes stronger and more dangerous.

However, it appears that there is no better alternative than conducting negotiations with Iran and making some concessions to it. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo declared that US sanctions could lead Iran to economic collapse.³⁶ However, economic forecasts of the World Bank do not confirm the US administration's assessments. According to the World Bank, Iranian economy will start to recover in 2021 despite the economic sanctions and COVID-19. In 2021, Iranian GDP is expected to grow by 2.1%.³⁷

On the other hand, the stability of the regime was brought into question during the mass protests in November 2019, which erupted after the government announced the price of petrol would be increased by 50%.³⁸ Although these protests were brutally suppressed by the government forces, they demonstrated that Iranian people were disappointed with the economic situation, which was getting worse amid the US sanctions. The expected slight economic growth in 2021 is unlikely to significantly improve the lives of most ordinary Iranian people. Therefore, new protests and instability may happen again. However, it appears that if Iran really faces collapse and regime change, this will not radically improve the security situation in the Middle East. The United States had already experienced the collapse of Saddam Hussein's Iraq, another strong

35 M. Dagher, n32.

36 A. Mohammed, H. Pamuk, *U.S. to End Sanctions Waivers Allowing Some Work at Iran Nuclear Sites*, "Reuters", 27 May 2020 [<https://ru.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN2332W1> access: 10 August 2020].

37 *Global Economic Prospects: Middle East and North Africa*, "World Bank Report", June 2020 [<http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/950801588788414569/Global-Economic-Prospects-June-2020-Analysis-MENA.pdf> access: 10 August 2020].

38 *Iran Protests: Rouhani Claims Victory against 'Enemy' After Crackdown*, "BBC News", 20 November 2020 [<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-50486646> access: 10 August 2020].

adversary of Washington in the Middle East. Nevertheless, the regime change in Iraq after the war in 2003 did not radically strengthen US positions in the region.

Thus, diplomacy is the best option in dealing with Iran. Reaching a new deal with Iran could be even more complicated than in 2015, but pressure on Iran is unlikely to lead to positive results. Moreover, the economic crisis resulting from the global pandemic decreases the value of sanction relief for Iran, because during the global recession, the lifting of sanctions will not radically improve the Iranian economy.³⁹ Thus, Iran would not be highly interested in making big concessions on its nuclear or space programmes in return for sanction relief. Under these conditions, it would be very difficult to negotiate with Iran, and most likely, it would be possible to reach an agreement on the nuclear issues only as it was in 2015.

It is unlikely that Iran would be ready to limit its space activities either, because, as a spokesman for Iran's UN mission stated, the missiles and other weapons "are absolutely and under no condition negotiable".⁴⁰ Although the Iranian minister of foreign affairs Javad Zarif did not exclude the possibility that the Iranian missile and space programmes could be negotiated,⁴¹ the moderate forces represented by Javad Zarif, together with president Hassan Rouhani, are gradually losing their power, faced by

the growing US pressure, and the hardliner approach starts to dominate in Iranian policy.⁴²

It appears that under the current conditions, the only realistic option to reduce international concerns around the Iranian missile and space programmes would be banning long-range missiles in the Middle East, as Michael Elleman suggested in his article for the *Arms Control Today journal*.⁴³ According to his study, all the Middle East countries, including Iran and Israel, could negotiate a treaty that would prohibit the production and proliferation of long-range missiles in the Middle East, and this would make the Iranian space programme more controlled and less dangerous for the international security. Reaching this deal soon would be a complicated task, but after renewing the JCPOA or signing its updated version, the talks on missile issues appear to be possible.

Thus, it could be concluded that the Iranian missile and space programmes will most likely remain a complicated issue in the relations between Iran and Western countries. Solving this problem would be possible only after reaching a new nuclear deal with Iran. Until that time, Iran would likely try to further develop its space activities but probably will not launch new satellites or create ICBMs, taking into account a complicated economic situation amid the COVID-19 crisis.

39 E. Geranmayeh, *Reviving the Revolutionaries: How Trump's Maximum Pressure Is Shifting Iran's Domestic Politics*, European Council on Foreign Relations, 23 June 2020 [https://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/reviving_the_revolutionaries_how_trumps_maximum_pressure_is_shifting_irans access: 10 August 2020].

40 *Iran Rejects Suggestion Its Missile Programme Is Negotiable*, "BBC News", 16 July 2019 [<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-49011836> access: 10 August 2020].

41 *Door Is 'Wide Open' to Negotiation If Trump Lifts His Sanctions*, Zarif Says, "NBC News", 15 July 2019 [<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/mideast/door-wide-open-negotiation-if-trump-lifts-his-sanctions-iran-n1030021> access: 10 August 2020].

42 Geranmayeh, n39.

43 M. Elleman, *Banning Long-Range Missiles in the Middle East: A First Step for Regional Arms Control*, "Arms Control Today", 42 (4), May 2012.

Just strengthening or lifting sanctions would be unlikely to significantly change Iran's poor economic situation and thus would not convince the Iranian leaders to limit its nuclear and space programmes. However, Western countries could discuss with Iran some projects of economic cooperation, which could help to recover the Iranian economy and persuade the Iranian leaders to make concessions on Tehran's nuclear and space programmes.

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