

S

S

enter email address

>

[Register](#)

Login

• Egypt	مصر
• Gulf	الخليج
• Iran	ايران
• Iraq	العراق
• Israel	ישראל
• Jordan	الأردن
• Lebanon	لبنان
• North Africa	شمال افريقيا
• Palestine	فلسطين
• Syria	سوريا
• Turkey	TÜRKİYE
• Culture	
• Research Labs	

• [Russia Mideast](#)

• [Washington](#)

• [Week in Review](#)



Login

- [0](#)
- [1](#)
- [2](#)
- [4](#)
- [5](#)

[Login](#) [Register](#)



- [EGYPT](#) [مصر](#)
- [GULF](#) [الخليج](#)
- [IRAN](#) [ايران](#)
- [IRAQ](#) [العراق](#)
- [ISRAEL](#) [ישראל](#)
- [JORDAN](#) [الأردن](#)
- [LEBANON](#) [لبنان](#)
- [NORTH AFRICA](#) [شمال افريقيا](#)
- [PALESTINE](#) [فلسطين](#)
- [SYRIA](#) [سوريا](#)

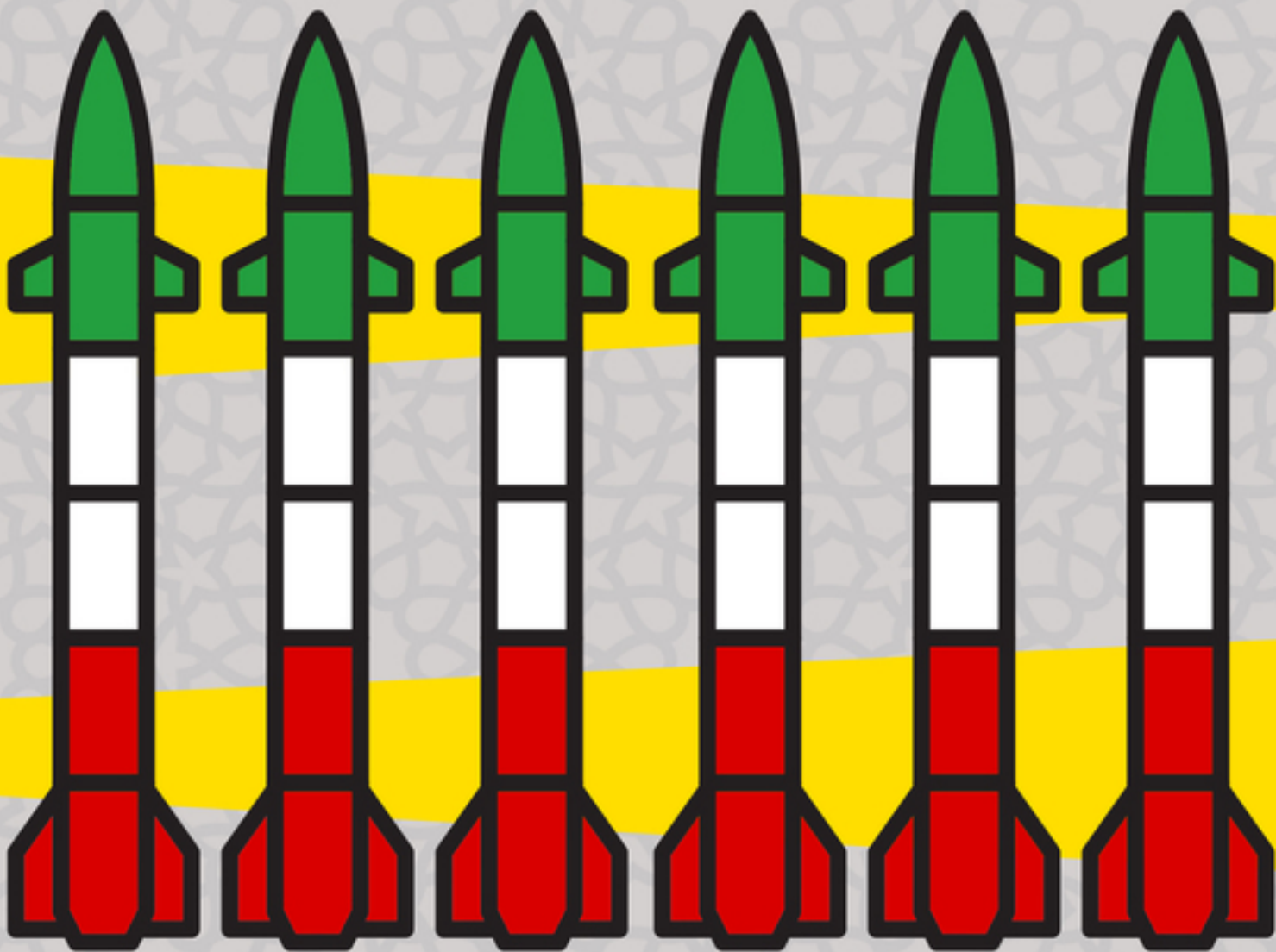
- [TURKEY TÜRKİYE](#)
- Trending:
 - [Yemen war](#)
 - [Khashoggi](#)
 - [Syria Conflict](#)
- [CULTURE](#)
- [RESEARCH LABS](#)
- [RUSSIA MIDEAST](#)
- [WASHINGTON](#)
- [WEEK IN REVIEW](#)

Iran Pulse

Six factors shaping Iran’s missile decision-making calculus

[Seyed Hossein Mousavian](#) December 12, 2018

- [0](#)
- [1](#)
- [3](#)
- [5](#)
- 
-  [6](#)



Article Summary

It would be folly to expect that Iran would dismantle the backbone of its defense doctrine without bearing in mind its security concerns, including the need for a broader regional arrangement to ban weapons of mass destruction.

Image by Hugo Goodridge/Al-Monitor

The UN Security Council convened Dec. 12 to address the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). US Secretary of State Pompeo said that Iran’s pace of missile activities has not diminished since the JCPOA and that the United States seeks to reimpose ballistic missile restrictions that were outlined in UN Security Council [Resolution 1929](#). European countries, however, distanced themselves from the United States by saying Iran had been in compliance with the Iran nuclear deal, while at the same time saying the missile tests [were in nonconformity](#) with UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which endorsed the nuclear deal. Meanwhile, China and Russia said Iran’s missile tests were not a violation of Resolution 2231.

Iranian officials, including Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, [have rejected](#) that there have been any violations, reiterating that the UN resolution does not ban Tehran's missile activities.

[One reason](#) President Trump cited to justify his decision to withdraw the United States from the nuclear deal was Iran’s missile program. Pompeo also [demanded that Iran](#) dismantle its ballistic missile program. Iran has repeatedly [rejected calls](#) for dismantling its arsenal, [insisting that](#) its defensive capabilities are non-negotiable. Moreover, Iran’s Revolutionary [Guards warned](#) that if threatened,

Tehran would increase the range of missiles to above 2,000 kilometers (1,240 miles).

The following interconnected factors shape Iran's missile policies and its defense strategy:

One is the horrific memories of Iraq's invasion of Iran in 1980; hundreds of thousands of Iranians died in an [eight-year war](#) bankrolled by [Saudi Arabia](#) and Kuwait and supported by major world powers, including [France](#), the Soviet Union and the [United States](#). The conflict left an indelible mark in the Iranian political psyche that the country must fight for its survival at all costs.

Second, Iraq's systematic use of Scud missiles to bombard defenseless Iranian cities gave Iran the incentive to begin investing in its ballistic missile program. Over the period of eight years, the Iraqi army launched [533 ballistic missiles](#) on Iranian cities, resulting in [2,300 deaths](#) and injuries to 11,600 Iranians. By the end of war in 1988, Tehran [had been attacked](#) 118 times, resulting in 1,600 casualties. In a potential future conflict, Iran can use its inventory to deter and retaliate against an adversary.

Third, the traumatic experience of Saddam Hussein's systematic use of chemical weapons against Iran, and the international community's indifference to such violations, has convinced Iran that it cannot rely on international institutions to deter and punish such flagrant violations. A CIA [declassified assessment](#) reveals that Iraq began using chemical weapons early in 1983, only to escalate in 1984. Iraq's [11,000-page report](#) to the UN Security Council listed 150 foreign companies — including from the United States, Germany, and France — that played a role in Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction program.

Fourth, the current imbalance of conventional forces in the region play a critical role in Iran's missile policies. While Iran has been under an arms embargo for decades, its regional rivals, especially Saudi Arabia, have de facto carte blanche to purchase any advanced weapon systems. With [defense spending](#) of \$69.4 billion in 2017, the kingdom became the [largest arms importer](#) in the world. Meanwhile, Israel, with [military spending](#) of \$19.6 billion, is equipped with the most-advanced [military hardware](#). In comparison, Iran's [defense spending](#) stood at \$14.5 billion, a fraction of its neighbors'.

While Iran's missile arsenal is the [most diverse](#) of its kind in the region, it has [voluntarily limited](#) the range of its missiles to 2,000 kilometers. However, Saudi Arabia's Chinese made DF-3 and Df-21 missiles are reported to have an [increased range](#) of 2,800 kilometers (1,740 miles), with some claiming a range of up to 4,000 kilometers.

Fifth, Iran is surrounded by US military forces in the region and a number of nuclear-weapon states, such as Israel and Pakistan. Israel, which has the most hostile relations with Iran, [has an inventory](#) of 200 nuclear warheads that are deliverable by ballistic missiles, including [Jericho II](#), with a range of 3,500 kilometers (2,175 miles), [Jericho III](#) (6,500 kilometers, or 4,000 miles) and air- and sea-launched warheads.

Last but certainly not the least, over the past four decades, the United States has used economic, cyber and political warfare to isolate and weaken Tehran, and has [repeatedly called](#) for regime change in the country. Moreover, the Trump administration has firm intentions to create a [new political alliance](#) with six Gulf Arab states, Egypt and Jordan aimed at confronting Iran.

The Nuclear Threat Initiative chaired by former US Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz [found in a study](#) that between 2005 and 2012, when the world powers imposed the most comprehensive sanctions on Iran, the country developed new, liquid-fuel ballistic missiles and tested at least 33 missiles, more than twice the number of missiles tested in the preceding 20 years. From 2012, when Iran-US high-level direct nuclear talks began, until the signing of the deal in July 2015, Iran conducted only one missile test. The study said that in the 2012-2017 period since the negotiations began, Iran decreased the overall number of tests and focused more on solid-fuel short-range missile capabilities rather than intercontinental ballistic missiles. However, the German newspaper Welt am Sonntag reports that [Western intelligence services](#) maintain that Tehran, after Trump's departure from the nuclear deal, this year has doubled the number of last year's missile tests.

In such a hostile environment, an acceptable framework to alleviate mutual concerns should address the legitimate security concerns of all parties. Such a framework could include a multilateral arrangement for the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and a regional conventional arms arrangement beneficial to all parties. Otherwise, under current circumstances, where the countries of the region are aggressively arming themselves, it is simply folly to expect that Iran will dismantle the backbone of its defense doctrine.

Found in: un security council, iran-iraq war, ballistic missiles, mike pompeo, mohammad javad zarif, iran deal, european middle east policy, jcpoa



[Seyed Hossein Mousavian](#) is a Middle East security and nuclear policy specialist at Princeton University and a former spokesman for Iran's nuclear negotiators. He is the author of "The Iranian Nuclear Crisis: A Memoir" (2012) and "Iran and the United States: An Insider's View on the Failed Past and the Road to Peace" (2014).



POLITICAL ISLAM

Fatah slams Iran for funding Gaza Strip while skirting PA



POLITICAL ISLAM

Fatah slams Iran for funding Gaza Strip while skirting PA

Recommended Articles:



Iran

[Iran, Russia-led bloc move toward free trade](#)



Iran

[The unlikely war between Iran, Hezbollah and Israel](#)



[Senate puzzles out how to punish Saudi Arabia ahead of unprecedented vote](#)



[US ices Iran out of Yemen talks](#)




Iran

[Iran says special channel for trade with Europe almost set up](#)



[Intel: Why Israel thinks its attack on Hezbollah won’t lead to new war with Lebanon](#)

Ad ▾



Senior Sock For Foot Pain

New sock is helping millions of seniors turn back the clock on their aging, aching feet.

socksoothers.com

>

Updated weekly

The Influence Game - Middle East Lobbying in Washington

- Award-winning—the most comprehensive resource available
- The who, why and how much. Up or down from last year?
- With frequent updates, authoritative reporting and exclusive interviews
- A must-read among experts and professionals
- Are you in the know?

Join the discussion...

LOG IN WITH

OR SIGN UP WITH DISQUS

Justnfree • 11 hours ago

Genocidal maniacs pretend they are worried about Iranian missiles while they are starving millions Yemeni children to death.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›

charliematerne • 33 minutes ago

Perhaps if Iran stopped stirring stink in the neighborhood, the neighbors might be more friendly

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

gnuneo • 4 hours ago

There is no way in hell that the Republic of Iran is going to abandon it's missile deterrence, anymore than the USA is going to unilaterally denuclearise. This is no more than the bully demand the victim lower their arms protecting their face - before smacking them anyway. You have to be a braindead fool to imagine any other outcome, and the IRA are no longer such fools, if they ever were.

This is like Hitler demanding Britain scuttle the Royal Navy in 1938, and stop building Spitfires.

What happens to the Palestinians on a daily basis, let alone the Yemenis, shows that being "defenceless" does not prevent a Holocaust from being inflicted - many would say that it invites it.

Iran has every possible reason to ignore and mock these 'orders' from Pompeo and his fellow Nazis, and the unilateral pullout from the JCPOA underlines the utter untrustworthiness of America and it's 'allies' and the other World powers.

Europe is barely more trust-able, and only a fool (see above) would trust France's Micron in ANY way - the destruction of the stable democracy in Iran would be as profitable for the MIC as the destruction of Iraq.

Personally, I think they should develop nuclear deterrence too. But that is not my decision, obviously.

see more

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Sponsored Links

27 Beach Photos No Longer Socially Acceptable

Definition

96-Year-Old Sells Her House. When She Open The Door Buyers Can't Believe Their Eyes

InvestmentGuru

Remember Her? Take A Deep Breath Before You See What She Looks Like Now

TherapyJoker

This Photo Has Not Been Edited, Look Closer

Travelfuntu

MORE LIKE THIS



[Iran](#)

[Iran, Russia-led bloc move toward free trade](#)



[Iran](#)

The unlikely war between Iran, Hezbollah and Israel



Washington

Senate puzzles out how to punish Saudi Arabia ahead of unprecedented vote



[US ices Iran out of Yemen talks](#)



[Iran says special channel for trade with Europe almost set up](#)

- [0](#)
- [1](#)
- [2](#)
- [4](#)

©2018 AI-Monitor. All rights reserved.

TERMS OF USE

- [Visitor Agreement](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Submissions and Discussions Policy](#)

CONTACT US

- [Support and Contact Info](#)

STAY SOCIAL

- - [0](#)
 - [1](#)
 - [2](#)
 - [4](#)
 - [5](#)

ABOUT US

- [Our Story](#)
- [Mission](#)
- [Careers](#)
- [Team](#)
- [Buzz](#)

NEWSLETTERS

- [Subscribe](#)
- [Week in Review](#)

The website uses cookies and similar technologies to track browsing behavior for adapting the website to the user, for delivering our services, for market research, and for advertising. Detailed information, including the right to withdraw consent, can be found in our Privacy Policy. To view our Privacy Policy in full, [click here](#). By using our site, you agree to these terms.

ACCEPT