

## Iran (July 25, 2020)

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1)

### How might Iran react to a US seizure of its oil tankers?

By Jalil Bayat

July 23, 2020

<https://responsiblestatecraft.org/2020/07/23/how-might-iran-react-to-a-us-seizure-of-its-oil-tankers/>

*„[...] After a successful operation by five Iranian tankers to export fuel to Venezuela, four other Iranian tankers are now said to be on their way, reaching their destination in the coming months. However, unlike last time when the U.S. administration failed to intimidate Iran, it is now determined to prevent this second delivery. To this end, the U.S. Department of Justice has announced an order by a federal judge to confiscate the shipments of the four Iranian tankers en route to Venezuela. The order was issued following a request by U.S. prosecutors under the pretext that Iran spends the income from fuel exports to Venezuela on war activities, proliferation of WMDs, military equipment and weapons supporting terrorism, and human rights abuses. [...]“*

2)

### A Near-Miss Over Syria And Our Illegal Military Presence

All U.S. forces should be withdrawn as soon as possible before something worse happens.

By Daniel Larison

July 23, 2020

<https://www.theamericanconservative.com/state-of-the-union/a-near-miss-over-syria-and-our-illegal-military-presence/>

*„There was a dangerous incident on Thursday over Syria involving two U.S. jets and an Iranian passenger plane bound for Beirut: An Iranian passenger plane en route from Iran to Beirut swerved and dropped abruptly to avoid two fighter jets, injuring several passengers before landing in Beirut, Iranian and Lebanese television stations reported on Thursday evening. [...] Centcom confirmed that U.S. jets were involved, and claimed that they were conducting a routine patrol in connection with the al-Tanf base in southeastern Syria. This latest incident is another reminder that the U.S. military presence in Syria is unauthorized and illegal. U.S. jets have no business operating in Syrian airspace, and U.S. troops have no business being on Syrian territory. The jets were operating illegally to safeguard an illegal base, and in the process they nearly caused a terrible accident. U.S. jets shouldn't be interfering with civilian flights over Syria. They shouldn't be there at all. Just imagine how the U.S. would respond if the positions were reversed and a U.S. passenger plane were harassed in a similar fashion by fighters from a hostile government in another country's airspace. This incident is bound to increase tensions between Iran and the U.S., which were already quite high following the acts of war that been carried out inside Iran in recent weeks. [...]“*

3a)

### Iran's Fmr. Beijing Envoy on comprehensive 25-year-long deal with China

In an in-depth interview with the Al-Alam News channel, Iran's former ambassador to China, Mehdi Safari, revealed his thoughts and important details about the comprehensive 25-year historic agreement currently being finalised between Iran and China.

July 19, 2020

<http://middleeastobserver.net/irans-fmr-beijing-envoy-on-comprehensive-25-year-long-deal-with-china/>

**3b)**

### **Iran and China: On the Way to a Long-Term Strategic Agreement?**

By Sima Shine, Eyal Propper, Bat Chen Feldman

The Institute for National Security Studies (Tel Aviv University)

July 23, 2020

<https://www.inss.org.il/publication/china-iran-agreement/>

*„[...] The agreement between China and Iran is of great importance to Iran, including in the context of a possible easing of the pressure generated by the sanctions. From a Chinese perspective, the basis for the agreement is the principle of commercial-economic benefit, while maintaining the balance in its relations with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. China's goal in relations with Iran is not to create a military alliance with Iran against the United States, and certainly not against Saudi Arabia and Israel. Israel is of little importance to China in this case, and does not necessarily figure in Chinese considerations, except as part of China's concern about an Israeli military attack against nuclear facilities in Iran, which is liable to set off a regional war and destabilize the region. The Chinese will likely consider the level of risk in approving an agreement of this type, and will hesitate to advance it if they feel that their financial interests will be affected by instability in the region and in Iran. This aspect, in which Iranian activity destabilizes and threatens the region, should be emphasized by Israel to high-level Chinese parties.“*

**4a)**

### **EU-Iran: The way forward**

#### **Can the JCPOA survive the Trump presidency?**

European Parliamentary Research Service

July 2020

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/652001/EPRS\\_BRI\(2020\)652001\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/652001/EPRS_BRI(2020)652001_EN.pdf)

*„SUMMARY: Two issues have dominated relations between the EU and Iran in recent years: the nuclear agreement known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) – including efforts to conclude it, followed by efforts to save it – and human rights concerns. Even though the European Union (EU) and Iran have worked together over the past two years to save the JCPOA, relations between the two have deteriorated. Iran accuses EU Member States of not standing up to pressure from the United States of America (USA) to isolate Iran and of not doing enough to save the JCPOA.*

*The EU, for its part, is concerned about Iran's enrichment activities; growing tensions in the region and Iran's role in this context, including the provision of military, financial and political support to non-state actors in countries such as Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen; and its ballistic missile programme. In 2011,*

*the EU put restrictive measures in place to react to serious human rights violations in Iran. These remain in force.*

*Nevertheless, the EU has continued to engage with Iran, in marked contrast to the USA. Following the US withdrawal from the JCPOA in May 2018, the Trump administration re-imposed wide-ranging sanctions on Iran and has since then pursued a policy of 'maximum pressure'. The declared goal of the maximum pressure campaign is to push Iran to negotiate a new agreement that would also address Iran's ballistic missile programme, end its support of militant groups in the region, and curb its foreign policy ambitions in western Asia. Instead, the US policy of maximum pressure on Tehran has led to an escalation of tensions in the Persian Gulf region, with potentially direct consequences for Europe. With Iran continuing uranium enrichment to levels far exceeding the levels permitted under the JCPOA, and with the USA threatening to trigger the re-imposition of United Nations (UN) sanctions against Iran, further escalation is likely.*

*Security in the EU is linked to the security situation in western Asia. For that reason, Europe should maintain efforts to preserve the JCPOA and seek to reduce tension between Iran and the USA.“*

#### **4b)**

### **US Democratic Party Rules Out Regime Change In Iran And Supports Nuclear Deal**

By Behrouz Turani

July 23, 2020

<https://en.radiofarda.com/a/us-democratic-party-rules-out-regime-change-in-iran-and-supports-nuclear-deal/30743452.html>

*„Even compared to the party's own platform in 2016, the new draft marks a shift in attitudes toward Iran. Democratic Party platform maintains that "Democrats believe the United States should not impose regime change on other countries and reject that as the goal of U.S. policy toward Iran". [...] The final draft of the Democratic Party platform also calls for returning to the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran also called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). President Donald Trump pulled out of the deal in 2018 and subsequently the United States imposed new sanctions on Iran and called for a new agreement that would also constrain Iran's ballistic missile program, its military ambitions in the Middle East, its violation of human rights as well as its controversial nuclear program. [...]“*

#### **4c)**

### **World Should Oppose US Push to Extend Anti-Iran Sanctions: Chinese Envoy**

By Tasnim News

July, 14, 2020

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2020/07/14/2306736/world-should-oppose-us-push-to-extend-anti-iran-sanctions-chinese-envoy>

*„China's Ambassador to Iran Chang Hua described the JCPOA as "an important positive factor in maintaining regional and global peace and stability" and urged the international community to oppose US unilateralism and its attempts to extend or reinstate sanctions against Iran. [...]“*

#### **4d)**

### **Remarks to Economic Club of New York**

## Teleconference of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo

July 16, 2020

<https://www.miragenews.com/remarks-to-economic-club-of-new-york/>

*„[...] There was a news story yesterday about an arrangement between China and Iran that was at least being contemplated. I think that's very telling about what will happen on October 19th when the current embargo for Iran that prevents Iran from both purchasing most weapon systems and being – and acting as an arms dealer. It would be tragic. This was one of the central failings of the JCPOA, just that that was but a roughly five-year hiatus in Iran being the world's largest state sponsor of terror and one of its larger sellers of arms to bad actors around the world. We will work with the UN Security Council to ensure that the arms embargo is extended, and I'm confident that we'll get that outcome. I believe we have all the tools that we need. I hope we can solve it diplomatically. I hope we can convince the P5 that it's the right thing to do to extend this arms embargo, to make it an indefinite arms embargo until the Islamic Republic of Iran changes its ways, but in the event we can't convince them, I'm confident that we have a legal basis and a path forward so that we can, as President Obama reminded us, unilaterally reimpose all of those sanctions. We don't need approval of anyone. I can find you 15 quotes from Secretary Kerry, from Wendy Sherman, from Barack Obama that reminded the American people that the United States had the unilateral right to reimpose all of those sanctions if we were unhappy with the behavior of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I can assure you this administration is not pleased by Iran's behavior and we're going to ensure that this arms embargo doesn't expire in October. [...]“*

5a)

## Iran Could Flood Oil Markets If Biden Becomes U.S. President

By Tsvetana Paraskova

July 20, 2020

<https://oilprice.com/Energy/Crude-Oil/Iran-Could-Flood-Oil-Markets-If-Biden-Becomes-US-President.html>

*„If presumptive Democratic candidate Joe Biden wins the presidential election in November, Iran could suddenly turn from a bullish driver for oil prices into a bearish factor if it resumes up to 2 million barrels per day (bpd) of oil exports. Currently, there is a consensus among analysts and international agencies that the oil market is tightening and will continue to tighten, lifting oil prices through next year. [...] Iran's current crude oil exports are estimated at between 100,000 bpd and just over 200,000 bpd, compared to 2.5 million bpd in April 2018, just before President Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. from the Iran nuclear deal and re-imposed sanctions on its oil. Due to the sanctions and to the coronavirus crisis, Iran's oil production has plummeted to below 2 million bpd in the second quarter, compared to an average of 3.553 million bpd in 2018, according to OPEC's latest Monthly Oil Market Report (MOMR). [...]“*

5b)

## OPEC Monthly Oil Market Report - July 2020

Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries

July 14, 2020

[file:///C:/Users/Amir/Desktop/OPEC\\_MOMR\\_July\\_2020.pdf](file:///C:/Users/Amir/Desktop/OPEC_MOMR_July_2020.pdf)

6)

## **Mysterious Explosions Rock Iran**

Part 1

By Andrew Hanna

United States Institute of Peace

July 10, 2020. Updated: July 23, 2020

<https://iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2020/jul/10/mysterious-explosions-rock-iran>

*„Beginning in June 2020, Iran experienced a notable string of explosions, fires and industrial accidents. The damaged sites included Iran’s nuclear facility in Natanz, a missile plant in Khojir, the power grid in Shiraz and a chemical plant in Mahshahr. The most destructive incident was an explosion at the main uranium enrichment site in Natanz, which set back Iran’s nuclear program by months. On June 26, a similar incident ripped through Iran’s largest missile production plant near Tehran. Residents living in the capital city saw a bright orange glow lighting up the skyline. [...]“*

7)

## **Poor judgment will undermine United Against Nuclear Iran’s effectiveness**

By Michael Rubin

The American Enterprise Institute (AEI)

July 23, 2020

<https://www.aei.org/op-eds/poor-judgment-will-undermine-united-against-nuclear-irans-effectiveness/>

*„United Against Nuclear Iran is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing Iran from fulfilling its nuclear weapons ambitions. It began more than a decade ago toward the end of the George W. Bush administration and is among the few groups today that has continued through both Obama and Trump administrations, having retained its bipartisanship and managed to offer steady and serious assessment. Alas, recent decisions by various UANI board members in their personal capacities threaten to undermine UANI’s reputation, if not reverse the good work that UANI has done. At issue is the Mujahedin-e Khalq, an Iranian opposition group that emerged as an outgrowth from the merging of Islamist and Marxist intellectual strains in the decade prior to the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran. [...] Last week, the group held its annual summit. While virtual, it continued to bring together foreign officials, most of who, while serving in government, knew better. Mujahedin-e Khalq press highlighted comments by former senator and current UANI co-chairman Joe Lieberman. Other UANI board members who frequently appear at Mujahedin-e Khalq rallies include former national security adviser John Bolton, former Bush-era counterterrorism official Francis Townsend, and Clinton-era U.N. Ambassador Bill Richardson. Last September, UANI founder and co-chairman Mark Wallace also appeared with the Mujahedin-e Khalq. [...]“*

8a)

## **Covid-19, the Iranians, and Us**

By Jon B. Alterman

The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)

July 21, 2020

<https://www.csis.org/analysis/covid-19-iranians-and-us>

*„[...] That the U.S. government could underperform a country like Iran fighting the coronavirus pandemic will take a bite out of U.S. prestige. But it will also drive partners to consider the very real possibility of what the world might look like without an outsized U.S. role. Most of them will want to do what they can to bring that role back. They do not want to face the world alone. That is an opportunity for whomever wins the presidential election in November, and he should seize it.“*

**8b)**

### **Iran, sanctions, and the COVID-19 pandemic**

By Roxane Farmanfarmaian

The European Leadership Network (ELN)

July 23, 2020

<https://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/commentary/iran-sanctions-and-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

*„This week, Iran announced its highest single-day death toll from COVID-19 since the start of the outbreak in February. The uptick in cases and deaths is the result of a new wave of infections that began May 3rd, two weeks after the gradual easing of the country’s partial lockdown in mid-April. [...]“*

**9)**

### **IFRC lauds opening financial channel for Iran**

By IRNA

July 23, 2020

<https://en.irna.ir/news/83882117/IFRC-lauds-opening-financial-channel-for-Iran>

*„[...] In a meeting with Managing Director of IRNA Mohammad Reza Norouzpour, he added that during the meetings with influential European ambassadors in Tehran, it was agreed that there should be a secure financial channel for the Red Crescent that can benefit from the financial benefits the others provide to the Red Crescent. After the Red Crescent corresponded with the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, he had correspondence with the US Treasury and Diplomacy Division, and fortunately, with the follow-up of the Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the efforts of the Red Cross, the US finally surrendered and a few days ago, correspondence was made by the US Treasury Department, according to which an opportunity will emerge in the discussion of the transfer of humanitarian aid to the Iranian Red Crescent Society, Hemmati said. [...]“*

**10)**

### **Iran among high human development nations: UNDP**

By Faranak Bakhtiari

July 23, 2020 - 8:26

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/450363/Iran-among-high-human-development-nations-UNDP>

*„Iran’s Human Development Index (HDI) has increased by 38.3 percent between 1990 and 2018, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) announced in its Human Development Report 2019, listing the country in the high human development category. [...] The HDI is a summary measure for assessing*



*long-term progress in three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, access to knowledge and a decent standard of living. Long and healthy life is measured by life expectancy. The knowledge level is measured by mean years of schooling among the adult population, which is the average number of years of schooling received in a life-time by people aged 25 years and older; and access to learning and knowledge by expected years of schooling for children of school-entry age. Iran's HDI value for 2018 is 0.797, which put the country in the high human development category; positioning it at 65 out of 189 countries and territories. Between 1990 and 2018, Iran's HDI value increased from 0.577 to 0.797, demonstrating growth of 38.3 percent. During the aforementioned period, Iran's life expectancy at birth increased by 12.6 years, mean years of schooling increased by 5.8 years and expected years of schooling increased by 5.5 years. Moreover, Iran's Gross National Income per capita increased by about 59.5 percent between 1990 and 2018. [...]"*

**11)**

### **How a hawkish Washington 'think tank' is promoting ethnic strife in Iran**

JULY 22, 2020

By Eldar Mamedov

July 22, 2020

<https://responsiblestatecraft.org/2020/07/22/how-fdd-is-promoting-ethnic-strife-in-iran/>

*„As Iran is riled by a series of incidents, of which some bear all the hallmarks of a novel, and audacious, sabotage campaign, traditional forms of pressure on the country persist. Among those are attempts to promote ethnic strife in a society where various minority groups account for almost half of the population. [...]"*