Iran Unveils New Drone Defense Technology

By Michael Rubin
OE Watch Commentary

Drones are increasingly a central part of Iran's military strategy. Over the past decade Iranian military industries have greatly expanded the country's drone fleet, unveiling a number of models with both surveillance and attack capabilities. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, the regular military, and Iran's paramilitary law enforcement forces now count drones in their arsenals. Iranian authorities also claim expanded ranges, incorporated GPS guidance, and increased stealth characteristics. While both the Iranian press and defense officials regularly exaggerate their military capabilities, Iranian forces and their proxies have demonstrated significant capabilities by using drones against targets in Iraq, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Yemen.

The current announcement of new platforms as per *Kayhan*, a conservative broadsheet whose editor the Supreme Leader himself appoints, suggests that Iranian authorities have moved to fill a gap in the Iranian arsenal. The article and the unveiling, timed to coincide with Iranian Army Day, suggests that Iranian leaders now prioritize the ability to jam and counter advanced UAVs and to miniaturize platforms so that they can be easily deployed.

The excerpted announcement also highlights a desire to integrate artificial intelligence into Iran's drone doctrine. The article claims the ability to network a swarm of suicide drones autonomously to identify and strike separate targets. If true, this would significantly advance Iran's current UAV capability. However, many other Iranian claims surrounding artificial intelligence appear focused more on repeating jargon for the domestic audience and less based on true acquisition and current ability to field these top technologies.

New drone and drone defense systems unveiled by the Iranian Army Ground Forces on 25 April 2021.

Source: http://cdn.pana.ir/Media/Image/1400/02/05/637549422385012552.jpg

> "They unveiled suicide drones capable of conducting joint operations."

Source: "Ravanmaye az Dastavardha-ye Jadid Niru-ye Zamini Artesh (Unveiling the New Achievements of the Army Ground Forces)." *Kayhan.ir* (Conservative newspaper who's editor is appointed by the supreme leader), 26 April 2021. http://kayhan.ir/fa/news/215587/رونمایی-از-دستاوردهای-جدید-نیروی-زمینی-ارتش

The ceremony of unveiling and releasing the new achievements of the Islamic Republic of Iran Army Ground Forces' Self-Sufficiency Research and Jihad Organization was held yesterday (Sunday) in the presence of Admiral Habibollah Sayari, Deputy Coordinator of the Army and Brigadier General Kiomars Heydari, commander of the Army Ground Forces at the Army Ground Forces' Self-Sufficiency Research and Jihad Organization….

For the first time, the Army Ground Forces' Self-Sufficiency Jihad Organization unveiled suicide drones capable of conducting joint operations with 10 aircraft within a radius of 250 miles. These drone systems have a range of between 25 and 250 miles and can be guided from a ground station and, along the way, each is able to destroy the intended target. The warhead of these systems ranges from 11 pounds to 33 pounds. These are UAV systems which use artificial intelligence, and they have the ability to provide information online, network, and relay information to each other. Other achievements of the Army Ground Forces were unveiled at the ceremony, which are as follows:

1. *UAV Portable Wave Radio Detection Systems: This system has the ability to detect, detect and disrupt air surveillance radars on a variety of UAVs, helicopters and fighter jets to deal with a variety of surveillance and guidance radar threats. This system is completely indigenous and is based on internal technologies.*
2. *UAV Portable Laser Detection: These are able to detect laser-guided weapons and airborne threats, warning against enemy short-range air defense systems….*
3. *The Ranesh ["Drift"]-1 Multi-purpose micro-turbojet engine….*
4. *The Tiam-1400… A UAV self-defense system for detecting and jamming the signals of enemy radars and air surveillance….*
5. *Total Flight artificial intelligence-based network flight system….*
6. *"Taha 1400"; UAV radar interceptor system*
7. *Advanced ground-based disruptive systems*