



Iran to Launch New Satellite by Year's End

OE Watch Commentary: In a wide-ranging interview with *Mashregh News*, an outlet close to Iran's intelligence and security services, Manuchehr Manteqi, managing director of the Iran Aviation Industries Organization, discussed a number of aviation and space projects. Two portions of the interview, in the accompanying excerpted article, are illuminating. First, was his discussion of the new Sharif-Sat, an indigenous satellite developed by the Sharif University of Tehran. While the Iranian press had originally announced a February 2015 launch date, that date came and went without a launch and mention of the Sharif-Sat eventually faded from public discourse. While Manteqi's words suggest Iran is prepared again to launch the Sharif-Sat into orbit, his emphasis on budgetary caution and his suggestion that the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) has put the brakes on satellite launches are notable; indeed, he suggests that the SNSC has become the logjam in Iran's broader satellite program.

While the Islamic Republic remains deeply interested in a space program, his complaints may reflect tension between those more interested in the science behind and enabled by the satellites and the SNSC's greater interest in launch systems which have dual use ballistic missile potential. At the same time, Manteqi's mention that the designers of Sharif-Sat are producing a new satellite highlights the importance of Iranian universities in Iran's space program. Additionally, Manteqi's comments with regard to construction of a 150-seat aircraft raises questions about Iran's efforts to purchase aircraft internationally to upgrade its commercial fleet. While Iran's initial proposal included planes with a seating capacity three-times greater than the volume flown by Iranian aircraft, the excess planes may not only have been destined for the Iranian military, but also to reverse engineer for Iran's own domestic production. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**

“The Sharif-Sat is among the important satellites that should be launched into space.”

Source: “Pertab-e Sharif Sat Montazar Tayid-e Showra-ye ‘Ali-ye Amniyat-e Melli (Launch of the Sharif Sat waiting for Approval by the Supreme National Security Council),” *Mashregh News*, 23 June 2018. <https://goo.gl/ryJfX9>

According to a Mashregh report, Iranian successes in the air and space areas in the region and the world are clear. Construction of a 150-seat aircraft is one program, and it will be built in the near future if funding becomes available. Iran's self-sufficiency in the construction and design of helicopters and airplanes was a long-standing dream which has been realized in the country today. And to get to know more about Iran's aerospace successes, we sat down with Manuchehr Manteqi, head of the National Space Center and managing director of the Iran Aviation Industries Organization, for a detailed discussion....

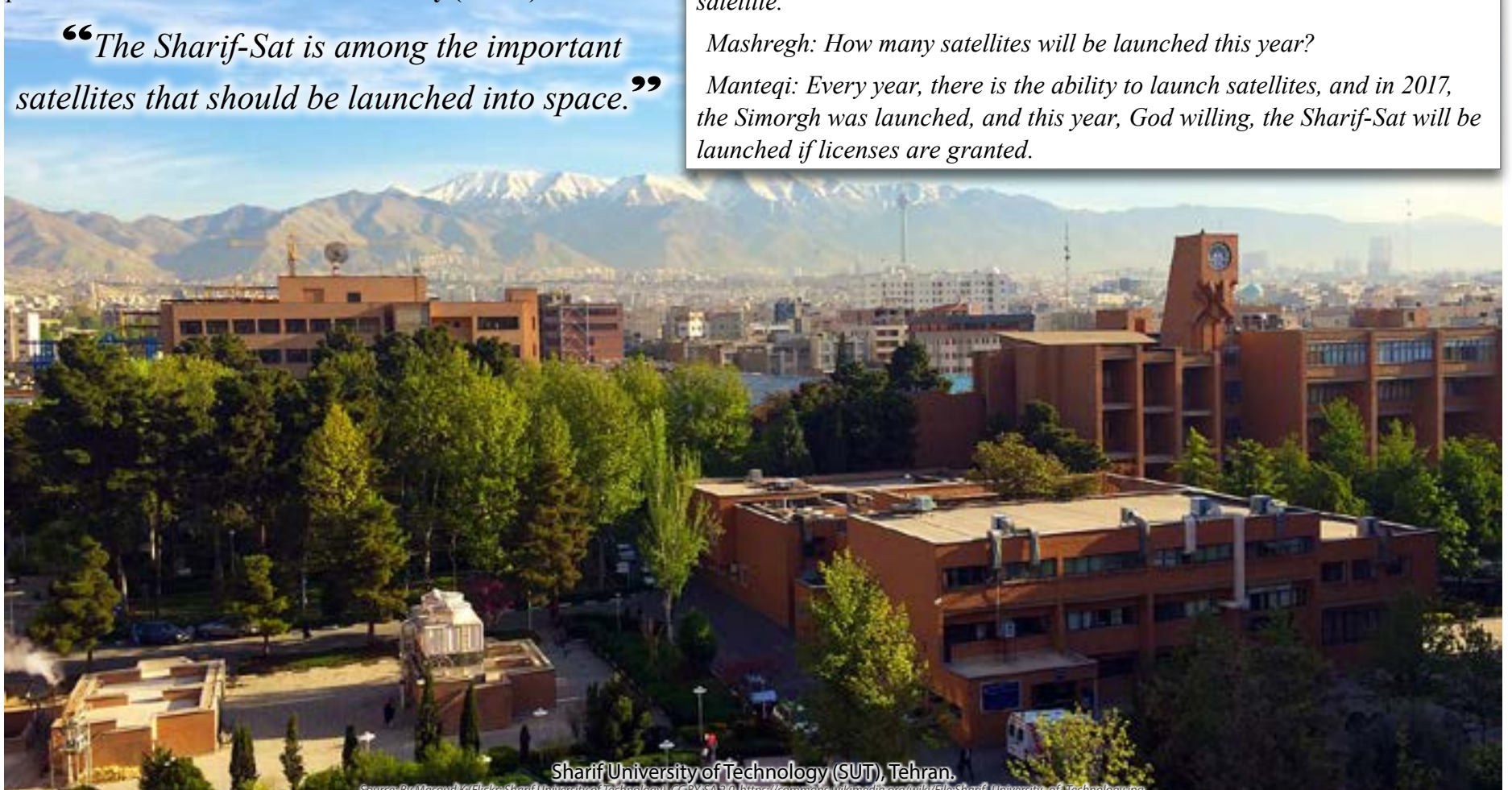
“Sharif Sat is set to launch this year”

Mashregh: The Supreme Leader has emphasized the aero-space field, and the Sharif-Sat is among the important satellites that should be launched into space. Can you say precisely when will this satellite finally be launched into space? Is it on the agenda, or has it been forgotten?

Manteqi: The group that designed Sharif-Sat are designing another satellite. Basically, the process of designing and building satellites in Iran has never been slow. The Sharif-Sat can be launched this year, but the exact time of launching is not my decision; the launch procedure has its own process. The satellites which are built, delivered, and integrated, and sent to the launch station, and they must get the permissions to launch from the Supreme National Security Council, or we can say the Sharif-Sat is able to be launched because everything is ready, and that the satellite will be launched when the Supreme National Security Council's approval is issued. But we're not able to follow up from the Supreme National Security Council when exactly the satellite will be launched because the Council makes its determination and issues its final decision based on both internal and external factors, and so I want to say that this is not a topic on which we can make a decision judging by the very complicated process of launching the satellite.

Mashregh: How many satellites will be launched this year?

Manteqi: Every year, there is the ability to launch satellites, and in 2017, the Simorgh was launched, and this year, God willing, the Sharif-Sat will be launched if licenses are granted.



Sharif University of Technology (SUT), Tehran.

Source: By Masoud K (Flickr/Sharif University of Technology), CC BY-SA 2.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sharif_University_of_Technology.jpg