Iran: Telegram Giving Data to US and Israel

OE Watch Commentary: The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' Passive Defense Organization was the first unit within Iran's security structure to address cyber defense in a systematic way, and it remains an influential, if not paramount, voice in setting Iran's cyber policies. In the excerpted article from *Tasnim News Agency*, a news agency close to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), Passive Defense Organization head Gholamreza Jalali accuses Telegram, one of the most popular social media apps in Iran, of active engagement in espionage.

While it has been noted that Jalali embraces a xenophobic and conspiratorial outlook common among senior IRGC officers, such accusations, even when false, signal a forthcoming crackdown on foreign social media applications. The Passive Defense Organization, Iranian cyber police, and the Basij (paramilitary volunteers) may soon arrest Iranians who have Telegram for engaging in espionage. While such prohibitions on social media signal a lack of Iranian regime confidence in the loyalty of the population especially in the wake of the December 2017-January 2018 unrest, Jalali's efforts to delegitimize Telegram and other Western social media companies likely signal renewed efforts inside Iran to create a distinctly Iranian intranet that the Iranian government both sees as safe and which conforms to the revolutionary values espoused by the Islamic Republic's leadership. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**

❝*There is no doubt that our information stored in Telegram has certain customers, like the United States, the Zionist regime...*❞

Source: "Etela'at-e Karbaran-e Irani Tawsat Madiriyat-e Telegram beh Amrika va Israil Farukhteh Shod" ("Telegram Management Sold the Information of Iranian users to the United States and Israel"), *Tasnim News Agency*, 30 January 2018. https://goo.gl/CYKvjh

Brigadier-General Chief Gholamreza Jalali, head of Passive Defense Organization, in a speech to a gathering of the provincial directors of Passive Defense Office in the Martyr [Hassan] Abshenasan hall and the ten-day Fajr commemoration [marking anniversary of Ayatollah Khomeini's 1979 return to Iran], emphasized the magnificence of these days.

In reference to the recent protests and riots in the country, he said, "This is a modern-type of security incident, and its dimensions must be identified and plots thrown out. The agents behind this incident were a triangular: The first side was in cyberspace, the second side rested on economic problems, and the last side was the threats of enemies. All three issues must be checked...."

"Telegram CEO Pavel Durov is recognized as an agitator in his own country. He left Russia as he incited unrest there like our riots and engaged people in uprisings against authorities. Telegram is a network that collects 16 categories of personal information of its users, such as their phone numbers, place of work, photos, place of residence, calendars, and more. This data is stored in its servers which are not located in Iran, and data-mining occurs, and after processing, it assembled 'big data' which later can be easily used for assessing information of every community," Jalali said.

He continued, "Pavel Durov, does not charge Iran for its services. He sells the personal information of Iranian users to those who are interested in analysing our country. There is no doubt that our information stored in Telegram has certain customers, like the United States, the Zionist regime, the Monafeqin [Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization] and all other groups who want to use operational forces against us. The clear example of this are the incidents occurred on 31 December," Jalali said.

Iran Develops UAS with "Smart Bomb" Capability

OE Watch Commentary: On 3 February 2018 Iranian state news announced the development of unmanned aerial systems (UAS) equipped with so-called "smart bombs." According to the accompanying excerpt of an article from *Kayhan News*, an Iranian newspaper, Iran is expected to mass produce a series of its existing Mohajer-6 drones. Iran's Minister of Defense Brigadier General Amir Hatami and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Ground Force Commander, Brigadier General Mohammad Pakpour, jointly announced this military-technical development as one of the most important in the Islamic Republic's almost 40-year history.

According to the article, the Mohajer-6 is a tactical drone that is also capable of intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition, and reconnaissance (ISTAR) missions. It can reportedly send information in real time and can remain in the air for a prolonged period. Additionally, the Mohajer-6 is shown in a test flight in the accompanying video stills from *Fars News*, another Iranian news media source, as a reporter explains its logistical capabilities. According to the video correspondent, the equipped "smart bomb" can identify its target from 12 kilometers away and take photos from as far as eight kilometers away. **End OE Watch Commentary (Keshavarz and Bunker)**

Source: "Eftetahe kaht toleed amboo pahbad Mohajer-6 mosala be bomb ha-ya hooshmand ghaem (The Mohajer-6 drone is in development with smart-bomb capability)," *Kayhan News*, 4 February 2018. https://goo.gl/bDcAc4

Yesterday, the Defense Minister unveiled a series of Mohajer-6 drones equipped with smart-bombs that will be led by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps...

Source: "Pahbad Mohajer-6 ba bomb hooshmand nokhtezan ghaem (The Mohajer-6 drone with smart-bomb)," *Fars News* (3:14 Minute Video), 5 February 2018. http://www.farsnews.com/MediaDisplay.aspx?nn=13961116001241

...The drone can identify its target from 12 kilometers away...