Brief Notes

Pezeshkian Says BRICS Must Combat U.S. 'Unilateralism': Speaking at a virtual BRICS summit convened by Brazil to discuss U.S. trade policy, President Masoud Pezeshkian called on member nations to combat the "alarming trend of unilateralism." In his speech, Pezeshkian said, "One of the biggest threats to justice and stability in today's international order is the growing trend of unilateral actions and the instrumental use of sanctions…The military aggression of the Israeli regime and the United States against the Islamic Republic of Iran, the ongoing genocide against the innocent and oppressed Gazans, the massacre of the defenseless people of Lebanon and Yemen, and unacceptable U.S. threats against Venezuela are clear evidence of the failure of the current global system."

Former Regime Diplomat Missing in Egypt: Spokesperson for the Foreign Ministry Esmaeil Baghaei today said that authorities are looking into the disappearance of Amir Mousavi, a former official described by some reporting as a "former diplomat at Iran's embassy in Algeria." Baghaei said that Mousavi was "not a diplomat," though he did serve as a cultural advisor at one point. Baghaei added that dual Iranian-Iraqi citizen Mousavi entered Egypt with his Iraqi passport, but "in line with our duty to support and protect the rights of Iranian nationals, we will certainly pursue the matter through the Iranian Interests Section in Cairo." This comes as media reports of a potential Cairo meeting between Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi to take place tomorrow.

Tehran Comments on New 'Department of War' Label: Spokesperson for the Foreign Ministry Esmaeil Baghaei also commented on President Trump's September 5 Executive Order, which officially added "Department of War" as a secondary title for the Department of Defense. Baghaei said of the decision, "In fact, [the U.S.] have made an honest confession about the existing reality…In practice, there has existed no such thing as the Department of Defense in America. This institution has always been engaged in planning and waging wars." Baghaei also noted that Islamic Republic officials have, disparagingly, long referred to the U.S. Department of Defense as the "War Department."

Parliament Backs Defense Spending Boost: The Majles (Parliament) National Security and Foreign Policy Committee has approved a new bill that would significantly increase military spending, framing the legislation as a direct response to Israel. The bill mandates billions in new funding to be taken from oil revenues, frozen foreign assets, and air transit/overflight fees. Committee spokesman Ebrahim Rezai said the legislation was designed to

"counter the crimes and acts of aggression of the Zionist regime." The bill must still be voted on by the overall Majles and approved by the Guardian Council prior to being signed into law.

Parliament Resubmits Espionage Punishment Bill: The Majles has finalized its amendments to the "Bill to Intensify Punishment for Espionage and Collaboration with Hostile States." The amendments were requested by the constitutional watchdog, Guardian Council, in early July to "resolve some ambiguities and problems" in the initial draft. The amendments defined "intelligence actions" as activities that "can endanger state security...actions capable of killing, destroying public or private places or property, creating public terror, and disrupting the country's communication networks, information systems, or infrastructure." The bill expands the definition of espionage and adds the charge of "efsad fil-arz" (translation: "corruption on Earth"), which is punishable by death, for a wide range of "intelligence actions," as defined above.

Supreme Leader Signals 'Unity,' Braces for Turbulence

Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei yesterday delivered an address to senior Islamic Republic officials during a ceremony at his compound in Tehran.

The 86-year-old Ayatollah looked to be in a better physical and mental state than in his previous appearances during and following the 12-Day War. However, his voice was still gruff and his rate of speech was slower than usual. The wording used in Khamenei's speech reflected a sense of frustration and exhaustion.

The event, attended by President Masoud Pezeshkian and his cabinet, was designed to signal "unity" between power centers in the country amid mounting pressure against the Pezeshkian administration from rival factions.

Unwilling to make meaningful concessions to European powers and the IAEA over its nuclear and other malign activities, the Islamic Republic is on a collision course with the world again. Wary of the mounting pressure, Khamenei warned against the current purgatory of "not war, nor peace...that the enemy is trying to impose on us." He ordered officials to find a path out of the current situation with "hard work."

In the face of the country's deepening economic crisis, Khamenei ordered the government to identify the "top 10 necessary items," roll out electronic coupons for them, and maintain a set price for the goods. In the past, sharp surges in food price controls have triggered nationwide protests.

Khamenei also argued that the administration should prioritize convincing regional governments to cut ties with Israel.

During the event, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council Ali Larijani were pictured shaking hands, with the latter holding a white envelope. Local media later reported that Larijani has been put in charge of the nuclear file and that the photo-op also served as a public display of the power transfer.

FM Spox: U.S. Undermining Tehran's IAEA Resolution

As the IAEA's quarterly Board of Governors meeting began in Vienna today, Tehran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei claimed that the U.S. is threatening to withdraw its funding from the IAEA if the IAEA General Conference, scheduled for September 15, approves the Islamic Republic's planned resolution condemning U.S. and Israeli strikes on nuclear facilities in Iran. Baghaei went on to say that the IAEA would "effectively cease operations" without U.S. funding.

Baghaei added that Washington was "well aware" that its actions were a "crime" and a "violation of international law." He also said that President Pezeshkian would travel to New York to attend the UN General Assembly session in late September, adding that the U.S. has no right to prevent his attendance without "a blatant violation of international law."

Finally, responding to a question, Baghaei said September 4 meetings in Qatar between Foreign Minister Araghchi and EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Kaja Kallas were "useful."

On the Radar

- An IRGC officer, Mohammad Saqafi, has died after falling into a coma due to "intense injuries" he sustained during the 12-Day War. Ali Asghar Qasemi, local commander of the Basij for Shahreza, Isfahan Province, said that details for the officer's funeral ceremony would be released soon, and that people are expected to attend in large numbers.
- Islamic Republic authorities announced the seizure of five vessels and two vehicles engaged in fuel smuggling operations off the coast of Minab, Hormozgan Province, on September 7. Authorities also discovered an illicit 7.7km (~4.8mi) pipeline used to smuggle fuel and recovered about 61,500 liters (16,247 gallons) of smuggled diesel. This is the latest of several such law enforcement actions taken against fuel smuggling in Iran's Hormozgan Province, with other operations taking place earlier this month and mid-August.
- In an interview on September 5 hosted by Saudi-funded Al-Hadath TV, Interior Minister of the internationally recognized Yemeni government Ibrahim Haidan said that the regime in Iran is behind recent attempts to establish drug manufacturing facilities within Yemen and that Tehran wants to "transform Yemen into a platform for exporting deadly toxins to the people of the region." Haidan said that recently seized drug manufacturing equipment could all be traced back to Iran and that, since the fall of Assad in Syria, the Islamic Republic had "transferred some of its suspicious activities to Yemen."
- Foreign Minister Araghchi condemned U.S. "unilateral actions and bullying" of other countries in a phone call with his Venezuelan counterpart Yvan Gil Pinto on September 7. Araghchi stated that U.S. "threats"

against “independent developing countries” were “a clear violation of the UN Charter and a direct threat to international peace and security.”

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