## Brief Notes

**Tehran Claims Israel Hiding Impact of 12-Day War:** Islamic Republic Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi asserted that the regime was transparent regarding damage it took during the 12-Day War, while alleging Israel blocked the disclosure of what he called "very, very heavy" losses on its side. He claimed satellite imagery and sources "inside Israeli territory" indicated extensive destruction that was only partially publicized. Gharibabadi framed the confrontation as one between the regime and a broader Western-backed, "Zionist" network, not Israel alone.

**Trial Begins for Dual-National Accused of 'Spying for the Zionist Regime':** Branch Two of the Revolutionary Court of Karaj began hearings today for a dual national accused of "intelligence and espionage cooperation in favor of the Zionist regime" during the 12-Day War. The individual is a citizen of Iran and another unnamed European country. Authorities say the individual was arrested on the fourth day of the 12-Day War, after arriving in Iran by air about a month earlier. Authorities also claim that, during the individual's arrest, "sophisticated spy equipment" was allegedly seized from his residence. Hossein Fazeli Harikandi, the prosecutor for the case, further claims the dual-national was trained by Mossad for two years in various European cities, as well as in Israel, prior to traveling to Iran.

**Intelligence Ministry Breaks Up Alleged 'Monarchist' Cell:** Intelligence Ministry officers arrested a group of alleged "monarchists" on December 5. Authorities claim the individuals were "linked with Zionists," allegedly planning to carry out acts of sabotage against the regime during the 12-Day War. Authorities claim confessions revealed coordination with individuals in Europe, including contact with an "operative" in Sweden allegedly connected to Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi and the Mossad.

**State Media Frames U.S. National Security Strategy as Evidence of 'Decline':** State and hardline outlets framed the newly released U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS) as evidence of American "decline" and a turn toward isolationism, saying the strategy is not a "manifestation of power," but rather is an example of the U.S. "heralding its end." State-linked outlets noted fewer references to Tehran, and the regime's Foreign Ministry criticized the NSS for "serving" Israel's interests.

**IRGC Chief Urges Development of Radar-Evading Missiles:** IRGC chief Mohammad Pakpour called for the regime's missile arsenal to be equipped with radar-evading capabilities in order to penetrate Israel's air defense systems. Speaking at the IRGC-run Imam Hussein University, Pakpour urged expanded research on air defense

and stealth technologies. Pakpour framed these advances as essential to overcoming what he described as Israel's "layered defensive shield."

## Tehran to Increase Fuel Prices

The Pezeshkian administration today announced that a new three-tier fuel pricing system will take effect starting at midnight on December 13, raising prices for "high-volume consumers" and narrowing the scope of long-standing fuel subsidies.

Under the plan, motorists consuming more than 160 liters (~42 gallons) per month will pay 50,000 rials per liter, up from 30,000, while most households will continue to benefit from subsidized quotas covering 80% of their fuel needs.

Regime vehicles, imported cars, and vehicles in free-trade zones will see quotas removed, and ride-share platforms have agreed not to pass increased costs on to customers.

Officials presented the move as an overdue "reform" aimed at curbing distorted domestic consumption, reducing government spending, tackling fuel smuggling to neighboring countries, and addressing air pollution, which authorities claim is 60% vehicle-related.

The plan had been shelved for years amid fears of unrest similar to the deadly protests triggered by sudden fuel price hikes in 2019.

Critics warn the move could ripple through the economy, raising basic prices and exacerbating ongoing inflation and financial pressures for ordinary Iranians.

## On the Radar

- The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) today condemned recent remarks by Islamic Republic officials and Hossein Shariatmadari, a confidant of the Supreme Leader and the editor-in-chief of the Supreme Leader' ultra-conservative Kayhan daily newspaper, in which they, among other statements, claim sovereignty over Bahrain. On Saturday, the editor-in-chief of Kayhan said that the annexing of Bahrain is an "unignorable right" of the Islamic Republic in Iran. The GCC said the Islamic Republic's comments infringe on the sovereignty of Bahrain, UAE territorial claims, and shared rights to the Arash gas field. Secretary-General Jasem al-Budaiwi stressed that Persian Gulf states have consistently shown goodwill toward the regime and urged Tehran to halt "false claims" that undermine regional dialogue.
- Islamic Republic Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi used a visit to Baku today to signal that lingering "misunderstandings" with Azerbaijan should be resolved through direct talks and continued high-level

engagement. In Baku, Araghchi pressed Azerbaijan to prevent outside actors from straining the two nations' bilateral ties and claimed that Israel "accepted defeat" in the 12-Day War.

- The Islamic Republic Judiciary has filed charges against a former Department of Environment advisor and the head of the Jamaran news platform over remarks describing severe ecological decline. Hardline outlets identified the official as Esmail Kahrom, who warned that the Hyrcanian forests could disappear within decades and that fuel contamination, and subsequent air pollution, far exceed global norms. The move follows public scrutiny over recent forest fires and mounting criticism over the perceived drivers of air pollution, particularly the widespread burning of mazut, or impure, fuel.
- Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein pushed back against comments by the U.S. envoy to Syria suggesting pro-Tehran militias wield decisive influence over Baghdad politics. Hussein said the remarks misrepresented Iraq's political trajectory and stressed that the country's democratic and federal structures are constitutionally entrenched. He underscored Iraq's commitment to institution-building and its rejection of any return to authoritarianism.
- Border guards in the southern Iran's Hormozgan Province announced yesterday that they arrested an individual who had attempted to hijack a ship and take members of the crew hostage. Hormozgan Border Guard chief Behzad Ebrahimi said the individual was quickly apprehended and no injuries occurred.
- President Masoud Pezeshkian inaugurated a desalination and water-transfer line bringing water from the Sea of Oman to Mobarakeh Steel factory in Isfahan, a move the regime says will curb the plant's reliance on the depleted Zayandeh Rud river. Officials framed the project as part of a broader plan to revive the river by shifting major industries off scarce freshwater supplies.

*→ For inquiries or more information, please contact **k.isfahani@nufdiran.org***