Brief Notes

Trump Announces 'Total and Complete Blockade' of Venezuelan Oil: U.S. President Donald Trump announced a "total and complete blockade" of sanctioned Venezuelan oil tankers, saying the country is "Venezuela is completely surrounded by the largest Armada ever assembled in the History of South America...It will only get bigger, and the shock to them will be like nothing they have ever seen before -- Until such time as they return to the United States of America all of the Oil, Land, and other Assets that they previously stole from us." Trump also said the Maduro government has been designated a foreign terrorist organization.

Foreign Ministry Condemns U.S. 'Illegal' Actions Against Maduro Regime: The Islamic Republic's Foreign Ministry today condemned the "threatening statements and actions of the United States" against the Maduro regime in Venezuela. Tehran warned that any interference with Venezuelan shipping constitutes "state piracy and armed robbery at sea.". The ministry called on the UN, the Non-Aligned Movement, and other international bodies to condemn Washington's actions.

Supreme Leader Appoints New Air Force Commander: Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei appointed Bahman Behmard as commander of the Artesh (the "regular" national armed forces, as opposed to the IRGC) Air Force, replacing Hamid Vahedi. Behmard previously served as deputy head of operations at the General Staff of the Armed Forces. The move follows the recent appointment of a new Air Defense Command chief.

FM Says U.S. Bases Would Be Targeted in Future Conflict

Islamic Republic Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has warned that U.S. military bases across the Middle East would be targeted if Washington launches further attacks on the Islamic Republic. He said that Tehran's June missile strike on a U.S. airbase in Qatar was a direct response to U.S. attacks on nuclear facilities, also claiming that it will "make no difference where those bases are located" if a new conflict erupts.

He underlined that the strike was aimed at U.S. forces, not Qatar, and said Tehran maintains "utter friendship" with its regional neighbors despite the presence of U.S. bases on their territory.

Tehran and Moscow United Against 'Western Bullying'

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said the Islamic Republic and Russia share a common stance against Western "domination, coercion, and bullying," warning that Washington's concept of "peace through strength" threatens the global order. Speaking with Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov today, he stressed that both countries oppose unilateral actions and aim to defend regional stability.

On the nuclear file, Araghchi reiterated that the regime will not give up its right to peaceful uranium enrichment, saying Washington seeks "dictation" rather than genuine negotiations.

Araghchi also said he opposes "foreign interference" in the Caucasus and Central Asia, praising Russia's support against sanctions and highlighting growing bilateral cooperation in energy and transit.

On the Radar

- Mohammad Reza Bahrami, the Foreign Ministry's director general for South Asia, has invited the Taliban's foreign minister, Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi, to visit Tehran. During a meeting in Kabul, Mohammad Reza Bahrami briefed Muttaqi on a Tehran-hosted regional meeting on Afghanistan held on December 14, which the Taliban declined to attend. Bahrami stressed the importance of relations with Afghanistan and voiced hope that the Taliban would contribute to regional cooperation. Muttaqi described bilateral ties as "positive" and said Afghanistan "should not be seen as a problem now," while no date was given for a potential visit.
- The Islamic Republic's judiciary has halted the online broadcast of a program accused of violating "cultural, religious, and national values" by using unlicensed music. State media said the ban likely targets "Gang," a program featuring Persian rap hosted by former state TV presenter Ali Zia.

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