Brief Notes

British Hostages in Iran are 'Losing Hope': In January of this year, the Islamic Republic detained British couple Lindsay and Craig Foreman as they rode their motorcycles through Iran, later charging them with "espionage," which they deny. On Thursday last week, Mrs. Foreman was allowed to speak to her son, Joe Bennett, over the phone for only the second time since January. During the call, she told her son that she was "losing hope." Following the conversation, Bennett told the press his mother's "spirits were low" after a recent court appearance that "had not gone well," adding that his parents remain caught "between two systems moving too slowly." The family of the detained couple recently met with UK Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper, but said the meeting "produced little more than a commitment to wait," which Bennett called "deeply concerning." The Foreign Office says it is "raising this case directly with the Iranian authorities" and urges all British citizens to avoid travel to Iran due to the "significant risk of detention."

Tehran Poised for 'Corridor Wars': Speaking at a scientific committee meeting of the "Basij, Development, and Sustainable Security in Southeastern Iran Conference," Yahya Rahim Safavi, a military advisor to the Supreme Leader, described an emerging form of global competition he dubbed "corridor wars." Safavi said: "The world today is engaged in a new form of competition known as the corridor wars. A rivalry defined by railways, sea routes, and transit roads," where "nations with strategic geography and strong public security will be the main players." Safavi continued that Iran's location, connecting "East to West and North to South," positions it as "a new axis of regional power balance."

New Zealand Insurer Tied to Sanctioned Oil Trade: A Reuters investigation revealed that a small insurer based in New Zealand, Maritime Mutual, run by British businessman Paul Rankin and his family, has enabled the global trade of tens of billions of dollars of sanctioned Iranian and Russian oil, providing essential insurance to the shadow fleet of tankers skirting Western sanctions. The company, which "categorically denies" any wrongdoing and claims it maintains a "zero-tolerance policy" on sanction breaches," has insured nearly one in six vessels sanctioned by Western governments. Maritime Mutual is now under investigation by New Zealand authorities, working with the U.S., U.K., and Australia, over potential violations of sanctions and money-laundering laws. Maritime Mutual's coverage is backed by some of the world's largest reinsurers, such as Lloyd's of London, Munich Re, and Hannover Re.

Clashes in Peripheral Provinces Continue: A regime law enforcement officer, Meysam Alikhah, 38, died from injuries sustained during a shootout in Lahijan, Gilan Province, today. According to the Gilan's provincial Law

Enforcement Command, Alikhah was shot during a "direct confrontation with an armed thug carrying a military-grade weapon" and died en route to the hospital. Another officer was injured, while the alleged assailant, wounded by return fire, was arrested. This comes after yesterday's clashes in Sistan and Baluchestan Province and Khuzestan Province, in which at least two people were killed and many were injured.

Quds Force 'Restructuring' Iraqi Proxies

Commander of the IRGC Quds Force Esmail Qaani reportedly discussed the "restructuring" of pro-Tehran Iraqi militias during his recent visit to Baghdad on October 21. Ghaani reportedly met with Iraqi officials, Shia Coordination Framework leaders, and militia commanders during his visit, emphasizing the need to "block and prevent Israeli plans to target or launch military strikes against Iraq."

To this end, sources allege that Tehran and Baghdad agreed "to limit the targeting of American interests at the current stage, in addition to raising the level of joint cooperation on the security and political fronts to avert danger and spare the region a coming or anticipated war."

Qaani subsequently urged Shia militia leaders to control their use of arms, adhere to Baghdad–Tehran understandings, and resolve internal rifts prior to Iraq's November 11 parliamentary elections.

Tehran 'Remains a Member of the NPT' Despite IAEA Spat

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei, speaking today at his weekly press conference, said that the Islamic Republic "remains a member of the NPT and committed to its safeguards agreements," but said cooperation with the IAEA "will be based on domestic law."

He noted that certain inspections, such as those at the Bushehr and Tehran reactors, will continue, but insisted the Islamic Republic should now "be treated as any other NPT member" following the "expiration" of the 2015 nuclear deal.

Next, Baghaei said Deputy Minister Kazem Gharibabadi's recent visit to Afghanistan focused on routine bilateral issues such as border security, water rights, and judicial cooperation. He noted that both sides agreed to resume work on renovating stalled border markers and discussed combating illegal crossings, drug and human trafficking, and organized crime. "We hope that continuing these talks will facilitate interactions in various fields, especially in the areas mentioned," Baghaei said.

Baghaei additionally condemned U.S. military actions in the Caribbean as evidence of Washington's "growing disregard" for the UN Charter, saying such operations, often justified under "various pretexts, including the fight against drug trafficking," amount to a "blatant violation" of international law.

Finally, Baghaei said Tehran had been vindicated in its claims that it was not behind organized attacks on Jewish targets in Australia, saying the plots were "clearly designed by Israeli intelligence to destroy Iranian-Australian relations." He cited a New South Wales Police report stating it "has nil holdings in relation to Iran or agents of the Iranian regime perpetrating these incidents," falsely arguing this proves the accusations were "fabricated by the Mossad."

On the Radar

- State media confirmed that Hojjatollah Ghoreishi has replaced Mohammad Reza Naghdi as the Coordinating Deputy Commander of the IRGC, a move that has fueled speculation regarding internal shifts following the 12-Day War. The late and understated announcement, alongside renewed espionage rumors surrounding Naghdi's office, suggests internal tensions. Some analysts view the change as a symbolic effort to move the IRGC's leadership toward a more defense-oriented structure amid broader post-war security realignments.
- At the opening of an Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) interior ministers' meeting in Tehran today, President Masoud Pezeshkian said, "Our region and surrounding areas have not been immune from foreign attacks." Emphasizing unity among ECO members, which include Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, and Central Asian states, he called for a "coherent, stability-promoting, homegrown, and development-oriented security architecture." Pezeshkian also renewed his push to establish an ECO police force, or "Ecopol," saying its absence has hindered effective cooperation with international law enforcement.
- Also at the ECO meeting, Pezeshkian said the Islamic Republic is ready to help mediate tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan, emphasizing that Muslim nations must "reduce tensions and avoid any form of conflict," as unity is "a clear directive from the Prophet of Islam." Pakistani Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi welcomed Tehran's role in easing regional tensions, noting progress in joint counterterrorism and border efforts, and said dialogue with Afghanistan was advancing toward a peaceful resolution.
- The Interior Ministry announced it has deported over 1.45 million illegal migrants since March 21, 2025. While officials did not specify nationalities, a bulk of these 1.45 million are likely Afghans, who make up a majority of the illegal migrants in Iran. Deportations have accelerated since the 12-Day War.

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