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Brief Notes

Supreme Leader's Office Encourages Houthi Attacks on Shipping: Quoting a past speech on X, the Office of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei praised Houthi attacks on Israel and maritime shipping as "support for Gaza," calling them "commendable." The post included an image of a dagger piercing through an Israeli-flagged warship with the quote, "We hope that these struggles and resistances will continue until victory, God willing." The quote is from a January 2024 speech, but was posted after an increased threat to international shipping by the Houthis, including the sinking of a ship in the Red Sea last week.

Supreme Leader's Office Reacts to Israeli 'Psychological Warfare': An article published on the official website of Supreme Leader Khamenei dismissed an open letter addressed to him by former Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant as a calculated act of "psychological and narrative warfare," rather than a legitimate diplomatic or military statement.

Foreign Minister Visits China to Attend SCO Meeting: Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi departed for China today to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's (SCO) Council of Foreign Ministers meeting to be held tomorrow (July 15). Araghchi is set to meet with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov during his visit to China.

Tehran Playing Both Ends

President Masoud Pezeshkian wrote on X today, "The window of diplomacy is still open and we pursue this peaceful path diligently."

Meanwhile, Tehran's top military brass warned that the 24 June ceasefire with Israel can break at any point.

Defense Minister Brig. Gen. Aziz Nasirzadeh, in separate calls with his Turkish and Malaysian counterparts, cast doubt on Israel's ceasefire promises, called for regional security coordination, and pledged a "decisive" response to any future Israeli attack.

Top Commander: Regime Faced Unprecedented Existential Threat

"The Islamic Republic's territorial integrity and existence had never been threatened to this extent before," Armed Forces Chief of Staff Abdolrahim Mousavi said today while speaking of the 12-Day War.

The Supreme Leader appointed Mousavi as chief of staff of the Islamic Republic's combined armed forces after the death of his predecessor, Mohammad Bagheri, during the conflict.

Mousavi added that the country's forces have their "fingers on the trigger" and stand ready to respond to any further strikes: "If the enemy makes a miscalculation and attacks this country, our fighters will sever its hand and make it regret its actions."

He made the remarks during a visit to the headquarters of the IRGC Aerospace Force (IRGC-AF). During the visit, Mousavi wore the olive green uniform of IRGC officers. A career officer of the Artesh (Iran's conventional/"regular" armed forces), Mousavi's choice to wear the IRGC uniform is symbolically significant.

Moscow, Tehran Deny Russian Endorsement of 'Zero Enrichment' Deal

Axios reported on July 12 that Russian President Vladimir Putin had expressed support, both to President Trump and Islamic Republic officials, for a nuclear deal that includes "zero enrichment" by the Islamic Republic.

The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs dismissed the report, saying it "appears to be a new political defamation campaign aimed at exacerbating tensions around Iran's nuclear program."

Islamic Republic Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Esmail Baghaei dismissed the reports as attempts to harm the Islamic Republic's ties with allied nations and praised Russia for issuing a clear statement rejecting the claim.

Tehran Slams Netanyahu, Warns Europe on Snapback

Following Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's interview with Tucker Carlson, Islamic Republic Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi criticized the Israeli leader on X, writing that Netanyahu "is openly dictating what the U.S. should or shouldn't say or do in talks with Iran."

Aragchi added, "[Netanyahu] dreamed that he could erase 40+ years of peaceful nuclear achievements. The end result: every one of the dozen Iranian academics that his mercenaries martyred had trained 100+ capable disciples."

Araghchi echoed conspiratorial claims made by Tucker Carlson regarding Jeffrey Epstein's alleged ties to Israel, asking, "What exactly does the Mossad have on the White House?"

Meanwhile, Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi warned France, Germany, and the UK against triggering UNSCR 2231's snapback mechanism, stating that it would end diplomacy with Tehran and render EU-Islamic Republic relations "meaningless."

President Calls for Unity in Meetings with Iraq, Pakistan

Islamic Republic President Masoud Pezeshkian called for Islamic unity against Israel in two separate meetings with the interior ministers of Iraq and Pakistan.

The interior ministers of the two countries are in Tehran to attend a trilateral meeting with the Islamic Republic's interior minister focused on coordination of the annual Arba'in pilgrimage that takes Shia Muslims to the city of Karbala in Iraq.

Pezeshkian said during his meeting with the Iraqi interior minister, "The Zionist regime is a project of the hegemony system to weaken, occupy and plunder the resources of countries and divide the region, and we must stand united against such a common enemy, support each other and strongly avoid division and duality."

Pezeshkian made similar statements in his meeting with the Pakistani interior minister, to which the minister responded by praising the "wise leadership" of Supreme Leader Khamenei during the conflict. Ali Akbar Velayati, senior adviser to the Supreme Leader, also attended the meeting and condemned Azerbaijan's alleged cooperation with Israel.

Judiciary Chief: 'Handle Espionage Cases Quickly'

Judiciary chief Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei urged officials to handle Israel-linked "espionage cases quickly," as they do not "require much investigative work."

The Islamic Republic's judicial system is infamous for its sham trials, which are often marred with forced confessions and a complete lack of due process. Speeding up these judicial procedures for cases will further exacerbate human rights violations.

This comes as the Majles (Parliament) recently introduced a bill mandating the death penalty and asset seizure for "collaboration with hostile states," such as the U.S. and Israel. The bill is pending revisions and approval from the constitutional watchdog, the Guardian Council.

On the Radar

- Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Esmail Baghaei condemned new U.S. sanctions on Cuba as "inhumane" in a Spanish-language X post. Baghaei began his statement: "Once again, the United States' addiction to bullying and intimidation has targeted a sovereign nation determined to exercise its right to self-determination and preserve its independence and dignity…"
- Multiple fires were reported in parts of Tehran and a large explosion was reported in Qom, prompting widespread speculation from the Iranian populace over potential continued Israeli operations in the country. Emergency services in Qom said the explosion was caused by a gas leak and that seven people were injured.
- While the Islamic Republic's state media criticized Iranian soccer referee Alireza Faghani for warmly greeting President Trump during the FIFA Club World Cup final ceremony yesterday, many Iranians praised him on social media for his professionalism and international recognition.
- The Taliban-controlled media reported that the Islamic Republic deported more than 500,000 Afghan migrants over the past three weeks.

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