

## Battlefronts multiple, US ...

On the other hand, amid the heightened conflict between Hamas and Israel, another segment of US military power is currently engaged in supporting Israel, and the recent joint attack with the UK on Yemen has opened up a new front against this country. Despite all these developments, following the news of a potential visit by a delegation of US congresspersons to Taiwan in May, China has expressed its opposition, hinting at a tense future on that front as well.

Biden recently stated that the US is not inclined to engage in proxy wars, but the issue is that even if proxy wars were to occur, they would be initiated by the United States' adversaries, not by the country itself or its allies. In fact, in the current circumstances, direct intervention against countries that, according to the US's definition, act as proxies, will not only be impossible for the US and its allies to win but will also be highly detrimental to them. This will surely be the case even with the assumption that European countries are supposed to coordinate with the US. However, considering the reluctance of France, Italy, and Spain to provide military and even political support for the recent attacks on Yemen, this assumption must realistically be considered null and void. Given these considerations, the path ahead for the US is highly challenging and full of complexities. Particularly noteworthy is that American plans are never so intricate that they can catch other countries by surprise. Currently, its military and political capabilities are decentralized and vulnerable, even when countries like Iran, Lebanon, and Syria have yet to take significant actions. These factors make it difficult to precisely forecast the strategies these nations intend to pursue.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist



# NIGC exporting gas to Iraq as planned

The director of dispatching at the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) said gas export to Iraq is continuing according to the agreement.

Iran is exporting gas to Iraq via two exchange points, added Saeid Aqli, explaining, "Based on the agreement reached between Iran and Iraq two months ago, one of the exchange points was disconnected to undergo a calibration process, and has been now reconnected," Shana reported.

Calibration is a normal process in gas exports and not limited to the Iran-Iraq contract, pointed

out the NIGC official.

A senior Iranian businessman said in July 2023 that the deal between Iran and Iraq to swap Iranian gas and electricity for Iraqi crude oil and mazut will benefit Iran and remove hurdles created by the United States in energy trade between the two neighboring countries.

"With this agreement with Iraq for barter of oil for gas, the US ability to stonewall (payments) will be restricted, and given Iraq's situation, the deal can benefit Iran," said Hamid Hosseini, who serves as the board manager at Iranian Oil, Gas, and

Petrochemical Products Exporters Union (OPEX).

Hosseini said that Iran will be able to receive some 30,000 barrels per day (bpd) of heavy grade crude oil and a 70,000 bpd of mazut from Iraq to compensate for a part of its supply of natural gas and electricity to Iraq, which he said is believed to be between \$10 million and \$15 million per day.

Facing a lower supply of natural gas from Iran to its power plants, Iraq was grappling with extensive power cuts during the scorching heat of early July. The Arab country finally decided



to agree to a long-running proposal from Iran to pay for the country's natural gas and electricity in crude oil.

The agreement came after repeated US attempts to stonewall the payment of nearly \$11 billion worth of funds to Iran that

the Iraqi Ministry of Electricity had deposited into accounts in the Trade Bank of Iraq.

The agreement allowed Iran to restore its supply of natural gas to Iraqi power plants to levels agreed between the two countries under a gas export deal.

## NDF allocates €1b to Makran Coast development

Iran's National Development Fund (NDF) allocated €1 billion for the development of the Makran Coast, south of Iran.

According to Article 138 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the government

approved a plan in a meeting held on January 3, 2024, to allocate €1 billion in support of the NDF for the development of the Makran Coast, wrote Tasnim News Agency.

After gaining the approval of relevant

legal bodies and within the framework regulations, the fund will deposit €1 billion in banks. It will be paid in the form of facilities to the applicants introduced by the Secretariat of the Supreme Council for the Development of

Makran Coast.

This is in line with Iran's plans for the development of the Makran Coast, the development of a sustainable sea-based economy, and the growth of industries in the ports, the report added.

## Managing US-Iran tensions has proven successful



By Ebrahim Beheshti  
Staff writer

### INTERVIEW

*The US and UK's attack on positions affiliated with the Ansarallah group in Yemen comes at a time when the US claims to be striving to prevent an escalation of conflict in the region. Will the attackers achieve their intended goal of maritime security in Yemen? Will the policy of managing tensions between Iran and the US continue? Why does the US not persuade Israel to accept a cease-fire? These are some of the questions Iran Daily posed to Amir-Ali Abolfat'h, an expert on US affairs, in an exclusive interview.*

**IRAN DAILY:** The United States, on one hand, claims that its policy is aimed at preventing the escalation and expansion of Gaza war in

the region, while, on the other hand, it attacks the positions of Ansarallah (Houthis) in Yemen. How do you make sense of this contradiction?

**ABOLFAT'H:** The US contends that the attack on Yemen also serves a deterrent purpose to prevent the expansion of the war in the region. They hope that the attack on Yemen sends a strong message to both the Ansarallah and, according to their claim, their supporter, meaning the Islamic Republic of Iran, to refrain from threatening navigation in the Red Sea and the Bab al-Mandeb Strait. However, this objective is yet to be realized, as the Yemeni military responded quickly after the initial attacks by the US and the UK. I genuinely don't know how Yemen will react further, but their declared policy is to respond to attacks by the US and the UK. Meanwhile, the US president explicitly stated that he



does not intend to engage in war with Iran, and by extension, Yemen.

**Do you predict that the Yemenis will capitulate? Will the maritime security desired by the US be restored to the Red Sea and the Bab al-Mandeb?**

As for predicting the Yemeni response, it's challenging to make a precise assessment. Irrespective of Yemen's reaction, the crucial point is whether the security in the Bab al-Mandeb will return to its pre-Israeli attack state. My prediction is that, at least soon, such security will not be restored, and maritime transport through this waterway will not be as feasible as before. Currently, major economic enterprises and shipping companies consider this region unsafe. A missile may be fired, or a mine encountered in the sea at any moment. Consequently, ships either avoid this route or pass through with higher insurance costs, which translates into economic setbacks for these companies. The superior military power of the US does not guarantee security for maritime shipping in the Red Sea and the Bab al-Mandeb. It's worth noting, however, that the Yemenis only target ships heading towards

Israel, not those of other nations.

**The Americans claim that the attack on Yemen is aimed at ensuring maritime security and is unrelated to the Gaza war. Are these claims accepted by public opinion and other governments?**

Certainly, the attack on Yemen is related to the Gaza war. Yemenis did not attack ships heading to Israel without cause. They took such measures to support the Palestinian people and exert pressure on Israel. It is natural that, as the conflict in Gaza intensifies and prolongs, such reactions may spread to other regions, causing further insecurity. But if the Gaza war subsides, areas associated with the Gaza conflict may also experience relative calm. The world does not believe that these are unrelated.

**The Guardian has suggested in an article that instead of attacking Yemenis, the US and the UK should pressure Israel to cease the Gaza war. Does the US genuinely not want a cease-fire, or does it lack the capability to persuade Israel to accept one?**

The US is caught in a difficult situation. On one hand, it cannot pressure

Israel to accept a cease-fire, as Israel has declared that a cease-fire would mean its defeat and victory for Hamas. On the other hand, the US cannot remain silent about the extent of atrocities and genocide, especially with the upcoming US elections and existence of strong active anti-war movements in the country.

It appears that the US is moving towards de-escalation in Gaza; a situation where the conflict is only with Hamas, and non-combatants are not harmed, with humanitarian aid being provided. However, due to the limited land area of the Gaza Strip and the people's connection with Hamas, this American plan is not operational. Currently, it seems that due to global public pressures, the scale of war and the intensity of massacres in Gaza have diminished.

**The US has stated that it is not seeking war with Iran. Iran has also stated that it is not seeking war with the US or Israel. How should the common position of the US and Iran, with the former supporting Israel and the latter supporting Hamas, be evaluated?**

Iran has never sought war, neither with the US nor with any other country. In Iran's security strategy, preemptive war is not present, but defensive deterrence is very pronounced. Iran has stated that resistance groups in various countries operate independently, although they receive support from Iran. Therefore, it is unjustifiable for Iran to be held accountable for the measures of the Yemenis or the Iraqis, for example. The US is aware of this. Messages have been ex-

changed between Iran and the US, and both sides have clarified their positions. In fact, the goal of both Iran and the US in the Gaza war is the same — to stop the war — but they use different methods. The US believes that the destruction or severe weakening of Hamas will lead to the end of the conflict, but Iran does not accept this. Except for the hardline Israeli cabinet, everyone else supports stopping the war.

**Before the latest round of inconclusive nuclear talks between Iran and the US followed by Hamas's surprise attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, it was said that Tehran and Washington had a common will to control and manage tensions. Do these two countries still pursue this policy after the Gaza war?**

Yes. Although the level of bilateral tensions has increased compared to six or seven months ago, both sides still strive to manage tensions and prevent their escalation. Iran and the US are far from reaching a de-escalated state, but it seems that both sides are not inclined towards intensifying tensions, either. So far, it appears that this policy has been successful, as, contrary to some speculations, neither direct confrontation between Iran and Israel nor between Iran and the US has occurred. The US president stating, "We are not in a proxy war with Iran," is good news, and it is in line with the same tension management policy. Nevertheless, both parties must be vigilant about actors who, for whatever reason, seek to undermine the control of tensions between Iran and the US.