

Trump in Netanyahu's Grip

For the US government, an "Israel First" policy takes priority over exiting the quagmire of war with Iran



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The body of Zeyd Mahigir Larki, a fisherman killed in US and Israeli strikes on fishing boats in the Strait of Hormuz, is being taken for burial on Larak Island on Sunday, May 24, 2026.

No decision made without Leader's approval: President Pezeshkian

TEHRAN – Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has described national unity as the country's most important asset in overcoming crises and threats, stressing that no decision in Iran is taken without the approval of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei.

During a meeting with the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), Pezeshkian stated that what has ensured the country's stability during sensitive periods has been the solidarity and empathy of the people and the pillars of the establishment.

The president said that Iran's main concern today is not war, missiles, or bombardment, but rather preserving calm, cohesion, and social unity, adding that despite numerous challenges, he refrains from raising many issues to avoid creating division and discord. Maintaining national unity, he emphasized, is far more important than military and security issues. ► Page 2

IRGC warns of 'hellish' response to any new aggression against Iran

TEHRAN- The commander of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) warned that any renewed act of aggression against Iran would trigger a "devastating and hellish" response extending across the region and beyond.

IRGC Commander Brigadier General Ahmad Vahidi issued a message on Sunday marking the 44th anniversary of the liberation of the strategic port city of Khorramshahr from Iraqi forces under former dictator Saddam Hussein and commemorating the National Day of Resistance, Sacrifice, and Victory. ► Page 2

Strait of Hormuz closure sets stage for global food price shock

TEHRAN- The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) warns that the fallout of war on Iran could push millions in the world into hunger within a year.

Fertilizer crisis hits farmers first

The closure of the Strait of Hormuz following the outbreak of the West Asia conflict on 28 February 2026 is rapidly turning a regional security crisis into a looming global food emergency. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), under normal conditions 2030% of all internationally traded fertilizers pass through the strait. That flow has now been effectively halted. ► Page 4

Widening divide between the US and Europe

TEHRAN – The world is living through one of the most sensitive periods in international relations, a time when the "Atlantic Alliance" has faced a storm called Trumpism after decades of stability.

Donald Trump's presidency was more than just a political shift in the U.S.; it was a political earthquake that shook transatlantic relations and ended decades of trust between Washington and Brussels. Trump's "America First" approach and instrumental view of international treaties forced Europe to face a harsh reality: the United States was no longer a predictable partner or reliable defender of the global order.

Diplomatic and economic confrontations—from threatening to leave NATO to withdrawing unilaterally from international agreements—damaged shared interests and sparked a deep debate about the "identity of the West." Europe, caught between traditional loyalty and the need for strategic independence, had to rethink its security and political strategies.

Hezbollah strikes Israel's Iron Dome launchers

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – The Lebanese resistance is striking at the core of the Israeli regime's security infrastructure, targeting advanced defense systems built over the years to protect settlements in the north.

Hezbollah has announced new operations, including the targeting of two Iron Dome platforms at the Ramim (Honin) barracks using Ababil kamikaze drones, achieving confirmed direct hits.

It is not the first time the resistance movement has attacked Iron Dome systems near the southern Lebanese border region. There have been at least three major attacks over the past several weeks, with video documentation published by Hezbollah's war media.

Damage to the Iron Dome systems appears to have affected the missile interceptor's radar capabilities. The Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) acknowledged that aerial projectiles had recently crossed the Lebanese border without triggering incoming alert sirens in northern settlements, while Hebrew media reports echoed the same account.

The irreversible shattering of Israel's diplomatic armor

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN — The profound diplomatic unraveling confronting Israel in mid-2026 is neither a passing reputational crisis nor a temporary political phase that will vanish once the guns fall silent.

It represents a permanent, structural shift in the geopolitical landscape. For decades, Tel Aviv operated on a foundational assumption: that unconditional Western diplomatic coverage, aggressive information campaigns, and the decoupling of regional economic integration from the Palestinian question could permanently insulate it from the consequences of colonial occupation and military aggression.

That protective insulation has collapsed. The genocidal campaigns of aggression in the region, including against Gaza, Lebanon, the West Bank, Yemen, and Iran, have exposed the stark limits of brute force as a substitute for long-term political strategy.

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Japan ready to broaden humanitarian ties with Iran

TEHRAN – Japan's Ambassador to Iran, Tamaki Tsukada, has announced his country's readiness to expand cooperation with Iran in humanitarian areas.

He also said Japan is interested in providing food and health commodities to Iran and developing economic relations between the two countries, noting that implementing a joint project would mark the beginning of a new chapter in this regard, IRNA reported.

The Japanese envoy made the remarks in a meeting in Tehran on Monday, May 18, with Pirhossein Kolivand, the head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society.

He announced that Japan will send its first shipment of humanitarian aid to Iran in the coming weeks, adding that the issue had been finalized in an agreement between the foreign ministers of the two countries. ► Page 7

Exclusive

The front line on a blank canvas

By Marzieh Kian

TEHRAN – When the siren wails across the city and the air in the media space becomes thick with the scent of war-news gunpowder, everyone picks up a weapon and stands at a corner of this vast front. One takes up a rifle; another adjusts their camera lens. And in this fray, there is an artist whose weapons are lines, colors, and meaningful, biting satires.

Seyed Masoud Shojai Tabatabai, the renowned Iranian cartoonist, made an unspoken vow at the very first dawn of the 40-day War, a promise rooted in art and commitment. He decided that as long as the flames of this conflict burned, he would create at least one caricature every day to act as an honest narrator of the suffering and the realities hidden behind the scenes. ► Page 8



Spain rejects the war against Iran: Legality and strategic autonomy

By Xavier Villar

MADRID – For an Iranian reader, the European response to the war reflects an alliance beginning to reveal internal fractures. Most governments within the European Union have aligned themselves with Washington and Tel Aviv through military support, diplomatic cover or calculated discretion. Spain matters not because it represents absolute opposition to NATO – it will remain within the alliance – but because it has transformed its refusal to participate into a political act that challenges automatic alignment with Washington. ► Page 2

TEHRAN PAPERS

In the following column, we take a look at some important contents and views in yesterday's Iranian newspapers.

The end of geographic immunity

Khorasan addressed the IRGC's recent statement and wrote: The IRGC's recent declaration about extending the war beyond the region marks an official shift from a traditional defensive doctrine to a strategy of expansive offensive deterrence. For the United States, the IRGC's warning is the final blow to the theory of fighting wars far from its borders. Today, officials in the White House understand that their military bases across the world, their economic interests in Latin America and Africa, and even their cyber-infrastructure inside the US homeland are all within reach of Iran's missiles and its non-state allies. The West now stands at a historic crossroads: either submit to on-the-ground realities or embark on an adventure that could deal a fatal blow to the economy and security of Western societies. What is certain is that the era of American and European dominance and self-immunization has ended, and this time the region—now from a position of strength—will be the final arbiter of peace or global war.

Donya-e-Eqtasad: Iran and the US in a resilience race

Donya-e-Eqtasad analyzed the possibility—or impossibility—of a diplomatic solution. The analysis states: What is being described as a “diplomatic solution” is in fact only a temporary framework to prevent further escalation until a concrete diplomatic agreement is reached. Therefore, it appears that we remain far from resolving the fundamental disputes between Iran and the United States—namely, the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz and the issue of 60-percent enriched uranium. For this reason, it cannot be said that military action has been removed from Trump's agenda. In reality, both sides have entered a contest of endurance. Iran believes that Trump cannot keep US forces in the region for long and will eventually be forced to retreat. Trump believes that if he fails to escape this credibility trap, his position on the international stage—and the broader competition among great powers—will be negatively affected.

Arman-e-Melli: Time is working against the United States

Arman-e-Melli argued that the passage of time in the current situation harms Trump and wrote: Trump is trapped in a tight corner, still imagining that through repetitive psychological warfare he can pressure Iran—politically and psychologically—into granting concessions that he could then present as an achievement to the American public. It must be acknowledged that the gap between Iran's demands and America's coercive policies is vast, and there is no statement or signal from the American side

indicating a willingness to accept the realities and capabilities of the Islamic Republic after the recent aggression. In the past, during negotiations, time always worked against Iran, and the US government tried to pressure Iran by setting deadlines. But now time is working against the United States, and the necessity of reaching an agreement will not remain distant. Ultimately, the two sides may be able to reach a point of equilibrium that enables an agreement.

Resalat: A structural shift in the international system

The consolidation of a new balance of power in West Asia, the decline of US hegemony, and the Trump administration's helplessness in the face of the steadfast will of the Islamic Resistance—these months have witnessed one of the most important, complex, and decisive turning points in the geopolitical equations of West Asia and even the overall structure of the international system. It can be said with confidence that the most humiliating, strategic, and disgraceful defeat for the Trump administration in this unprecedented confrontation has been Iran's firm assertion of sovereignty and decisive control over the strategic Strait of Hormuz. In a legitimate response to US military aggression and state terrorism by the United States and Israel, Iran, with full strategic intelligence and by exercising its legal right to defend territorial integrity and employ powerful geopolitical leverage, closed this vital waterway to aggressors and their supporters. With this bold action, it effectively paralyzed the energy supply chain of the hegemonic powers.

Hamshahri: Trump's new policy; threats in a dead end

Hamshahri, in an article examining the crisis and Trump's approach, quoted regional affairs expert Seyyed Reza Sadr-al-Hosseini: Trump, in a situation where time is severely working against him, seeks to obtain—through political deception and by creating division and fragmentation among the public—what he failed to achieve on the battlefield. He aims to use contradictions and threats, amplified by media outlets that widely broadcast his statements, to disrupt the cognitive processes of Iranian officials and push them—through intimidation—toward fulfilling his needs. These actions come at a time when his own party's critics have recently questioned his performance and statements, intensifying political pressure on him. Yet Trump still intends to continue this situation—one in which he himself is the primary loser—by keeping the machinery of rumor-mongering, threats, and intimidation running.

No decision made without Leader's approval: President Pezeshkian

From page 1 ▶ Pezeshkian underlined that he has always tried not to say anything contrary to the views of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution or adopt positions that could fuel divisions within the governing structure or be exploited by the enemy. He further stated that no decision in Iran is made outside the framework of the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) and without the coordination and approval of the Leader.

“When a decision is made in the field of diplomacy, all bodies, platforms, and political currents must support it to present a unified voice of the Islamic Republic to the world,” he stated.

Pezeshkian also stressed that IRIB must act as a promoter of national unity and cohesion, concluding that if all actors move in line with the directives of the Leader and preserve na-



tional unity, Iran's enemies will never achieve their objectives against the country.

Tehran ready to reassure world on nuclear program

Speaking on the sidelines of the meeting, the president added that Tehran stands ready

to reassure the international community that it is not pursuing nuclear weapons or regional instability.

“Prior to the martyrdom of Ayatollah Khamenei, Iran's late Leader, we declared—and we reiterate now—that we are ready to assure the world we do not

seek nuclear weapons,” President Pezeshkian said on Sunday.

He further stated that Iran does not desire regional instability; rather, it is the Israeli regime, envisioning a “Greater Israel,” that seeks to destabilize the region. However, Pezeshkian reiterated that Iranian negotiators will by no means compromise on the dignity and honor of the country.

The remarks come amid Pakistan's mediation efforts aimed at easing tensions between Iran and the United States, following the war of aggression waged by the US and Israel on Iran in late February. Officials in Tehran, Washington, and Islamabad have stated that a memorandum of understanding is being finalized to end the war, paving the way for further talks on contentious issues.

IRGC warns of 'hellish' response to any new aggression against Iran

From page 1 ▶ Referring to the recent US-Israeli war of aggression as the “third imposed war,” Vahidi said the Iranian nation had once again emerged victorious following the “terrorist attack of the Zionist-American enemy,” which resulted in the martyrdom of the late Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, several military commanders, and schoolchildren in Minab.

He said the enemy, after facing 40 days of “crushing resistance” and a “decisive and devastating response” by Iran's Armed Forces, was ultimately forced to seek a ceasefire “in humiliation” and is now witnessing the Iranian nation's determination to avenge the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution.

The IRGC commander described the latest conflict as a “hybrid war,” but stressed that the decisive response of Iran's Armed Forces,

backed by popular support, had thwarted the enemy's objectives and neutralized its “satanic plots.”

Vahidi said the lesson of Khorramshahr is reliance on domestic power and active deterrence, adding that Iran's advances in nuclear, missile, defensive, and offensive capabilities have forced its enemies to revise their calculations.

The commander described the determined presence of the Iranian people as the country's greatest strategic asset and an unbreakable barrier against enemy conspiracies and infiltration.

He further stated that Iran's Armed Forces are currently at the highest level of readiness and active deterrence across missile, air, naval, ground, space, and cyber domains.

“Any renewed aggression by the enemy will be met with a devastating and hellish



response on regional and trans-regional scales,” he warned.

Vahidi also described the liberation of Khorramshahr as a lasting model for future victories, the liberation of al-Quds, and the destruction of the “criminal Zionist regime” by the axis of resistance and Muslim fighters worldwide.

Spain rejects the war against Iran: Legality and strategic autonomy

From page 1 ▶ This position rests on a specific political legacy. The Iraq War of 2003 remains present in Spanish political life in a way it does not elsewhere in Europe. José María Aznar's conservative government supported the invasion despite the opposition of more than ninety percent of the population. The electoral defeat that followed became a lasting lesson: Spanish governments since then have operated under the assumption that participation in wars widely perceived as illegal inflicts domestic political damage exceeding any strategic gain. For many Spaniards, supporting war against Iran would mean repeating the mistake that removed Aznar from power.

Pedro Sánchez has reactivated that political constraint. In his ad-

dress to the Congress of Deputies, he framed Spain's refusal through a direct invocation of Iraq. ‘Forgetting is the first step towards repeating the error,’ he said, recalling the mass demonstrations of February 2003, when millions mobilized under the slogan ‘No to war’. Spain would not, he declared, become ‘an accomplice to illegal aggression or to lies disguised as freedom’. This formulation places legality at the center of the government's position: a political boundary drawn from recent institutional experience. For Sánchez's coalition, the war against Iran extends the logic of the Iraq War as a question of legal coherence.

The Spanish government has argued that Iraq demonstrated the consequences of intervention undertaken on contested premis-

es and fabricated intelligence. Iran magnifies those risks. Iran's territorial scale, its degree of military preparedness, and its capacity to disrupt global energy markets all indicate that an illegal intervention would prove even more costly than the last.

Madrid has also assumed a leading position on the genocide in Gaza. Spain was among the first European governments to recognize the State of Palestine. Sánchez has consistently called for an immediate ceasefire and for Israeli officials to be prosecuted before international courts. Opposition to the genocide in Gaza and opposition to the illegal war against Iran proceed from the same principle: that international law must constrain the use of force, and that European states are obliged to

act when that law is violated. The consistency Spain has maintained across these two fronts remains rare in Europe, giving Madrid a distinctive profile. Through this position, the Spanish government has decided that its foreign policy will name illegal violence regardless of the perpetrator, whether in Gaza or against Iran.

Certain sectors of Spanish politics, concentrated on the radical left, have called for withdrawal from NATO. The current government has shown no inclination to pursue such an outcome. Spain will remain within NATO, but it will use its membership to block operations it considers illegal. That is the line Spanish politics has drawn, and it is unlikely to shift.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

From Khorramshahr to Hormuz: A legacy of bravery and resistance against aggressors



By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN – This year's anniversary of the liberation of the strategic Iranian port city of Khorramshahr from Iraqi occupation has come into sharp focus amid Iran's enduring resilience and resistance, set against the backdrop of recent US-Israeli aggression.

The Iraqi army invaded Iran on September 22, 1980, launching a full-scale offensive under Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist regime. With political and military backing from several Western countries, including the United States, Iraq quickly advanced into southwestern Iran. Khorramshahr, in Khuzestan province, fell under full Iraqi occupation by late October 1980.

In April 1982, Iran launched a large-scale, multi-phase operation to retake Khorramshahr and other occupied areas of Khuz-

estan. On May 24, 1982, Iranian forces successfully liberated the city, ending nearly 20 months of occupation. The liberation marked a decisive turning point in the eight-year Iran-Iraq War (1980–1988) and became a powerful symbol of national resistance and resilience in the face of a heavily armed adversary supported by major global powers. It also underscored Iran's capacity to sustain prolonged military pressure while defending its territorial integrity.

From this perspective, the experience of Khorramshahr and the 39-day US-Israeli war launched against Iran on February 28 are presented as comparable episodes, highlighting Iran's continued ability to withstand external pressure as a defining feature of its strategic posture.

The liberation of Khorramshahr not only marked the defeat of Iraqi forces but also dealt a setback to the broader network of external support behind Saddam Hussein's war effort. It reinforced the belief that Iran is prepared to pay any price to defend its sovereignty.

This spirit was also reflected in the recent conflict involving Iran and the two militarily advanced powers. Despite intense pressure, Iran's military capabilities led Washington to agree to a ceasefire on April 8 and accept its

terms. In a broader assessment of US-Iran tensions, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz has said that the United States has been “humiliated” by Iran's leadership.

President Pezeshkian: Resistance rooted in Iran's culture

In a message posted on X, Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian drew a direct comparison between the liberation of Khorramshahr and current regional tensions. Referring to the presence of US naval forces in the region, he praised the enduring bravery of Iranians in resisting external pressure.

“Today, Iran's Khorramshahr is the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz. Just as the brave yet battle-untested people of Khorramshahr stood for days against an invading army, the nation today continues to demonstrate the strength of the Iranian people to the world. Resistance, sacrifice, and the repelling of aggression are deeply rooted in the culture of this land,” Pezeshkian said.

Taken together, these developments reflect Iran's view that its strength comes from experience, unity, and resilience. From Khorramshahr to the Strait of Hormuz, the message remains unchanged: external pressure has not broken Iran's resolve, and its ability to resist and defend itself remains strong.



Consulate General of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Almaty, Kazakhstan, posted this illustration based on the Persian proverb “a camel sees cottonseed in its dreams,” meaning wishful thinking or a pipe dream. The image portrays Donald Trump dreaming of victory and dominance, while critics argue that his Iran policy has left the US mired in a prolonged quagmire of war, alongside attempts to fabricate a sense of victory.

Trump in Netanyahu's grip

For the US government, an "Israel First" policy takes priority over exiting the quagmire of war with Iran

TEHRAN - There seems to be no end in sight to President Donald Trump's contradictory statements despite intensified efforts to bring a permanent end to the US-Israeli war on Iran, which initially began on February 28.

Trump said on Sunday that he had instructed negotiators "not to rush into a deal" with Tehran.

"The negotiations are proceeding in an orderly and constructive manner, and I have informed my representatives not to rush into a deal, as time is on our side," Trump wrote on Truth Social.

He also noted that the United States would maintain its blockade of Iranian ports, which began in mid-April. "The Blockade will remain in full force and effect until an agreement is reached, certified, and signed. Both sides must take their time and get it right. There can be no mistakes!"

His remarks followed a phone call with the Israeli prime minister. In response to discussions over signing a possible memorandum of understanding between Tehran and Washington, Benjamin Netanyahu said he and Trump had agreed that any final deal must include "dismantling Iran's nuclear enrichment sites and removing its enriched nuclear material from its territory."

He added that "President Trump also reaffirmed Israel's right to defend itself against threats on every front, including Lebanon."

The developments run counter to Trump's comments a day earlier. Trump said on Saturday that he had



talked to regional leaders and that "an agreement has been largely negotiated, subject to finalization" between the US and Iran.

Iran's condition for talks

A similar assessment was also reflected by Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman on Saturday, contingent on certain conditions.

"We are now in the finalization stage of this memorandum of understanding. The topics being discussed at this stage focus broadly on ending the war, halting the US naval blockade, and issues related to the release of Iran's frozen assets," Esmail Baghaei said. He emphasized that Iran's focus at this stage remains exclusively on ending the US-Israeli war based on Tehran's 14-point proposal.

He said a final agreement could be reached within a reasonable timeframe of 30 to 60 days.

Baghaei also pointed to the Strait of Hormuz, saying the strategic waterway "has nothing to do with America." He added that Iran and Oman, as the coastal states of the Strait of Hormuz, should define

a mechanism for it.

Iran also says halting Israel's strikes in Lebanon and the recognition of its enrichment rights are red lines in the talks.

These developments followed Pakistani Chief of Defense Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir's one-day visit to Iran, which ended Saturday afternoon, amid Islamabad's intensified efforts to bridge the gap between Tehran and Washington.

Iran and the US agreed to a ceasefire on April 8 through the mediation of Pakistan. However, subsequent diplomatic efforts to fully end the conflict failed due to Washington's "excessive" demands.

The US and Israel were unable to achieve their stated objectives during the 39 days of war, which included destroying Iran's military capabilities and influencing the country's political trajectory. Trump has repeatedly claimed that US strikes severely damaged Iran's military capacity. However, American officials speaking to US media

have acknowledged that Iran retains much of its missile and drone arsenal despite weeks of intense bombing.

Trump's threats

Trump ordered a naval blockade of Iran after Pakistani-mediated talks in Islamabad on April 11 ended without a breakthrough.

Trump has also set multiple deadlines for Iran to meet US demands, warning of severe consequences, including threats to send Iran back to "the Stone Age." However, he has repeatedly stepped back from military escalation, largely due to Iran's warnings that any new aggression would be met with a stronger response.

During the conflict, Iran carried out 100 waves of missile and drone strikes against Israel and US bases in the Persian Gulf region, inflicting severe damage to military installations and equipment.

In addition to Iran's military capability, its resilience and its control over the Strait of Hormuz have pushed Washington toward seeking an off-ramp to avoid deeper military and economic costs.

A potential deal to end the war could serve as a face-saving exit for Trump from a conflict with limited gains for Washington.

However, recent contacts between Trump and Netanyahu suggest that Israel's agenda remains highly influential in US decision-making, with critics arguing that Trump has prioritized "Make Israel Great Again" over "Make America Great Again."

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran's strategy for Persian Gulf, Hormuz Strait to shape West Asia's new order: Major General Abdollahi

TEHRAN - The plans and strategies of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution for managing the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz will guarantee the future of the region and a new regional order, in which foreigners will have no place, a top IRGC commander said.

In a message commemorating the martyrs of the recent US-Israeli war of aggression against Iran, Commander of Iran's Khatam al-Anbia Central Headquarters Major General Ali Abdollahi stressed the continuation of resistance, vigilance, and wisdom in confronting the US and Zionist enemies.

Referring to the guidance of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei,

the general said Iran will secure the Persian Gulf and eliminate the enemy's exploitation of the strategic waterway, while bringing comfort and progress for all nations of the region.

The commander warned enemies that the Leader's plans and strategies for the "management of the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz" will shape the future of the region and a new regional and global order under the framework of the "Strong Iran" strategy, emphasizing that foreign powers will have no role in it.

Major General Abdollahi further said Iran's powerful Armed Forces will not allow painful historical experiences to be repeated and, God willing, will impose the authority and pride of the Islamic Re-

public of Iran on the enemy.

"We are ready to deliver a harsh and hellish response to any aggression," he warned.

For generations, the Strait of Hormuz — entirely bordering Iran's territorial waters and southern coastline — had been maintained by Iran as a strategic corridor for global trade, with the Iranian navy ensuring freedom of navigation in line with both historical practice and international law.

However, following the unprovoked joint military aggression by the United States and the Israeli regime against Iranian soil on February 28, Tehran announced the immediate closure of the strait, suspending its longstanding policy of open passage.

LATEST NEWS

■ Omani foreign minister receives verbal message from Iranian counterpart

Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, the Foreign Minister of Oman, received a verbal message on Sunday from Abbas Araghchi, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The message was delivered during a meeting between the Omani minister and Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs, who is currently visiting the Sultanate of Oman along with a diplomatic and legal delegation.

According to an official statement, the message touched upon the ongoing Iranian-US talks, mediated by Pakistan, and the efforts being exerted to ensure their success. It also addressed the keenness of both countries to resume freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz safely and sustainably.

■ Qalibaf: No tyrant can stand against Iran's faithful soldiers

Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf says no tyrant can withstand Iran's devoted and faithful soldiers, praising the bravery of Iranian fighters on the anniversary of the liberation of Khorramshahr during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war.

Qalibaf also praised today's Iranian military forces for continuing the path of past commanders and keeping alive the memory of "the heroic defenders of the country."

■ Enemy seeks to intensify economic pressure on Iran, says deputy speaker

The enemy is seeking to increase economic pressure on Iran at the current juncture, and Tehran must strengthen both its defensive and offensive capabilities in this domain more than

ever before, Deputy Speaker of Parliament Ali Nikzad said on Sunday.

Speaking on the anniversary of Khorramshahr's 1982 liberation, he said the victory demonstrated the importance of national unity, hope, and self-belief under the harshest conditions.

■ Wreckage of Israeli spy drone found south of Iran

The wreckage of an Israeli Orbiter spy drone that had previously been shot down by Iran's air defense in the southeast of the country was discovered in the southern province of Hormozgan.

The wreckage of the destroyed Orbiter drone was found with the cooperation of a border guard naval group of Iran's Law Enforcement Command in Hormozgan Province.

The Zionist regime's drone, which was used for espionage and reconnaissance missions, had been shot down by the Army's Air Defense units.

■ US strategist says Iran emerges as fourth center of world power

Professor Robert Pape of the University of Chicago has stated that Iran is emerging as the fourth center of world power, alongside the United States, Russia, and China.

Following the recent 82-day military confrontation between Washington and Tehran, Pape described Iran's victory as a "strategic disaster" for the US, adding that Tehran successfully outmaneuvered American forces and will likely test nuclear weapons within a year and a half.

■ No MoU possible without release of Iran's frozen assets: Source

An informed source told Tasnim on Sunday that while the Americans have consistently

obstructed the negotiations and changed their positions, Iran has made it clear that no agreement will be reached without the release of a specified portion of its frozen assets in the very first step and a clear mechanism for the continued guaranteed release of all frozen assets.

Another source told the news agency that disagreements between Iran and the US over one or two clauses of a possible memorandum of understanding are still ongoing.

A third military source has said that if the Americans once again make a miscalculation and resort to aggression or criminal actions against Iran, they will face "Iran's third version of confrontation", which will differ from the previous two wars in terms of strategy, tactics, objectives, and equipment.

■ Iran condemns deadly terrorist attack on train in Quetta, Pakistan

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Esmail Baqaei, strongly condemned the terrorist attack on a railway in Quetta, Pakistan, which killed and injured dozens of Pakistani citizens.

Baqaei offered condolences to the victims' families and voiced solidarity with Pakistan's people and government. He stated that Iran, as a victim of terrorism and a frontline fighter against it, considers countering this heinous phenomenon an international responsibility requiring regional cooperation.

■ 33 ships permitted through Strait of Hormuz in 24 hours: IRGC Navy

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy says 33 more commercial vessels were allowed to sail through the Strait of Hormuz over the past 24 hours, in coordination with Iran's naval forces.

Kiani takes gold at 2026 Asian Taekwondo Championships

TEHRAN - Iran's Nahid Kiani won a gold medal at the 27th Asian Taekwondo Championships underway in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia on Sunday.

She emerged victorious over her Uzbek rival 2-0 in the final match of the featherweight 257 kg category.

On her path to the final, Kiani defeated taekwondo athletes from India, Jordan and Chinese Taipei.

Also, Yalda Valinejad seized a bronze medal at the Lightweight 762 kg.

Kiani's gold was Iran's fifth gold medal in the event.

Abolfazl Zandi in the -58kg, Mahdi Hajimousaei in the -63kg, Amirina Bakhtiari in the -74kg and Arian Salimi in the +87kg had previously won four gold medals for Iran national team.

Iran NPC chief delivers speech at Russian Paralympic anniversary

TEHRAN - Ghafour Kargari, President of the National Paralympic Committee (NPC) of Iran, delivered a keynote address at the 30th anniversary ceremony of the Russian Paralympic Committee during his official visit to Russia.

In his speech, Kargari emphasized Paralympic sport as the universal language of humanity — built on willpower, hope, and transcending limitations. He highlighted Iran's ancient civilization and underscored the resilience of the Iranian nation in the face of recent hardships, including military aggression by the United States and Israel that resulted in 3,375 civilian deaths, among them 168 schoolchildren in Minab.

The NPC chief revealed that nearly 300 Iranian athletes were martyred in the attacks, including one Paralympian, with over 30,000 wounded and more than 200 sports facilities damaged or destroyed. He also referenced the assassination of Iran's late leader, describing him as a symbol of resistance against oppression.

«Today you are witnessing the birth of the world's fourth superpower — a strong Iran,» Kargari stated, attributing the claim to international analysts rather than Iranian officials.

Despite the challenges, Kargari confirmed Iran is actively preparing athletes for the upcoming Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya and other international competitions. He called for expanded sports cooperation between Iran and Russia, particularly in the Paralympic sphere.

During his visit, Kargari is scheduled to hold bilateral meetings with his counterparts and finalize cooperation agreements.

Hossein Khanzadeh poised for Serie A return

TEHRAN - Iranian volleyball player Poriya Hossein Khanzadeh is reportedly on the verge of a high-profile return to the Italian Serie A, with reports linking the 21-year-old outside hitter to Cuneo.

This move comes as a major development following Hossein Khanzadeh's abrupt and surprising departure from Lube Civitanova last January. According to Italian media outlets, the young talent has reached a preliminary agreement with Cuneo management to bolster their roster for the upcoming season.

Should the deal be finalized, Hossein Khanzadeh will step into the shoes of Italian volleyball icon Ivan Zaytsev.

Zaytsev, who has had his own storied tenure at Lube, is set to depart Cuneo, with growing speculation suggesting that the veteran superstar may be looking to continue his illustrious career outside of Italy.

Hossein Khanzadeh, widely regarded as one of

the most promising pillars of the Iranian national team, has been maintaining his competitive edge back home. Just last week, he featured for Foolad Sirjan in the Asian Men's Club Volleyball Championship. Alongside Bulgarian star Aleksandar Nikolov, Hossein Khanzadeh helped drive the team to the final, where they ultimately fell in a hard-fought battle against an Indonesian Jakarta Bhayangkara side stacked with global heavyweights such as Robertlandy Simón, Rok Moziž, and Nimir Abdel-Aziz.

If the move to Cuneo goes through, it will mark a significant new chapter for the young Iranian, offering him a fresh opportunity to prove his mettle on one of the world's most competitive volleyball stages.

Iranians win medals at 2026 Para Powerlifting African Open Championships

TEHRAN - Iranian para powerlifters claimed medals at the 2026 Para Powerlifting African Open Championships held in Oran, Algeria.

Mahdi Sayadi seized a gold medal in the Men's Over 107 kg for a total lift of 703kg.

His countryman Ahmad Aminzadeh seized the silver with 487kg and bronze medal went to Ghana's Tahiru Haruna with 427kg.

Aminzadeh also won a gold medal in the BEST category with 247kg. Sayadi seized the silver in the division with 238kg and Haruna snatched bronze with 217kg.

Also, Aliakbar Gharibshahi won a gold medal in the Men's Up to 107 kg - TOTAL with 705kg. Ali Benmakhlouf of Algeria won the silver with 420kg and Moroccan Yassine El Ankouri won the bronze with 309kg.

Gharibshahi also won a gold medal at the Men's Up to 107 kg - BEST, followed by his countrymen Saman Razi and Reza Enayatollahi with 205kg and 200kg, respectively.

Nikoo Rozbahani of Iran also claimed a silver medal at the Women's Over 86 kg - BEST. She lifted 145kg in the weight class. The gold medal went to Nigerian athlete Folashade Oluwafemi-ayo with 160kg and Egyptian Amany Ali seized the bronze with 138kg.

Iran sweep Sri Lanka at 2026 CAVA

TEHRAN - The Iranian women's national volleyball team defeated Sri Lanka 3-0 (25-16, 25-13, 25-11) in the Central Asian Volleyball Association (CAVA) on Sunday.

The tournament, hosted in Nepal from May 22 to 29, sees the top regional sides vying for continental glory.

Under the guidance of head coach Lee Do-hee, Iran defeated Bangladesh in their first match.

Team Melli will play Kazakhstan on Monday in Pool B.

The CAVA Women's Volleyball Championship 2026 continues through May 29 in Kathmandu as teams compete for regional honors and strengthen sporting ties across the region.

Former Iran midfielder Parviz Ghelichkhani dies

TEHRAN - Former Iran national football team midfielder Parviz Ghelichkhani died on Saturday after a long battle with illness. He was 80.

Ghelichkhani was regarded as one of the greatest footballers in the history of Iran and Asia. He was a key member of Team Melli and helped Iran win three AFC Asian Cup titles in 1968, 1972, and 1976. He also won a gold medal at the 1974 Asian Games.

At club level, Ghelichkhani helped Taj, now known as Esteghlal, win the AFC Champions League in 1970.

He is widely considered one of the best Asian players of the 1970s.

Tehran Times extends its condolences to his family and to Iran's football community.

Iran launches plan to equip 12,000 schools with solar power plants

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN – In a major step toward expanding renewable energy infrastructure, Iran has officially begun a nationwide project to install solar power systems in 12,000 schools. The initiative, with a total capacity of 60 megawatts, aims to reduce pressure on the national grid, promote clean energy, and enhance energy security in the education sector.

The head of the SmallScale Power Plants Development and Monitoring Group at the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization of Iran (SATBA), Robabeh Abdollahi, announced that each of the 12,000 schools will receive a 5kilowatt solar system, including solar panels, inverters and mounting structures. SATBA will supply the main equipment, which will then be delivered to the Organization for Development, Renovation and Equipping of Schools of Iran.

According to Abdollahi, implementation coordination at the provincial level will be carried out in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, provincial governor's offices and regional electricity distribution companies. Once target schools are selected, the required equipment will be transported to the respective provinces.

Mohsen Tarzatab, Deputy Minister of Energy and head of SATBA, reiterated that developing rooftop solar power plants is a key priority for the ministry. "Efforts are being made to facilitate the construction process of these power plants by providing financial facilities to applicants," he said. He also noted that plans for domestic production of necessary equipment are on the agenda to accelerate the development of the sector.

Recordbreaking rooftop solar plant inaugurated in Khorasan Razavi

In a related development, Iran inaugurated its largest rooftop solar power plant last September in the Chenaran industrial town of Khorasan Razavi Province. The 4.5megawatt facility, built by Alis Company, covers 90,000 square meters and was completed in just six months.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, Javad Khodaei, senior adviser to the provincial governor and deputy head of the renewable energy task force, said the project underscores the province's leading role in Iran's solar sector. "This project marks a new record in the scale and capacity of rooftop solar power plants in the country," he stated, adding that Khorasan Razavi had previously hosted recordsetting rooftop facilities with capacities exceeding two megawatts.

Officials say solar energy, particularly in sunny provinces like Khorasan Razavi, is central to Iran's strategy to diversify its power mix and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

Tehran province schools lead the way

Meanwhile, in early November 2025, Majid Parsa, head of the Tehran Education Department, announced that 1,200 schools across Tehran province were set to be equipped with rooftop solar panel systems by the end of the past Iranian calendar year (20 March 2026). The initiative followed an agreement with the Tehran Governor's Office to install fivekilowatt systems on each participating school.

Parsa noted that the project would initially be implemented on a trial basis to assess performance, maintenance and grid integration. "The Education Department has already equipped five schools with pilot solar systems, which have shown promising results," he said at the time. He added that solarpowered schools could play a vital role in energy conservation, providing clean electricity for their own use and potentially supplying surplus power to the national grid.

Akbar Hasan Beklou, managing director of Tehran Province Electricity Distribution Company, earlier stated that the project aims to generate about six megawatts of solar power through these school installations, with the first phase expected to connect to the grid within three months.

First solar school opens in central Tehran with international support

The first school equipped with solar panels was inaugurated in Tehran's District 12 in midNovember 2025. During the opening ceremony, it was announced that any school wishing to install solar panels would receive 50 percent support from the district municipality.



The ceremony was attended by Abdolreza Golpayegani, Deputy Minister of Transport and Urban Development, South Korea's Ambassador to Iran Kim Junpyo, Sadegh Pouraghdam (Advisor to the Minister of Transport and Urban Development and Secretary of the National Habitat Committee), and Mohammad Ayini, Mayor of District 12.

The solar school project was launched on the initiative of the Iran Urban Regeneration Company, with support from the National Habitat Committee of the Islamic Republic of Iran and in cooperation with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) office, at the Rahiane Qods Technical School in the Sirous neighborhood.

At the ceremony, Golpayegani stated that the project is part of the implementation of the "National Urban Policy Document". "The main objective of this project is to model and promote the use of renewable energy in worn-out urban fabrics," he said. "The implementation of this project puts Tehran on the path toward more sustainable and resilient cities."

He explained that the Urban Regeneration Company operates to improve and renovate wornout urban areas in social, economic, cultural and educational fields, and that advancing this mission requires public participation and the cooperation of all relevant institutions.

Government targets 30,000 megawatts of solar capacity

Beyond schoolbased projects, Iran is pursuing a much larger national goal. Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi has announced that the 14th government aims to realise 30,000 megawatts of solar power plants across the country.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the inauguration of the 130megawatt Methanol Kaveh solar power plant in Saveh County, Aliabadi said: "The 14th government is pursuing this promise to be fulfilled by the end of its term, and we will see significant progress in the establishment of solar power plants."

He noted that Iran already has a diverse range of power plants, including wind, geothermal, small hydro, large hydro, and solar. The country's total power plant capacity currently exceeds 100,000 megawatts. "In the 14th government, we are witnessing significant development in connecting power plants to the national grid, and we are in a good position," Aliabadi added.

The minister stated that by next June (the Iranian month of Khordad), 1,000 megawatts of new power plants will be connected to the national grid. He highlighted that one of the key features of solar power plants is that they can be constructed and commissioned in the shortest possible time, and the Ministry of Energy will provide full support.

Aliabadi emphasised the importance of cooperation from public savings and private sector investment in developing solar power plants. He also acknowledged damage inflicted by the enemy during the imposed war on the country's electricity network, which took 4,200 megawatts of power plants offline and damaged some transmission lines. "That damage is being repaired," he said, "and we expect the public's cooperation in saving electricity."

The minister added that the target for electricity generation in the country this year is set at 9,000 megawatts. "If the public reduces consumption, we will reach a better point. We want to shift consumption from a negative balance to a positive one in order to provide better services to the nation."

With schoolbased solar projects gaining momentum and ambitious national targets in place, Iran is positioning itself to become a regional leader in renewable energy, turning sunlight into a pillar of its future power supply.

Strait of Hormuz closure sets stage for global food price shock

TEHRAN- The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) warns that the fallout of war on Iran could push millions in the world into hunger within a year.

Fertilizer crisis hits farmers first

The closure of the Strait of Hormuz following the outbreak of the West Asia conflict on 28 February 2026 is rapidly turning a regional security crisis into a looming global food emergency. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), under normal conditions 2030% of all internationally traded fertilizers pass through the strait. That flow has now been effectively halted.

In an address to the FAO Council on 28 April, DirectorGeneral QU Dongyu called the situation "the beginning of a systemic



agrifood shock." He noted that delays of just two to three weeks in fertilizer supply force farmers to cut application rates, "directly reducing yields per hectare." The FAO estimates that the disruption has already delayed 1.5 to 3 million tons of fertilizer month-

ly, affecting at least 40 million hectares of rice and threatening yield reductions of 1020%.

Prices already climbing sharply

The damage is already visible in global markets. West Asian granular urea jumped nearly

20% within one week of the conflict. By midApril, urea prices had soared 52% in the United States and 60% in Brazil. The FAO Food Price Index averaged 130.7 points in April, up 1.6% from March, while the All Rice Price Index rose 1.9%. The Cereal Price Index increased 1.1% in March, driven partly by higher wheat prices.

Six to twelve months to catastrophe

In a podcast on 20 May 2026, FAO Chief Economist Máximo Torero warned that unless governments act quickly, the world faces "a severe global food price crisis within six to 12 months." Higher energy costs will spread to seeds, yields and ultimately supermarket shelves, he added. With the upward trend already clear, the window for preventive action is closing fast.

Signs of Washington's helplessness in managing energy crisis becomes evident

TEHRAN- The US and Israeli military aggression against Iran has so far cost companies and economic enterprises worldwide at least \$25 billion in expenses and damages. As this war enters its third month, its economic toll grows larger every day, according to a report by IRNA.

The imposed war, which began on 28 February with the military aggression of the US/Israeli coalition against Iran, the martyrdom of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, a number of commanders and innocent people – especially 168 children at the Shajareh Tayyebeh school in Minab – has now taken on not just regional but transregional and global dimensions. At least 279 companies from various industries have cited this war as the primary reason for their defensive measures, including price hikes, production cuts, suspension of dividends, and even requests for emergency government aid.

In fact, the Strait of Hormuz has long ceased to be just a waterway; it has become the "heart of the world's energy", whose pulse shakes not only global markets but also power equations. By demonstrating its will and ability to manage this chokepoint, Iran has not only pushed oil prices above \$100 but is also managing a scene that Western analysts call "Washington's strategic deadlock".

What has happened in recent months is no longer a simple military conflict. It is a display of the end of an era – "the era when America thought of itself as the world's sole unilateral superpower". Today, whether they want to or not, White House and Pentagon officials admit that Iran has shown resilience beyond their predictions. But instead of accepting defeat, they have resorted to "word games". Not only the US, but also its regional and European allies prefer to ignore their failure and cover up reality with rhetorical flourishes.

\$25 billion loss for US manufacturing giants

According to official announcements, the war launched by the US and the Israeli regime against Iran has so far caused at least \$25 billion in losses and costs to companies around the world. However, experts acknowledge that the bigger picture is hidden in the details. Airlines, with \$15 billion in losses, are the largest victims of this crisis. Jet fuel prices have nearly doubled, leading to more expensive tickets for ordinary passengers and accumulated losses for airlines.

Because of rising fuel costs, carmakers have also joined the list of loss-making companies. Toyota has warned that it will lose \$4.3 billion from losing access to its markets. Procter & Gamble has estimated a \$1 billion reduction in its aftertax profit. Even McDonald's, the fast-food giant, has called inflation and supply chain

disruption a longterm threat. McDonald's CEO Chris Kempczinski explicitly stated, "High gasoline prices are the main issue we are seeing now, and it's hurting lowincome consumer demand." German tire manufacturer Continental expects to lose at least €100 million (\$117 million) from the second quarter of the year.

Nearly 40 companies in the industrial, chemical and raw materials sectors have announced that, due to their dependence on petrochemical supplies from the West Asia, they are forced to raise prices. Fertilizer, helium, aluminum and polyethylene – the basis of many everyday goods – are facing reduced supply and higher transport costs. These numbers speak clearly to a reality that Western officials are trying to hide. The war with Iran has not been a military or economic victory, but a costly bleeding for the West itself.

\$6 gasoline and ruin of American families

But the costs of this deadlock have not been limited to companies. Inside the US, the inflationary pressure from the energy crisis has become a hot domestic political issue. Senator Chris Murphy, appearing at petrol stations across the country, strongly criticized Trump's actions in starting the war against Iran. In a video he released, the senator said: "These costs are destroying American families. Gas prices have reached \$56 per gallon, and these numbers are still rising." It is also worth noting that before the US/Iran war, gasoline prices in America were \$23 per gallon.

US economic media clearly report on the inflationary pressure from the energy crisis. Rising food prices, transport costs and even household bills are part of this wave. The European Union has also warned that the war with Iran is causing inflationary shock and increasing pressure on the global economy.

Unprecedented record in drawing down strategic oil reserves

But perhaps the clearest sign of Washington's helplessness is the action taken by the US government this week. A Bloomberg reporter has reported that last week America released about 9.9 million barrels of oil from its Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) into the market. That means a drawdown rate of more than 1.4 million barrels per day for the second consecutive week, setting a record.

Releasing strategic reserves is a government's last trump card in a crisis. It is an action that shows there is no longer any effective lever on producers or the market. Washington, which thought it could bring Iran to heel through sanctions and military threats, is now forced to use oil stored from its past wars to compensate for current shortages. This is nothing short of a practical admission of defeat. It doesn't matter

what phrases US officials use. Whatever words they choose, the evident reality is that tankers are being emptied from America's strategic reserves to keep gasoline prices from crossing the \$7 threshold.

In another report, Bloomberg has warned that if the disruption to shipping through the Strait of Hormuz continues until August, the risk of a devastating global economic recession on the scale of the 2008 financial crisis will increase sharply. Since the war between the US and Israel with Iran began in late February, oil prices in global markets have nearly doubled, creating serious concerns about the simultaneous occurrence of high inflation and economic recession.

Bloomberg's initial forecast assumed the Strait would reopen in July, leading to an average reduction in oil demand of 2.6 million barrels per day and Brent crude prices around \$130 per barrel in the summer. However, if the supply disruption continues until August of this year, an even sharper demand reduction will be needed to offset this massive market shock – a reduction so significant that it could push global annual oil consumption in 2026 into negative territory.

End of an illusion and the beginning of a new reality

Eric Ham, a wellknown American political analyst, believes: "Trump has reached a dead end; he and his party are frustrated. Another war with Iran means more dead American soldiers, and an early end to Trump's presidency." This assessment can be extended to all of America's allies. They have reached a dead end. On the one hand, the New York Times, citing US military officials, writes that Iran "has shown extraordinary resilience and still has the ability to inflict serious damage on the region and the global economy." On the other hand, global markets are under inflationary shock, and economic media warn that escalating tensions in the Strait of Hormuz could plunge the world into a long, drawdown crisis.

But perhaps the most important point is this: "Neither the US nor its allies want to admit that they have failed." Instead of accepting reality, they have taken refuge in concealment and word games. They speak of "maximum diplomacy" while their strategic oil reserves are being emptied. They speak of a "regional coalition" while their allies are fighting each other. They speak of "American power" while \$6 gasoline is destroying their families. The Strait of Hormuz is closed, but a new window has opened on a fresh understanding of power in the world. That new reality is one that Iran has shaped through its patience and resilience.

Iran's position in international maritime bodies will be elevated: PMO head

TEHRN- The head of the Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) cited effective presence and the elevation of Iran's position in the International Maritime Organization (IMO) as one of the serious approaches, and emphasized: "Backed by 5,800 kilometers of maritime border and the history of Iranian seafaring on the high seas, Iran's presence in international forums must be more prominent than in the past."

According to a report by IRNA on Sunday from the Ports and Maritime Organization, Mohammad ShakibiNasab described the revision of maritime and port processes as another transformative approach in the new management period of the organization, saying: "In the new period of maritime affairs management at the Ports and Maritime Organization, modern technologies must be used to revise and standardise the country's

maritime activities."

The Deputy Minister of Transport and Urban Development, while praising the country's seafarers and mariners who, with their unique bravery and courage during the difficult conditions of the war, did not allow the food security of Iran's noble people to be endangered, stressed: "The Ports and Maritime Organization, with the cooperation and support of all relevant bodies,

will employ all its efforts and service capacities to supply the essential needs and basic goods of the people."

Referring to the IMO's motto – "Safe, secure and clean seas" – he emphasized: "The Ports and Maritime Organization, as one of the longeststanding members of the IMO, has always been a pioneer in the implementation of maritime conventions."

The irreversible shattering of Israel's diplomatic armor

From page 1 ▶ What is unfolding across global capitals is a fundamental recalculation. The regime is now confronting a self-made encirclement, increasingly treated by its traditional accomplices as an erratic strategic liability rather than an indispensable asset.

The sidelined proxy

The campaign of aggression against Iran, designed to deliver a definitive regional knockout blow, has instead accelerated Israel's strategic marginalization.

Tel Aviv entered the conflict promising its public and its Western backers total victory: immediate regime change in Tehran, the physical destruction of Iran's nuclear infrastructure, and the eradication of its ballistic missile and drone infrastructure. None of these delusional objectives was achieved.

Furthermore, a recent report by The New York Times has claimed that Israeli military officials privately admitted they had been "banished from the cockpit to economy class" during subsequent U.S.-Iran ceasefire negotiations.

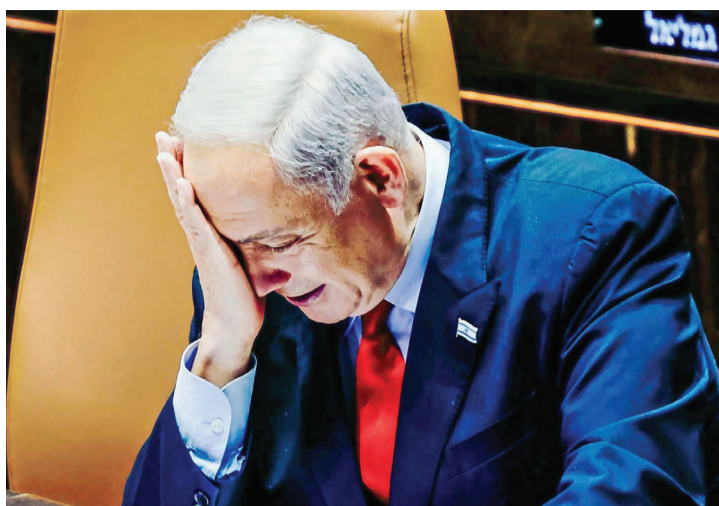
Rather than shaping regional architecture from the White House Situation Room, Israeli officials reportedly found themselves scavenging for details of the ceasefire via surveillance intercepts and third-party diplomatic contacts.

The resulting framework represents Netanyahu's ultimate strategic defeat. The reported deal that may be finalized leaves Iran's massive ballistic missile arsenal entirely intact, supposedly may introduce only temporary limitations on its nuclear enrichment, and paves the way for unfreezing Iranian foreign assets as well as sanctions relief and re-entering the economy.

Tel Aviv's aggressive overreach exposed its lack of leverage, leaving the regime a passive spectator to an endgame largely dictated on Tehran's terms.

The verdict of the street and the court

This strategic demotion is unfolding alongside an even more comprehensive collapse of moral legitimacy, driven by the unfiltered documentation of the assault on Gaza.



With the Gaza death toll surpassing 72,000, the daily reality of flattened neighborhoods, deliberate starvation, and ruined hospitals has bypassed traditional Western media gatekeepers to enter global memory directly.

This real-time visual archive has catalyzed a profound generational shift, rendering unconditional support for Israel politically toxic across many Western countries.

The political consequences have fast outpaced mere rhetoric. A historic wave of statehood recognitions has swept through the Western diplomatic mainstream, with France, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Portugal, and Belgium formally recognizing the State of Palestine, effectively stripping Tel Aviv of its long-held veto over Palestinian sovereignty.

Concurrently, the legal framework protecting the regime is being dismantled. The International Criminal Court's issuance of arrest warrants for Benjamin Netanyahu, Yoav Gallant, and other figures has transformed top Israeli officials into international fugitives across more than 100 member states, legally restricting their movement across Europe, Latin America, and Africa.

At the same time, South Africa's genocide case before the International Court of Justice has placed the legal identity of the state under permanent judicial scrutiny.

The language of diplomacy has shifted permanently; leaders such as Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez now openly invoke comparisons to historical apartheid regimes, codifying an international record of accountability that no propa-

ganda campaign can erase.

The collapse of the borderless defense

The diplomatic recoil has breached the traditional geographic boundaries that Israel once relied upon to contain regional fallout.

The handling of the Global Sumud Flotilla in late May serves as the definitive illustration of this wider systemic friction. The violent interception of over 400 international activists in international waters, followed by systemic torture and abuse, triggered immediate European outrage.

The crisis turned into an institutional disaster when National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir published footage of himself taunting bound, kneeling detainees, boasting that "we are the masters of this house."

While Israeli propaganda operators scrambled to frame Ben-Gvir as a rogue extremist who did not represent the regime's policy, foreign capitals rejected the distinction. He is a senior cabinet minister appointed by and accountable to Netanyahu; his actions were correctly interpreted as an unwashed expression of the regime's political culture.

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni labeled the footage unbearable, prompting a formal diplomatic summons and driving parliamentary debates over economic sanctions. This domestic pressure has reinforced a widening web of European arms embargoes that now includes restrictions from Germany, Italy, Spain, and the Netherlands.

Even more striking was the diplomatic rupture in East

Asia. South Korean President Lee Jae-myung delivered an unprecedented public rebuke, calling the detention of South Korean citizens inhumane, extreme, and "way out of line."

In a televised cabinet session, Lee explicitly referenced the ICC warrants and labeled Netanyahu a war criminal.

When a major, U.S.-aligned industrial power with almost no traditional involvement in Middle Eastern disputes adopts this language, it proves that Israel's diplomatic containment zones have completely ceased to function.

Normalization in reverse

The central premise of modern Israeli diplomacy was the illusion that it could secure regional integration through the Abraham Accords while permanently marginalizing the Palestinian cause.

The war on Gaza completely destroyed that fantasy. Driven by intense domestic public fury, Arab governments have been forced to reverse course, firmly conditioning any future diplomatic or economic engagement on the explicit establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state.

Furthermore, the campaign against Iran demonstrated that the further removed a regional country is from an alliance with Israel, the safer and more prosperous it remains, as the UAE's recent vulnerabilities illustrate.

This diplomatic quarantine is mirrored by a broader societal retreat. More than 1000 European universities have implemented academic boycotts, cultural institutions have enacted sweeping bans, and the mechanics of a "fortress economy" are failing to shield domestic markets from capital flight and supply chain disruption.

By relying entirely on murder and military coercion and ignoring the changing international landscape, Israel's leadership has dismantled its own geopolitical foundation.

The resulting isolation cannot be undone by a revised public relations strategy or another round of tactical force. The structural architecture that once protected Tel Aviv from global accountability has vanished, leaving a weaker, deeply divided regime exposed to a changing international order.

Yisrael Beiteinu, leader Avigdor Lieberman criticized Netanyahu, accusing him of turning the Zionist regime into a "banana republic".

In an interview, cited by the regime's Channel 12 website, Lieberman said that "Whoever has failed to win on any front for two and a half years will never win," adding that he has set two clear goals ahead of the elections: "bringing down the October 7 government" and becoming prime minister himself.

Responding to reports of a potential agreement between the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran, the former regime's Security Council chief, Major General Giora Eiland, said the outcome of the war has become clear, pointing out that the United States is in "an obvious dilemma," and as a result, the regime "is in an even greater dilemma."

He noted that "this path returns the United States to square one, where in January it sought negotiations covering the nuclear issue, ballistic missiles, and Hezbollah, but the Iranians at the time limited discussions to the nuclear file," stressing that this is currently "the best possible scenario" given the present deadlock.

As reports of a possible end to the regime's war circulate, the IOF ordered immediate evacuation orders for another ten towns and villages in southern Lebanon. Similar orders in the past have seen entire areas wiped out with indiscriminate bombardment. Scenes similar to Gaza, where the occupying regime was incapable of defeating Palestinian resistance forces, resulting in widespread destruction, are emerging in South Lebanon.

Widening divide between the US and Europe

From page 1 ▶ "Trump's America First policy has shaken decades of trust between Europe and the U.S. It has made Europeans question the reliability of the transatlantic alliance," Robert Kagan, an American foreign policy expert, wrote in Foreign Affairs in 2018.

Is NATO a security umbrella or tool for extortion?

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is an international military alliance founded in 1949 for collective defense. According to Article 5, an attack on one member is considered an attack on all. NATO was created to counter Soviet influence and focused for decades on maintaining security and stability in Europe and North America.

Trump challenged NATO's core by questioning Article 5 and calling the alliance "obsolete." He treated NATO as a protective service that European partners should fully pay for, creating an unprecedented conflict between Washington and capitals like Berlin and Paris. Europeans, who had relied on U.S. security guarantees for decades, suddenly faced a demanding ally. This tension planted the idea of a "unified European army." Leaders realized they could no longer depend on U.S. election cycles for long-term security and needed local deterrence.

The idea of a unified European army is about creating an independent military force for the EU, reducing reliance on the U.S. and NATO. Supporters, like France, emphasize strategic autonomy and better regional crisis management.

In November 2019, French President Emmanuel Macron famously spoke about the "brain death of NATO", criticizing the lack of coordination and predictability among allies. "What we are witnessing is the brain death of NATO. Europe must assume its responsibilities in defense and foreign policy," Macron said, the Economist reported.

However, challenges remain: high costs, disagreements over national sovereignty and command, and concerns about weakening NATO. The 2022 Ukraine war reinforced the need to strengthen Europe's defense, though the focus remains on international defense cooperation rather than a fully independent army.

US pullout from the Iran nuclear agreement dealt a blow to EU

Trump's withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA) was also seen by Europe as an insult to its political sovereignty. For the EU, the deal was a major achievement of multilateral diplomacy and a symbol of its independent role in global crises.

By ignoring European allies and imposing secondary sanctions, Trump penalized European companies and violated their economic autonomy. This economic confrontation deepened divisions, prompting Europe to attempt alternatives like INSTEX, a financial mechanism to bypass U.S. sanctions, which ultimately failed. The episode highlighted that Washington, pursuing its aggressive goals, was willing to sacrifice even its closest allies.

An ally becomes an economic adversary

Under the banner of protecting U.S. industries, Trump imposed heavy tariffs on European steel and aluminum, bluntly calling the EU a "trade enemy." This opened a new front where diplomacy gave way to threats and retaliation. For Europe, built on free trade, America's behavior was like a declaration of war on the existing

economic order.

The trade conflict affected global markets and pushed Europe to diversify trade partners and reduce dependence on the United States. Trump's transactional logic poisoned transatlantic cooperation, showing that even a long-time ally could become a rival.

Trump's threat to annex Greenland by force, if necessary, came as a shock to the European Union. Fearing the threat from Trump, Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen visited Germany, France, and Brussels in early August 2019 to rally support after Trump expressed interest in purchasing Greenland.

Vice President J.D. Vance visited Greenland on March 28, 2025, along with then National Security Adviser Mike Waltz, Secretary of Energy Chris Wright, and Senator Mike Lee. Though Vance claimed that the U.S. does not believe "military force is ever going to be necessary" for taking over Greenland, the Europeans did not believe it.

Trump's withdrawal from the Paris climate agreement undermined US global leadership

Europe viewed the U.S. exit from the Paris Climate Agreement as a serious blow to America's moral and global leadership. The EU, seeing itself as a pioneer in tackling environmental crises, called Trump's move a "betrayal of international responsibility." While Europe moved toward green energy and global cooperation, Trump returned to fossil fuels and rejected scientific facts. This ideological clash made Europe oppose the U.S. in many international forums, proving that under Trump, America could no longer lead the Western world and had become an obstacle to solving global challenges.

Trump's infamous assertion that global warming was a hoax invented by the Chinese to undermine American manufacturing is fresh in the minds of environmentalists around the world.

Just on Thursday (May 21), when the UN voted 141-8 to adopt a resolution backing a world court opinion that countries have a legal obligation to address climate change, the U.S., the world's biggest historical emitter, opposed it.

The Associated Press reported in February that the Trump administration had been urging other nations to press the Pacific island nation of Vanuatu to withdraw the resolution from consideration.

Europe's lasting legacy

Perhaps the most important consequence of Trump's unpredictable policies was the European realization of the need for strategic independence. Addressing the Bundestag in 2019, former German Chancellor Angela Merkel said, "Europe must take its fate into its own hands. We cannot always rely on others, even longtime allies, to act in our interest."

Former EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, addressing the European Parliament in 2020, emphasized the need for strategic autonomy. He said: "Europe has realized that relying too heavily on the United States is a strategic vulnerability. We must strengthen our own capacity to act."

The structural aggression of Trump's approach pushed Europe to strengthen independent military capabilities and alternative financial systems. Even after Trump left office and relations appeared calmer, deep distrust remained—a lasting legacy.

Hezbollah strikes Israel's Iron Dome launchers

From page 1 ▶ Other operations announced by Hezbollah include the targeting of IOF vehicles at the Iskandarouna area in towns of Al-Bayyada and Rashaf with rocket barrages.

On five separate occasions on Saturday, IOF vehicles operating near the Deir Seryan River came under intense Hezbollah artillery fire, turning the area into a sustained battlefield flashpoint.

The IOF announced the death of another soldier near the Lebanese border. In a military statement, the slain soldier was identified as 23-year-old Staff Sergeant Noam Hamburger, whom the IOF said "fell during operational activity" in a northern Israeli settlement.

Since the regime's military escalation in southern Lebanon began in early March, the IOF claims a total of 23 soldiers have been killed, including one military contractor, though ironically, despite repeated announcements of new battlefield deaths, the reported IOF death toll against Hezbollah has remained hovering around the 20 mark for weeks now.

In other operations, Hezbollah struck an IOF engineering vehicle in the southern Lebanese town of Bint Jbeil with an Ababil attack drone, scoring a confirmed hit.

Resistance fighters confronted an IOF Heron 1 drone over the Bekaa region with a surface-to-air missile, forcing it to withdraw.

Hezbollah's operations coincide with growing criticism inside the regime's military establishment over the course of the war in Lebanon.

Haaretz reported that officers and soldiers fighting in southern Lebanon are experiencing "mounting frustration" within military units amid unclear objectives and uncertainty over whether the political and military leadership seeks a decisive military victory or a ceasefire.

According to testimonies from IOF soldiers, current operations inside Lebanese villages have become focused mainly on "demolishing homes and residential infrastructure," while Hezbollah drones are increasingly viewed as the "most painful" threat facing the regime's forces, amid rising casualties and losses among troops and growing discussion inside the regime about military exhaustion and the failure to achieve field gains on the Lebanese front.

The Hebrew-language Channel 12 reported that "the launch of explosive drones at soldiers and the northern front, which has made the 'permitted for publication' statistics severe, has only demonstrated the seriousness of the problem.

As we now see, Iran is demanding (and accepting) an end to the war in Lebanon. As for Hezbollah, it is not only holding firm but proving its resilience through weeks of fierce fighting.

The channel adds that meanwhile, the regime "has been forced into a state of complete helplessness due to President Trump's directives, and the soldiers' hands have become, as they say, tied."

On Saturday, the regime's political party,



An activist holds a poignant sign reading "GAZA SILENCE ON TUE STOP GENOCIDE" ("Gaza: Silence kills; Stop the genocide") during a rally at the Place de la République in Paris on May 23, 2026. Held in support of the Global Sumud Flotilla, the demonstration features a large foreground banner and vibrant flags waving beneath the springtime tree canopy.

Ancient cemetery from Iron Age, Parthian era discovered in northern Iran



TEHRAN - Archaeologists working at the historic Chaser Elit site in northern Iran have uncovered a cemetery dating back to the Iron Age and Parthian period, along with a range of artifacts that researchers say could provide new insight into the lifestyles, rituals and social structures of ancient communities in the Mazandaran region.

According to Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, the discoveries were announced by excavation team leader Hossein Nemati during a specialized meeting on recent findings from the Chaser Elit archaeological site near Marzanabad in Chalus county.

Nemati said the site is considered one of the major ancient settlement centers in western Mazandaran. The site was added to Iran's national heritage list in 2019 and contains evidence of continuous human habitation from the Iron Age, Parthian and Sasanian eras through the Islamic and Safavid periods.

He said the geographical and climatic characteristics of the mountainous region support theories of seasonal habitation, nomadic movement and temporary settlement patterns, making the site particularly significant for anthropological and cultural archaeological studies.

The first season of excavations focused on determining the boundaries and protected zone of the site, Nemati said. The second phase, carried out in the Iranian year 1403 with the participation of five senior archaeology experts and five archaeology students from Chalus University, involved exploratory trenching across different sections of the historical mound.

The excavations uncovered remains of residential architecture built with local materials such as wood, rough stone and river stones, indicating what Nemati described as the inhabitants' adaptation to the surrounding natural environment.

The most significant discovery of the second excavation season was the Iron Age and Parthian-era cemetery, where archaeologists found a collection of weapons including spearheads, swords, daggers and javelins.

Nemati said the findings could offer valuable information about military structures, burial customs and social relations among communities living in the region during ancient times.

Researchers also uncovered a variety of historical jewelry items, including bracelets, necklaces, decorative clothing beads, earrings, hairpins and rings made from bronze, iron and silver.

Nemati said the artifacts hold particular importance for studies of culture, art and ancient metalworking technologies.

Among the more distinctive finds was a finely crafted jet seal engraved with the image of a mountain goat, as well as spinning tools and a rare Parthian-era rhyton decorated with a horse motif.

The excavation leader said these objects likely had ceremonial or ritual functions and may help researchers better understand the symbolic systems and cultural beliefs of ancient societies in northern Iran.

Several intact historical vessels were also recovered from the site, which Nemati said would provide valuable material for comparative archaeological studies in northern Iran.

He said one of the long-term goals of the project is to transform the Chaser Elit site into a site museum or regional museum. Nemati added that completion of boundary designation procedures and additional financial support from local authorities and the Ministry of Cultural Heritage would allow for broader excavations and greater public introduction of the site, particularly for local communities in western Mazandaran and Marzanabad.

Glimpses of World Heritage sites: Jesuit Missions of the Guaranis

Jesuit Missions of the Guaranis is a serial transnational property that consists of the ruins of São Miguel Arcanjo in Brazil, and those of San Ignacio Mini, Santa Ana, Nuestra Señora de Loreto, and Santa María la Mayor in Argentina.

According to UNESCO, these are the impressive remains of Jesuit Mission settlements established in the 17th and 18th centuries on lands originally occupied by Guarani indigenous communities.

In Brazil, the ruins of the São Miguel Arcanjo church constitute the most intact and complete structure among this period's designated heritage properties. In Argentina, the four Jesuit-Guarani Missions, located in the southern Misiones province, provide an exceptional example of systematic and organized territorial occupation.

The properties' surviving ruins depict the experience of the Society of Jesus in South America, where there emerged a singular system of spatial, economic, social, and cultural relations in 30 settlements - referred to as reducciones - that included ranches, mate plantations, and networks of trails and waterways extending across the Uruguay River and its tributaries.

This particular model of the reducciones also included smaller structures and constructions designed to support the basic functions of the

settlements. Together, these elements, each closely integrated within productive lands, and each manifesting the distinct potential and complementary traits of the various settlements and the other Jesuit provinces in the region, inform this underlying interpretation, reflected by the serial heritage property in a singular and specific fashion.

An integral part of the evangelization campaigns, the Missions stand as an important testament to the systematic occupation of the area and to the cultural relations forged between the area's indigenous populations, mostly Guarani, and the European Jesuit missionaries.

Over time, these structures lost their original religious, residential, educational, and cultural functions. Today, the various Missions include fragments of walls corresponding to the original monuments (churches, dwellings, workshops, orchards). Their archaeological remains are deemed historic monuments and important to the development of the respective local communities. In exceptional cases, they are used for religious or recreational events. None of the components of the serial transnational property are under threat, having been preserved through direct government action in both Argentina and Brazil.

(Source: UNESCO)

Community participation drives sustainable tourism in Iran's Pamemar village

TEHRAN - Nestled in the mountainous Shahiyun district of Dezful in southwestern Iran's Khuzestan province, the village of Pamemar has emerged as a notable example of community-based sustainable tourism, where residents have combined traditional knowledge, environmental protection, and cultural heritage to create new economic opportunities while preserving their rural identity.

Overlooking the waters of the Dez Dam reservoir and situated near the protected areas of Qaleh Shadab and Chehel-Pa, Pamemar has increasingly attracted domestic and international visitors seeking ecotourism experiences, handicrafts, and wildlife observation. Local tourism experts say the village's development model is rooted in the active participation of its residents and their close relationship with the natural and cultural landscape inherited from previous generations.

According to Azardokht Nouzari, a tour guide and ecotourism expert from Khuzestan province, one of Pamemar's defining features is the collective determination of its residents to transform the village into a sustainable tourism destination.

The modern history of the village dates back to the 1960s, when the construction and filling of the Dez Dam submerged the original settlement beneath the reservoir's waters. Many residents left their ancestral lands at the time, relocating to nearby towns and cities. However, a number of families chose to remain in the area and rebuilt their homes beside the newly formed lake, often reusing materials salvaged from their former houses.

Residents and local observers describe the rebuilding of Pamemar as a symbol of resilience and attachment to place. As the village gradually revived, some former residents who had migrated to urban areas returned to help rebuild community life.

Today, local participation forms the backbone of the village's tourism economy. Residents are involved in handicrafts, ecotourism services, hospitality businesses, environmental conservation projects, and lake-based recreational activities.

Among the most prominent cultural traditions in Pamemar is "kapou-bafi," a form of woven handicraft historically produced for household use. The craft was initially practiced by men using young palm leaves and a native plant that was once considered a wild weed in the region. Over



time, women became increasingly involved in the production process, introducing new patterns and decorative styles.

Following the national registration of kapou weaving as an Iranian handicraft, the art form expanded beyond the village and spread throughout Khuzestan through locally organized training workshops. In 2024, the city of Dezful was designated as a World City of Kapou by international handicraft organizations, further increasing attention toward the region and its traditional crafts.

The growing prominence of kapou weaving has contributed to a rise in tourism to Pamemar, regarded as one of the craft's historical centers. Visitors travel to the village to observe artisans at work and purchase handcrafted products.

Local officials and residents say nearly all members of the village community - including women, men, and children - now participate in the craft either as an artistic practice or as a source of income. Over generations, kapou weaving has evolved to incorporate local motifs inspired by ancient gravestone carvings, regional plants, and wildlife.

In recent years, kapou-inspired designs have also been integrated into the village's architecture and public spaces, including decorative doors, walls, and pathways. Residents say the handicraft sector has played an important role in creating employment opportunities, particularly for women.

Environmental conservation has also become closely linked to tourism development in the area.

Pamemar's location near the Dez Lake ecosystem and the forests of the Zagros mountain range has made it an important habitat for wildlife species. One of the most significant attractions for birdwatchers is the rare fish owl, which nests among the cliffs overlooking the lake.

Historically, owls in Iranian folklore have carried conflicting symbolic meanings, ranging from bad omens to symbols of wisdom. Local residents once regarded the species with fear, but attitudes gradually shifted after several environmentally conscious young villagers, working alongside Iran's Department of Environment and scientific communities, introduced the bird to wildlife enthusiasts and researchers.

The fish owl eventually became a protected species in the region, and conservation efforts surrounding the bird helped encourage broader environmental awareness. Residents and local guides say populations of other wildlife species, including wild goats that were previously difficult to spot because of excessive hunting, have also become more visible in recent years.

Wildlife imagery now appears throughout the village in handicrafts, sculptures, murals, and public decorations, reinforcing connections between tourism, art, and environmental protection.

In fact, community-led conservation efforts extend beyond wildlife protection in Pamemar. Villagers have participated in reforestation initiatives involving native tree species such as wild almond and berry trees. Resi-

dents often point out clusters of young trees planted collectively around the surrounding hillsides.

Traditional harvesting practices also remain part of village life. Women commonly gather native fruits from nearby mountains while observing local environmental customs designed to avoid damaging plant populations. During springtime, many households prepare traditional products such as berry flour and local date-based foods using indigenous ingredients collected from the area.

As tourism activity expanded through handicrafts and ecotourism, water-based recreation emerged as another important source of sustainable income. Many residents own boats used to transport visitors across the lake for sightseeing and wildlife observation tours.

Boat operators have increasingly taken on the role of local tour guides, introducing visitors to the ecological and cultural history of the region.

Today, tourism-related activities involve virtually all sectors of the village community. Eco-lodges, guesthouses, handicraft shops, and local guides form part of an expanding rural tourism network aimed at balancing economic development with the preservation of cultural and environmental heritage.

Residents say they continue to participate in training and capacity-building programs in an effort to improve service standards while maintaining the village's traditional identity and ecological balance.

Echoes of the past: A guard dog sculpture



Being kept at the National Museum of Iran, the pictured sculpture, is a remarkable artwork which dates from the Achaemenid era (c. 550-330BC).

The object carved from a single block of polished, dark gray limestone, depicts a life-sized guard dog in a seated posture atop a rectangular base. The surface of the stone has been meticulously smoothed and polished, reflecting a high level of craftsmanship typical of Achaemenid stonework.



The local dark gray limestone takes a high polish and was widely used at Persepolis.

The dog's head was already missing when the statue was discovered during Erich Schmidt's excavations in the 1930s. The head now seen on the sculpture is a modern restoration. Pre-restoration photographs show the headless body and reveal additional canine features, such as untreated nails on the paws.

Based on the raised contours remaining around the neck area,

the animal likely wore a collar. Its robust physique, heavy shoulders, thick legs, and large paws identify it as a mastiff - the ancient ancestor of today's Sarabi dogs.

Renowned for their strength and loyalty, mastiffs were widely employed in antiquity for guarding and hunting and appear frequently in Assyrian bas-reliefs.

According to the National Museum, the statue, together with its base and the surviving fragments (paws) of a second, largely destroyed dog sculpture, was unearthed in the vestibule of the southeastern tower of the Apadana, the grand audience hall of the Persepolis complex. A third, unfinished dog found east of the Tachara of Darius - now in the Persepolis Museum - confirms that these sculptures were produced locally. Archaeological evidence indicates that the pair originally flanked an entrance, serving as symbolic guardians of the royal palace.

Despite its canine identity, the sculpture exhibits subtle li-

on-like traits - including a heavy, compact chest, a barrel-like rib cage, and prominent, carefully modeled claws - which enhance its apotropaic (protective) function. In Zoroastrian belief, dogs were honored for their courage, faithfulness, and their role as links between the living and the dead. Thus, the choice of canine imagery carried a cluster of beneficial and protective meanings for an Iranian audience. Dogs appear rarely in monumental Iranian art before the Achaemenid period, making these sculptures a distinctive and significant example of Achaemenid royal iconography.

The artistic style, meticulous finish, and powerful realism of these works stand out as exceptional within the sculptural tradition of Persepolis. Unlike the formalized reliefs on the palace stairways, these freestanding guardian figures display a naturalistic attention to musculature and posture, highlighting the importance of protective imagery in ancient Persian architecture and belief.

Japan ready to broaden humanitarian ties with Iran

TEHRAN - Japan's Ambassador to Iran, Tamaki Tsukada, has announced his country's readiness to expand cooperation with Iran in humanitarian areas.

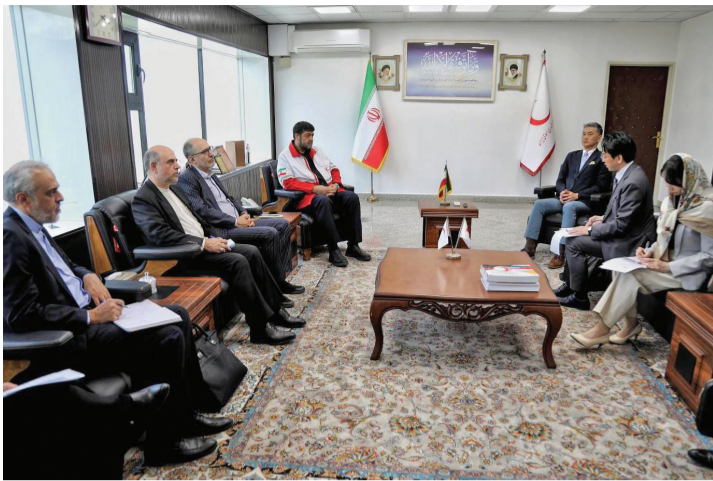
He also said Japan is interested in providing food and health commodities to Iran and developing economic relations between the two countries, noting that implementing a joint project would mark the beginning of a new chapter in this regard, IRNA reported.

The Japanese envoy made the remarks in a meeting in Tehran on Monday, May 18, with Pirhossein Kolivand, the head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society.

He announced that Japan will send its first shipment of humanitarian aid to Iran in the coming weeks, adding that the issue had been finalized in an agreement between the foreign ministers of the two countries.

Referring to Iran's aid to Japan after the 2011 earthquake, the ambassador said: "The Japanese people are grateful for this support, and today they also feel deep sympathy for the Iranian people."

Kolivand, for his part, said Iran has good experience related to disaster management, but Japan also has valuable practical experience in this field. "Knowledge exchange and transfer of experience between specialized teams of the two countries can play an important role in enhancing capabilities."



Economic, scientific relations

On May 15, the Japanese envoy met with Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Seyed Ali Madanizadeh, discussing ways to expand economic cooperation between the two countries.

The meeting, which took place at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, addressed the development of cooperation and economic relations, including the activities of private companies, as well as collaboration in the field of economic activities between the two nations.

During the meeting, both sides emphasized the serious determination of senior officials of Iran and Japan to develop joint cooperation between the two countries.

In January, Tsukada highlighted the significance of promoting scientific ties with Iranian universities in different areas, especially emerging technologies, artificial

intelligence (AI), and advanced materials.

Science and industry are the two main indicators of power in the 21st century, which play a critical role in scientific diplomacy, IRNA quoted Tsukada as saying.

He made the remarks in a meeting with Mahmoud Shokrieh, the chancellor of Iran University of Science and Technology (IUST). The ambassador said the scientific capabilities and capacities of Iran have never been truly presented to Japan, and that it is his main responsibility to do so. He also announced readiness to foster interactions between the IUST and Japanese universities.

For his part, Shokrieh elaborated on the University's achievements in science, research, and industry. He proposed exchanging professors and students, conducting collaborative educational courses and scientific projects, establishing joint laboratories,

and cooperating in science and technology parks.

Referring to the consortium of the top five universities of technology in Iran, namely the University of Tehran, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Amirkabir University of Technology, Sharif University of Technology, and Iran University of Medical Sciences (called UT5), the official said the consortium can lay the ground for the expansion of scientific interactions between the best Iranian universities of technology and Japanese universities, which was well-received by the Japanese side.

In October 2024, Science, Research, and Technology Minister Hosseini Simaie-Sarrafi and Tsukada discussed avenues for boosting scientific and technological collaborations between the two countries.

The officials met in Tehran, a week before attending the 21st annual meeting of the Science and Technology in Society (STS) forum held from October 6 to 8, 2024, in Kyoto, Japan.

Referring to Iran and Japan's global ranking in producing articles related to nanotechnology, which are fifth and fourth, respectively, Tsukada stressed the two countries could collaborate and become the leading countries in this field.

The Japanese official went on to say that regarding former joint activities, "Iran and Japan's collaborations in the field of environment can also be expanded."

Sea turtles: threats and opportunities

TEHRAN - As one of the oldest reptiles on Earth, with some species dating back more than 200 million years, more than half of turtle species are threatened with extinction today, and without extensive conservation efforts, they may die out.

Iran is home to 10 species of turtles, including five of the world's seven sea turtle species; natural and human-induced factors have posed major threats to the sea turtles' survival, IRNA reported.

The five marine turtles are namely the red turtle (*Caretta caretta*), the green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), the hawksbill sea turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), the olive ridley sea turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), and the leatherback sea turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*).

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List Status for these sea turtles is as follows. The red turtle and green turtle are classified as critically endangered species worldwide, while the leatherback sea turtle and hawksbill sea turtle are among the critically endangered ones. Olive ridley turtles are listed as a vulnerable species.

The coasts of the country are among the favorite places for green and hawksbill turtles to lay their eggs. Red, green and hawksbill sea turtles are mostly found on the coasts of the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman. The other two species are only spotted on the coasts of the Sea of Oman.

Due to their popularity among people, sea turtles are recognized as a flagship species that can lead to the protection of other living things and the ecosystem.

Sea turtles have a relatively long lifespan, but it takes them a long time (15 to 50 years) to mature, so they are in dire need of protection as the death of any one of them can pose serious damage to their entire popula-

tion in an area.

Natural threats to sea turtles include beach erosion and predators like birds, foxes, crabs, and rats that feed on the eggs of the turtles.

Human-induced hazards involve bycatch and entanglement in fishing nets, marine debris, coastal construction and development, off-road vehicles, pollution (including light, noise, and oil), the increase of non-native species (such as stray dogs) in the area where turtles live, climate change (affecting sex ratio), and turtle trades (meat and eggs) by local communities.

Cleaning up beaches and coasts, identifying and abolishing development and tourism in turtles' habitats, granting funds to study turtles, providing long-term conservation programs at national and provincial levels, strengthening NGOs, and most importantly, raising public awareness and training local communities are among the major factors that contribute to the protection of sea turtles.

Observed on May 23rd each year, World Turtle Day is a reminder of the urgent need to intensify efforts against plastic pollution, habitat destruction, and threats to marine and terrestrial ecosystems.

Founded in 2000 by American Tortoise Rescue to protect turtles and tortoises everywhere. The Day seeks to educate people about how to properly care for turtles by helping them to survive the consequences of rapid habitat changes. It also aims to spread awareness about turtles, with an emphasis placed on the disappearance of their habitat and how humans can help.

Preserving marine coastal ecosystem

Over the past few years, the Department of Environment (DOE) has been implementing more than 120 projects to protect the country's marine coastal ecosystem.

These projects play crucial



roles in safeguarding, managing, and restoring marine ecosystems, IRNA quoted Shahram Fadakari, an official with DOE, as saying.

They encompass a wide range of sectors such as conserving sea turtles, managing coral reef habitats, coastal zoning, studying marine mammals, as well as evaluating the marine ecosystem's health, and mangrove forests, the official added.

Studying sea turtle nesting habitat restoration in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, monitoring coastal and offshore ecosystems in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, developing national action plans for endangered species, and assessing the biodiversity of marine invertebrates are among the key projects, he noted.

The official went on to say that ongoing collaborations with universities, research institutes, and related organizations have enhanced the efficiency of these projects.

In 2025, the head of the DOE, Shina Ansari, announced the provision of a data bank of more than 5,000 creatures in the Persian Gulf and the Oman Sea, saying that it will serve as a regional and even international platform for the preservation of the biodiversity in these waters.

"This includes efforts such as preparing an atlas of sensitive marine ecosystems and the identification of unknown coral reef habitats, such as the Shah Alam area on the maritime border with

'Tobacco-free families for a tobacco-free generation'

TEHRAN - The National No Tobacco Week will be held from May 25-31 with the theme of "Exposing the allure and false advertising for a tobacco-free generation."

Monday, May 25, "tobacco-free families for a tobacco-free generation"; Tuesday, May 26, "tobacco-free generation with self-care and mental health"; Wednesday, May 27, "tobacco-free generation by promoting religious teachings"; Thursday, May 28, "commitment and participation of trade unions for a tobacco-free generation"; Friday, May 29, "tobacco-free generation by healthy sports and recreation"; Saturday, May 30, "educating teenagers and youth for a tobacco-free generation"; and Sunday, May 31, "commitment and participation of media to expose the tricks of the tobacco industry" are the weekdays of the event.

May 31 is World No Tobacco Day. This yearly celebration informs the public on the dangers of using tobacco, the business practices of tobacco companies, what the World Health Organization is doing to fight the tobacco epidemic, and what people around the



world can do to claim their right to health and healthy living and to protect future generations.

The Member States of the World Health Organization created World No Tobacco Day in 1987 to draw global attention to the tobacco epidemic and the preventable death and disease it causes. In 1987, the World Health Assembly passed Resolution WHA40.38, calling for 7 April 1988 to be a "a world no-smoking day." In 1988, Resolution WHA42.19 was passed, calling for the celebration of World No Tobacco Day, every year on 31 May.

Preserving biodiversity; actions and necessities

TEHRAN - Biodiversity is not only the natural asset of a nation, but also the foundation of its biological, economic, and cultural security.

Iran, as one of the world's important biodiversity hotspots, makes a valuable contribution to humanity's natural heritage.

Therefore, the country's approach is to move towards smart governance in the field of biodiversity; governance based on science, continuous monitoring, and intersectoral partnership, Shina Ansari, the head of the Department of Environment, has said.

More than 19 million hectares of the Iranian territory are dedicated to national parks, national monuments, protected areas, and wildlife refuges. Strengthening the management of these regions is one of the main priorities of the Department of Environment.

Developing management plans, utilizing modern monitoring technologies, strengthening protection infrastructure, and training environmentalists are some of the measures being pursued to increase the effectiveness of protection.

This year's International Day for Biological Diversity slogan, "Local Action for Global Impact," has a clear and strategic message: the future of the Earth begins here; from our decisions in cities and villages, in forests and wetlands, and in the way we interact with nature. Every responsible local action can be an effective link in the global sustainability chain.

In this regard, the national authority for the Convention on Biological Diversity, given the compatibility of the goals and obligations of this convention with the inherent duties of the Department of Environment, was transferred to the Department of Environment after effective follow-up and approval by the government. This action is an important step for policy coherence and strengthening the DOE's governance role in the field of biodiversity.

Also, the "Comprehensive Program for the Protection of Biodiversity of the Country" was developed by order of President Masoud Pezeshkian and presented as one of the most important agendas of the Supreme Council for the Environment.

This program, in line with the global biodiversity framework and the commitments of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Convention on Biological Diversity, includes 97 specific measures to confront threats, and its implementation will be pursued in cooperation with all executive agencies, because the protection of biodiversity is a national, cross-sectoral, and intergenerational responsibility.

Some 40 percent of the world's plant and animal biodiversity is located in wetlands, and given the importance of obtaining deeds for wetlands in the name of the Department of Environment on behalf of the government, a deed for 1.3 million hectares of wetlands has been issued.



Regarding species restoration, numerous measures have been taken, increasing the population of Iranian yellow deer and maral, and continuing protection programs for the Asiatic cheetah, the eland, the brown bear, and other prominent species, showing that wherever science, will, and participation come together, nature regains its ability to regenerate.

However, the challenges in this area are still very serious. Unfortunately, our habitats continue to face increasing pressures. The fires in the Zagros and Hyrcanian forests in recent years, partly caused by unprecedented drought, rising temperatures, and decreasing forest soil moisture, are a serious warning sign for the resilience of ecosystems.

In addition, the process of tree dieback due to climate change and human pressures, including encroachment on forest privacy and unsustainable development, is a double threat to this valuable heritage.

As a result of complex regional conditions and threats from war and aggression, some natural habitats have also been damaged and destroyed. In response to this situation, continuous monitoring of air, water, and soil pollution in at-risk areas, using specialized teams and available equipment, has been put on the agenda to accurately assess the extent of the destruction and its restoration requirements.

Biodiversity conservation is not just a government task. Experience has shown that no program will achieve its desired results without the participation of people, local communities, academics, and non-governmental organizations.

Today, biodiversity is not just a question of species and habitats; it is a question of our quality of life. Food security, public health, green jobs, and resilience to climate change all depend on the health of ecosystems.

Therefore, the solution is not in the conflict between development and the environment; it is in development based on the capacity of the land and an understanding of the economic, social, and strategic value of biodiversity.

If we combine science with will and participation, and if we consider nature conservation as part of the country's development path, living in harmony with nature will not be a distant dream, but an achievable and expected goal.



Book on Yahya Sinwar published in Persian

TEHRAN- A Persian translation of Russell Borna's book "Enemy of the State, Hero of a People: Yahya Sinwar and the Final Intifada" has recently been published in Tehran.

Translated by Shahriar Shafiei, the book has been released by the Shahid Kazemi Publishing House, offering a look into the life of one of the most influential figures of the Palestinian Resistance.

"Enemy of the State, Hero of a People" utilizes an analytical and narrative-driven approach to present a multi-faceted portrait of Martyr Yahya Sinwar. The work delves into the character of a commander whose legendary courage and fearlessness earned him a reputation that transcended the ranks of the Resistance, drawing begrudging respect even from his captors and enemies.

The book highlights Sinwar's years in the dungeons of the Zionist regime, noting that his spirit and self-confidence remained unbroken throughout his long imprisonment. Instead of succumbing to the harsh conditions of captivity, he transformed the prison into an arena for intellectual growth and active struggle.

One of the most compelling aspects of the book is its depiction of Sinwar's poise and dominance during interrogations, which often left Zionist security officials in awe. Many high-ranking security officers of the regime reportedly viewed him not as a mere inmate, but as the "true warden" who held absolute psychological and administrative authority

over the prison environment.

Through this work, the author seeks to move beyond conventional portrayals to draw a realistic image of Sinwar as a symbol of steadfastness and bravery for the Palestinian people. The book underscores how Sinwar's strategic mind and iron will ultimately shifted the regional equations against the occupiers.

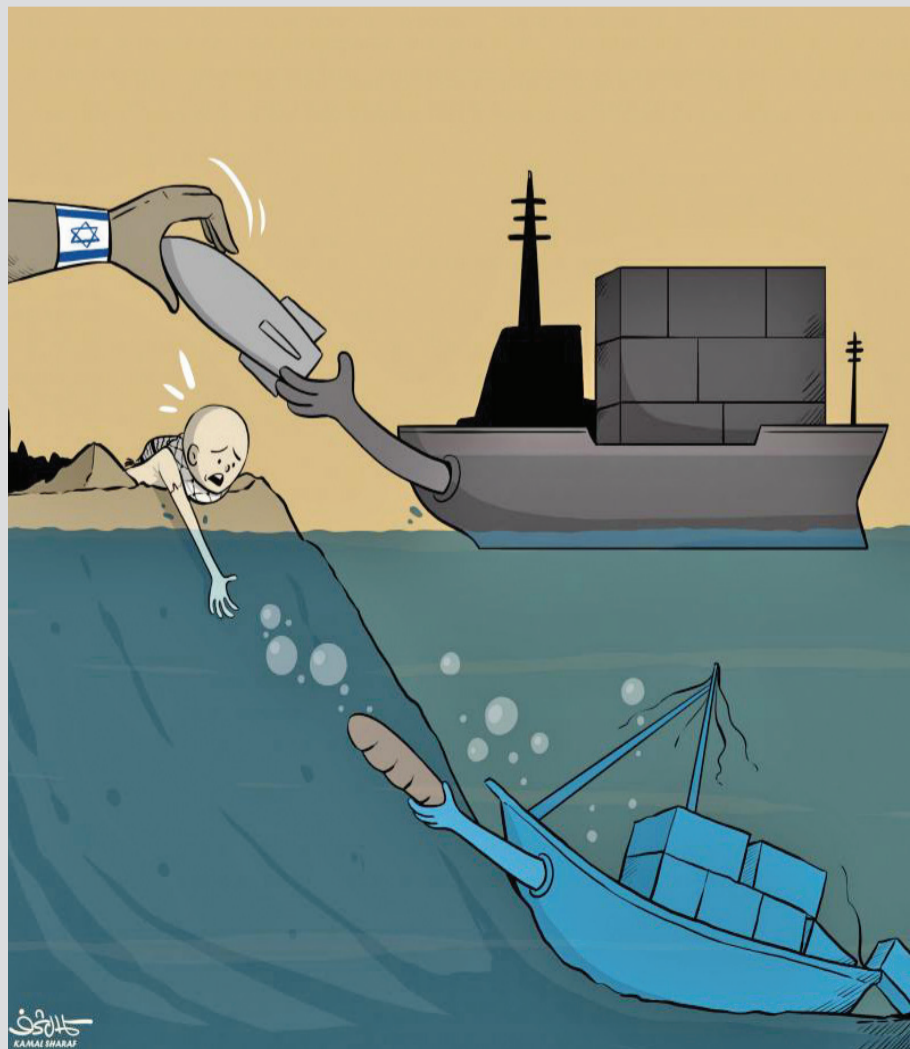
Russell Borna is a contemporary author, researcher, and analytical thinker whose work primarily navigates the complex intersections of history, political philosophy, and geopolitics. Known for his critical approach to dominant global narratives, Borna specializes in examining power structures, regional security issues, and the ideological foundations of resistance movements in West Asia.

His body of work includes notable titles such as "The Kill List: Inside Mossad's Secret Wars," and "Gaza After the Guns." Through a writing style that blends meticulous analytical depth with engaging narrative storytelling, he offers provocative insights into the lives of influential figures and the clandestine operations that shape modern conflicts, positioning himself as a significant voice for those seeking a nuanced perspective on international political struggles.

Yahya Sinwar was a Palestinian political and militant figure who became the leader of Hamas in the Gaza Strip in 2017.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Cartoon of Day



Aid!

Cartoonist: Kamal Sharaf from Yemen

A tale of a pen fighting on the battlefield

The front line on a blank canvas

By Marzieh Kian

TEHRAN – When the siren wails across the city and the air in the media space becomes thick with the scent of war-news gunpowder, everyone picks up a weapon and stands at a corner of this vast front. One takes up a rifle; another adjusts their camera lens. And in this fray, there is an artist whose weapons are lines, colors, and meaningful, biting satires.

Seyed Masoud Shojai Tabatabai, the renowned Iranian cartoonist, made an unspoken vow at the very first dawn of the 40-day War, a promise rooted in art and commitment. He decided that as long as the flames of this conflict burned, he would create at least one caricature every day to act as an honest narrator of the suffering and the realities hidden behind the scenes.

This report is a narrative of those turbulent days documented within the small frames of social media—from exposing global figures to providing round-the-clock training for teenagers. It is a journey into the world of an artist who believes that humor must sometimes be sharp and piercing to pull the truth out from beneath the rubble.

The stylus moves gently across the digital screen. Everything begins with a single black dot—a dot that slowly comes to life, turning into lines that trace the contours of a familiar face. The people and elements are all in their places; it is as if we are waiting for an explosion of color and irony to occur on the canvas. The director of this scene is not the loud voice of war news, but the mind of an artist who stirs up a storm in the silence of his workshop.

Suddenly, the lines intertwine, and a bull with a broken horn appears on the screen. This is not a scene from a war movie; it is a long-form picture of an event. If someone were to ask me what the essence of the media war during these 40 days was, I would show them this artist's daily caricatures—someone whom God positioned to witness the high-tension seconds of the confrontation and record them in the mind of history. The reality is that the dimensions of this war do not fit within news frames; this battle must be seen through the exaggerated lines, bitter sarcasms, and bold colors of his caricatures.

From the very day the flames of war ignited, Seyed Masoud Shojai Tabatabai, an industrious and concerned cartoonist, decided he would not sit idly by. He did not want to be merely a spectator or a consumer of news. In this interview, he revealed the moment this personal commitment took shape: "From the very first days of the war, I made a vow: if God wills and no obstacles arise, I will create and publish at least one caricature about this situation every day. To this day, by the grace of God, I have succeeded on most days, and on some days, I have even produced several pieces. The number of these works has now exceeded 80."

However, in an era where the speed of news surpasses the speed of light, keeping pace with events is no easy task. "It is natural that with such a volume of occurrences and the flood of events happening one after another, I sometimes truly lag behind some developments. The pace of the news is intense, but I try to have at least one visual narrative of these transformations every day," he added.

Language of images: exposure vs. official narratives

In the world of caricature, lines are not drawn solely to amuse. Sometimes, a simple sketch can challenge the media hegemony of an empire. Shojai-Tabatabai views the language of his war



"Global Crisis: One Cow, a Thousand Problems!" by Seyed Masoud Shojai Tabatabai

caricatures as a language of "exposure." He believes in the necessity of revealing what happens behind the scenes: "Our mission is to show what crimes have truly occurred, who is behind them, and what remains hidden in the official narratives."

When asked about his recurring subjects, two names stand out more than any others: Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu. He considers these two to be symbols of aggressive and war-mongering policies. "Today, Netanyahu is practically introduced as a war criminal. Trump is also a complex personality—someone with numerous legal files. These figures are highly usable for caricature because they are both global figures and symbols of a specific type of political demeanor and behavior."

A bull with a broken horn, "made in China" flags

The artist views the world

tiny flag is "Made in China!"

A network spanning the globe: from Brazil to Tehran

As the author suggests, Iran cannot be contained within standard horizontal frames. The message of these caricatures has also transcended geographical borders. Shojai Tabatabai is connected to a powerful network of international artists who view caricature not merely as art, but as a moral stance.

Highlighting his extensive connections with foreign cartoonists, he recounted an interesting memory about a Brazilian artist: "There was a famous cartoonist from Brazil who won one of our competitions and later came to Iran as a judge. He participated in the great million-strong march in Tehran and witnessed that atmosphere up close. Later, he became a representative for Iranian culture in Brazil! He used to say, 'We do not consider those who

piece I did for the martyrs of Minab was created with love and profound anguish. I truly cried while working on it. When you depict children who have been victimized, while simultaneously capturing their dignity and innocence in the image, that work is no longer just a cartoon; it is an emotional document. I believe that when a work comes from the heart, it finds its way into the hearts of others."

Midnight classes in Qom: an army armed with pencils and paper

However, this path does not end with just one person. In Qom, Shojai Tabatabai stays up until around 1:30 a.m., training a generation that is set to be the future narrators of this land. A deeply sensory atmosphere has been cultivated; children, teenagers, and young adults come to share their pain, and subjects are born from these very conversations.

"Some have become so good that I now introduce them as experts on the subject," he spoke with pride of his students, many of whom are young women creating brilliant work. The pieces by these young artists, combined with calligraphy and appropriate slogans, are turned into posters that are carried directly by the people at rallies and marches. He also employs a creative method for virtual training: publishing high-quality files, media-ready versions, and, most engagingly, time-lapse videos showing the creation of a piece from scratch. These time-lapses show the audience how a raw idea is transformed into a sharp visual weapon.

In an era where politicians turn to artificial intelligence and flashy posters to sway public opinion, the caricature – using the international language of satire – transcends all borders.

At the end of this interview, Shojai Tabatabai shared a sentiment that summarizes all his efforts these days: "These days, I have dedicated all my energy to this vow, an effort to ensure at least one piece is recorded every day that is simultaneously a narrative, an enlightenment, and an educational tool. I hope these cartoons can play a small part in reflecting the truth and healing the hearts of the grieving."

As long as there is injustice, the lines on the canvases of these artists will never rest. They have sharpened their pens so that history will not hear the narrative of war solely from the lips of the armed victors.



through a lens that the average observer rarely notices. Speaking about one of his most viral recent pieces, he says: "I had a piece depicting Trump as a wounded bull—a bull with a broken, bandaged horn. I used the spots on the bull's body to represent the map of the world. In reality, they say every part of a cow is useful, but here it was used as a symbol of a damaged and defeated political system. This work was widely seen on Facebook and received many reactions from artists in Europe and Latin America."

His satire often turns sharply biting, especially when it comes to the clash of powers. In another work, he has depicted Trump as tiny and helpless before China: "There was a time he spoke to China in the language of threats, but today he is in a position where he approaches others with a sense of desperation. In the image, there is a small American flag in Trump's hand facing a massive Chinese flag, and the ironic point is that even Trump's

work for the Zionist regime to be cartoonists at all; anyone who lacks a proper understanding and sufficient awareness of reality does not belong in the circle of professional cartoonists."

For him and his like-minded peers, the virtual space—especially Facebook—has become a "soft war" room. When a piece is reshared by globally-renowned figures, it circulates thousands of times and transforms into an emotional and political document on an international scale.

Tears shed on canvas: story of Minab martyrs

Satire is not always meant to evoke laughter; sometimes it acts as a mirror that, when reflecting the truth, brings a lump to the throat. When Shojai Tabatabai reaches the visual notes he created regarding civilian victims, his tone shifts. The illustrator of these war-torn days has not been spared from its emotional shrapnel. With a voice tinged with sorrow, he said: "The