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Brief Notes

Dozens Remain Jailed Following Mashhad Memorial Protest: Islamic Republic forces detained dozens of supporters of Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi following a memorial ceremony for Khosro Alikordi in Mashhad, with additional arrests reported in Sabzevar, Razavi Khorasan Province. Most detainees have been denied contact with their families and access to legal counsel, and there is no information on their health conditions. A source close to one detainee said intelligence officers severely beat the individual during his arrest and subsequently withheld medical treatment, threatening to beat him until he "forgets Pahlavi."

U.S. Sanctions 29 Regime Shadow Fleet Vessels: OFAC has designated 29 Islamic Republic shadow fleet vessels, along with their management firms, for their involvement in transporting "hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of Iranian petroleum products." Regarding these designations, Treasury Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence John K. Hurley said, "As President Trump has said repeatedly, the United States will not allow Iran to have a nuclear weapon. Treasury will continue to deprive the regime of the petroleum revenue it uses to fund its military and weapons programs."

Tehran-Linked Hackers Target Former Israeli PM: Former Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett confirmed that his account on the Telegram messaging app was hacked, but maintained that his phone was not accessed. The regime-linked hacker group Handala claimed responsibility for the breach, sharing photos that Bennett said were doctored. The group said the attack was part of "Operation Octopus." The group has also offered a $30,000 bounty for information on Israeli engineers and technicians, including personal details. Handala was responsible for hacking the communications channels of Iran International, a London-based diaspora news outlet, in July.

President Again Rejects 'Humiliating' Nuclear Talks

President Masoud Pezeshkian has again dismissed the prospect of renewed nuclear negotiations with Washington under what he described as "humiliating" and coercive conditions.

Speaking at a closed-door meeting in Tehran yesterday, Pezeshkian denied that talks could resume after U.S. and Israeli strikes on regime nuclear sites and accused the United States of seeking to dictate terms rather than negotiate.

During his speech, Pezeshkian said, "I am not prepared to submit to the humiliation they want to impose…I want peace with everyone, but not with someone who bullies." He continued, "Not when they say we must not have missiles, and then they fully arm that dishonorable Israel to the teeth so that whenever it wants it can come here, plough this place up and leave."

He reiterated Tehran's long-standing claim that it does not seek a nuclear weapon and said it was willing to demonstrate this, including through assessments of its nuclear stockpiles.

On the Radar

- The Islamic Republic Foreign Ministry has accused the United States of exploiting its role as UN host and violating international obligations due to its imposition of restrictions on Islamic Republic diplomats in New York. Tehran described the measures as part of a broader pattern of aggression against the Islamic Republic, saying they demonstrate U.S. disregard for humanitarian principles and international law. This comes after an X post from the State Department's Persian-language account on December 16, saying, "We will not allow these individuals to enjoy the freedoms, opportunities, and privileges of the United States while its policies force the Iranian people to endure poverty, severe air pollution, and a water crisis. The United States remains steadfast in its support for the rights and well-being of the Iranian people." The Foreign Ministry called the State Department's post "hypocritical and misleading."

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