

Biden's Foreign Policy Legacy: a Mix of Failure and Crime

In his last speech, president claims US adversaries 'weakened', but reality shows otherwise



Joe Biden speaks at the State Department in Washington, DC, on January 13, 2025, as he delivers his final foreign policy speech.

Army receives 1,000 new drones in move that allows it to 'command the skies'

TEHRAN – Iran has showcased its formidable advancements in air and naval defense, emphasizing its readiness to exert control over its airspace by adding 1,000 new drones ready to use by its armed forces.

At a ceremony on Monday, Defense Minister Brigadier General Aziz Nasirzadeh celebrated the induction of 1,000 cutting-edge unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) into Iran's Army Combat Organization.

He remarked that these drones have granted the Iranian military the capability to "command the skies" and strike enemies decisively if required.

The new UAVs are versatile, with the ability to land on and take off from sea surfaces, enhancing their role in smart operations and ground force support.

Nasirzadeh cited the guidance of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, who emphasized the defense sector's responsibility to equip Iran's military with essential defense systems.

Nasirzadeh also highlighted that Iran's military drills have only showcased a portion of their true capabilities.

"We possess extraordinary equipment," he stated, indicating that these assets would be deployed when necessary. ▶ Page 2

Araghchi appoints special representative for Syrian affairs

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has appointed Mohammad Reza Raouf Sheibani as his Special Representative for Syrian Affairs.

This decision comes amid ongoing regional challenges, with Syria's stability playing a crucial role in the broader peace and security dynamics of West Asia.

In the official decree, Araghchi highlighted Syria's strategic importance within the region and underscored the critical need to ensure the country's stability. He emphasized that the future of Syria must remain in the hands of the Syrian people, without foreign intervention, and stressed the necessity of respecting Syria's territorial integrity and national sovereignty.

Sheibani previously served as Araghchi's Special Representative for Lebanese Affairs.

'Autocrat' label and past crimes fuel backlash against outgoing US envoy in Japan

TEHRAN – Japanese citizens have expressed anger over a social media post by outgoing U.S. Ambassador Rahm Emanuel, in which he reiterated his inflammatory remarks about China, Iran, Russia, North Korea, and Venezuela, labeling them an "axis of autocrats."

"I'm going out like I came in: Never afraid to share my views," the former American chief of staff stated in a post on X, after claiming that the five countries are "as weak as the societies they have broken."

"The leaders of the 'axis of autocrats' have more in common than style alone. China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, and Venezuela bear the same hallmarks: Their economies are failing, their societal legitimacy is faltering, capital is fleeing, and their youth are breaking free. The autocrats' bluster and bravado don't fool those of us who believe in freedom, rights, and democracy," Emanuel wrote on Monday. ▶ Page 2

Gaza ceasefire "imminent" as Netanyahu capitulates

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – Discussions in Qatar continued on Tuesday as mediators worked to finalize a plan to end the war on Gaza.

The focus of the talks was on a ceasefire and the withdrawal of Israeli occupation forces from the enclave.

Both Israel and Hamas are reviewing a final draft proposal after a "breakthrough" in negotiations on Monday.

The White House had earlier indicated that an agreement was "imminent".

High-level meetings were held in Qatar on Monday. The Qatari government confirmed Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani held talks with Khalil al-Hayya, a Hamas leader.

The Qatari ruler also met with Brett McGurk, a National Security Council official heading U.S. President Joe Biden's talks, and Steve Witkoff, President-elect Donald Trump's appointed Middle East special envoy, the statement added.

Reports suggest this is to ensure that the incoming U.S. administration supports the terms of the deal. ▶ Page 5

Art in the rubble: how Gaza's artists are documenting the war

In a Gaza battered by war and deprivation, Israel's severe restrictions on aid and commercial goods have intensified a humanitarian crisis that the UN described in a 12 November briefing as "catastrophic", warning of "imminent famine". Yet, against all odds, Gaza's artists continue to create.

Facing shortages of basic supplies, from food to paper, they turn whatever they can find into tools of expression to document the relentless conflict around them. The Art Newspaper spoke with four artists who, amid the rubble and chaos, are using their art to preserve a record of life in Gaza and to share their stories with the world by any means possible.

Khaled Hossein

Hossein, a sculptor from Rafah in southern Gaza, initially stayed in his hometown when the war began. Israel had designated it a safe zone and directed much of Gaza's population there. Hossein worked tirelessly to provide for his family and ensure their safety, leaving little time for art.

But when Israel's military campaign reached Rafah in May 2024, he and his family were forced to flee, and their home was destroyed. In Deir al-Balah, surrounded by old friends from Gaza's once-vibrant art scene, he was encouraged to start creating again. ▶ Page 8

Lebanon's developments a lesson for those still tricked by so-called US democracy

By Sondoss Al-Asaad

BEIRUT – The stance of those who have deliberately thwarted Hezbollah's political victory in the presidential race and who openly declare their absolute loyalty to Washington is not shocking. What is shocking, however, is the stance of Hezbollah's so-called allies, who have shamefully submitted to the higher foreign orders.

This same team has expressed its concern about the anti-Hezbollah team's relentless attempt to drag Lebanon into a "civil conflict". Hence, they have communicated with the Shiite duo in a bid to reach an understanding on forming a national cabinet capable of running Lebanon until the parliamentary elections scheduled for May 2026.

They further warned Judge Nawaf Salam, the prime minister-designate, to avoid "being manipulated as a tool of confronting the Shiites or the resistance (movement), and to take the initiative to expand the circle of trust in his upcoming government." ▶ Page 5

Why Washington Post cartoonist's critique of Trump lead to her sudden exit?

By Samaneh Aboutalebi

TEHRAN- Earlier last week, Ann Telnaes, the Pulitzer prize-winning cartoonist for The Washington Post, tendered her resignation after the newspaper declined to publish a satirical cartoon.

The cartoon depicted the paper's owner, Jeff Bezos, alongside other media and technology moguls, kneeling before Donald Trump as he prepares for his term as president in the White House.

In a statement expressing her disappointment and frustration, Telnaes revealed that she had engaged in constructive discussions with the Post about her work in the past, but had never faced the rejection of a cartoon based on its subject matter. ▶ Page 8



I'tikaf gets underway all around country

I'tikaf is an ancient Islamic tradition that is usually held during the 13th, 14th, and 15th of the month Rajab.

During I'tikaf, an individual goes to the mosque, fasts, and remains there to stand against the consumption-driven life.

Secluded from their daily routine, the Mu'takif [the person taking part in the I'tikaf] dedicates time to themselves and seeking closeness to God.

Throughout these three days, the Mu'takifs often spend their time studying religious books, reciting the Holy Quran, praying, and contemplating.

During this time, he/she can think attentively with peace of mind about this world and its creator and the path that one has before them in order to reach the creator.