Iranian Biomass Remote-Sensing Satellite Developed

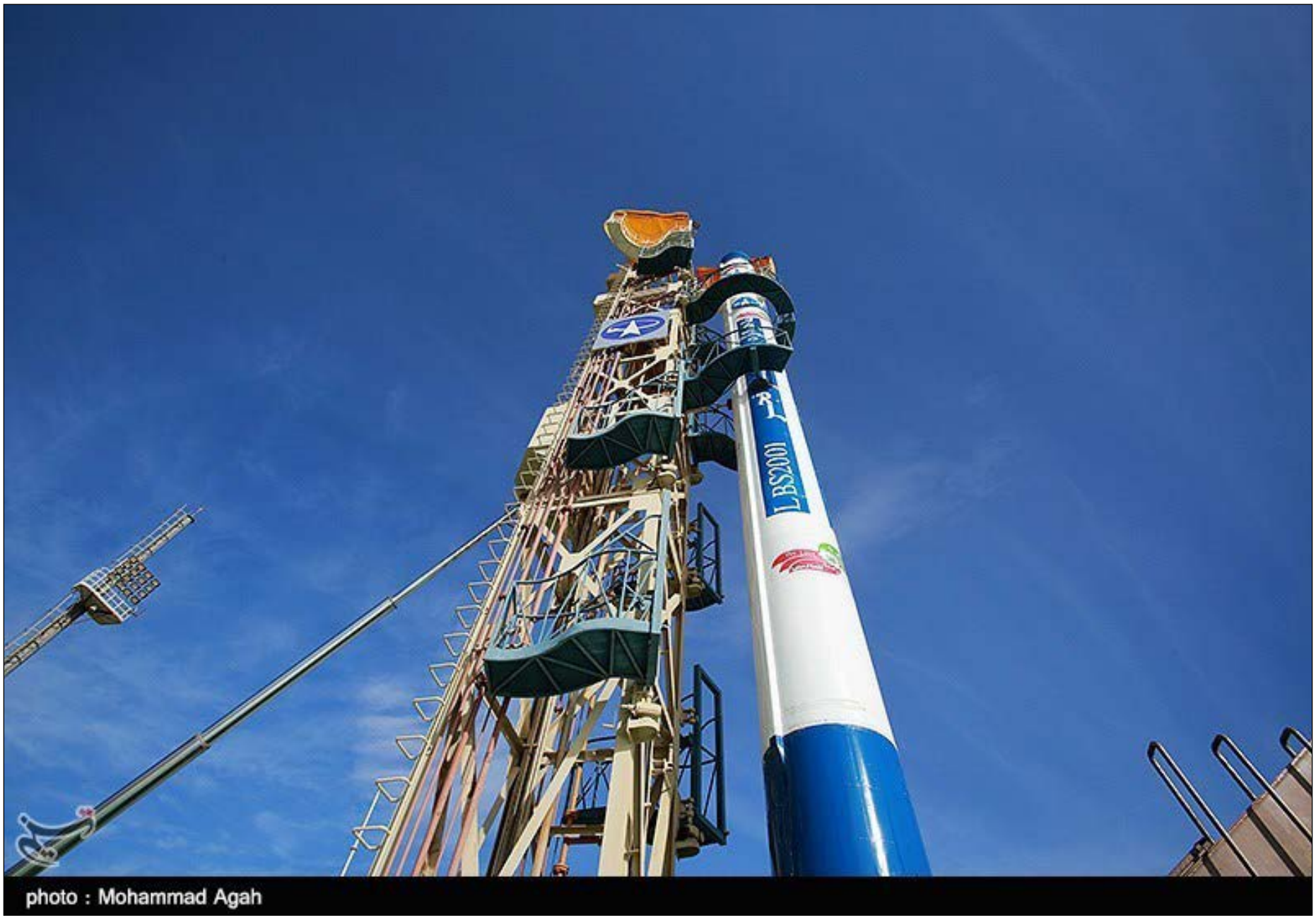
OE Watch Commentary: The Iranian Space Agency has successfully launched at least six satellites, although all but one or two have fallen from orbit within days, weeks, or months. Iranian officials arguably utilize the ability to launch satellites as cover to develop dual use technologies that could bolster Iranian intercontinental ballistic missile capabilities. In the accompanying excerpted article, Morteza Barari, the director of the Iranian Space Agency, speaks about commercializing remote-sensing satellites. While this may represent a genuine desire to augment the Iranian Space Agency's budget, it may also reflect cooperation with China. On 6 September 2008, China launched the Huanjing, an earth observation satellite which it had developed jointly with Iran and Thailand; Tehran's investment represented about 15 percent of the total project cost.

Even if the joint satellite project with China has developed to a commercial/operational phase, Barari's optimism about being able to tap a $60 billion market seems wildly exaggerated given international commercial constraints on doing business in Iran, even if sanctions were not re-imposed. Given this fact, it seems likely that the Sino-Iranian satellite cooperation focuses instead on the development of sensors which can be used for more conventional observation and espionage. Of course, for Iran to derive benefit from such capabilities and maintain its autonomy from China, the Iranian Space Agency will not only have to launch new satellites, but also find a way to keep them in orbit. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**

> *"The Iran Space Agency... has developed a plan entitled, 'Remote Sensing Satellite Biomass'."*

Source: "Tarh zist bavam mahvareh senjesh az dur tadvin shod (Biomass Remote-Sensing Satellite Developed)," *Mashregh News*, 16 May 2018. https://goo.gl/rCAVQi

Morteza Barari [director of the Iran Space Agency] wrote on his Instagram page, "There are currently about 600 satellites available [internationally] for remote sensing, transmitting several terabytes of data and imagery per day," and he said that "The remote sensing industry will have a $60 billion market in 2018 and is expected to grow at least 14 percent by 2020 to reach $76 billion," and he stated, "The Iran Space Agency, with the aim of monitoring and determining the optimal exploitation of the land and its valuable resources based on the basic needs of the country, has developed a plan entitled, "Remote Sensing Satellite Biomass," which will take advantage of the high capacity of this field in the creation and development of basic space businesses and its role in providing application services to the community in different areas.



Safir space launch vehicle carrying Fajr satellite.

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