



Iran: Use Suicide Drones as Air Defense

OE Watch Commentary: As part of a broader report on Iranian air defense strategies, the Fars News Agency, an outlet close to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, published a lengthy analysis of Iranian defense strategies. Acknowledging air defense and the maintenance of control of the skies as a major concern for the Iranian military, the analysis suggested that the Islamic Republic could utilize “suicide interceptors” as a major component of its air defense.

Iranian resources are limited—especially under sanctions—and the article proposes that reliance on relatively cheap drones could neutralize far more expensive enemy platforms. However, it is unclear if this is true for fighter jets and bombers, because they operate at higher altitudes, have greater range and speed, and more advanced stealth technology than any Iranian drone. It is more likely that such drones could pose a risk to American helicopters participating in carrier strike group or amphibious ready group operations, or to civilian flights. A broader challenge to the operational environment might be Iran’s efforts to arm its drones with air-to-air missiles, a capability Iran may believe necessary due to the likelihood that any strike on Iran would target ground-based, stationary batteries.

Still, the excerpted article does highlight Iran’s recent suicide drone developments, such as the Sarir, unveiled in 2013 and more recently, the Karrar, which the article claims to have heat-seeking capabilities, as well as the Kian-3, unveiled in 2019. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**

“Using suicide drones for air intercepts is both smart and low-cost.”

Source: “Pehpadha-ye Intehari dar Kamin-e Jangandha-ye Doshman/Mamoriyat-e Vizhe Kararha baraye Defah az Asman-e Iran (Suicide Drones against Lurking Enemy Aircraft/A Special Deployment Mission to Defend Iranian Skies),” *Fars News Agency*, 23 November 2019. <https://www.farsnews.com/news/13980828000520>

A Special Deployment Mission to Defend Iranian Skies

Using suicide drones for air interception operations is a smart and low-cost strategy to defend against the threat of expensive enemy fighters. Air defense against aerial invasion can be the most important factor in overall superiority in the combat environment, as domination of the air enables ground and sea operations to occur without interference, and that’s why military planners must consider having even minimal air superiority to be necessary...

In recent years, in our country, two developments in air defense have received particular attention, and these have been air defense systems and the development of unmanned aerial vehicles, leading to the design of a number of different air defense systems and drones in various configurations. But one of the common areas where air defense systems and UAVs coincide is the use of interceptor drones to conduct air interception operations, and a few examples have been suicide drones or those armed with air-to-air missiles. The Sarir, or H-110...can be described as the Army’s first air defense UAV.



Iran considers the potential of suicide drones as an air defense component.

Source: Fars News Agency, https://media.farsnews.com/Uploaded/Files/Images/1398/09/01/13980901000422_Test_PhotoN.jpg