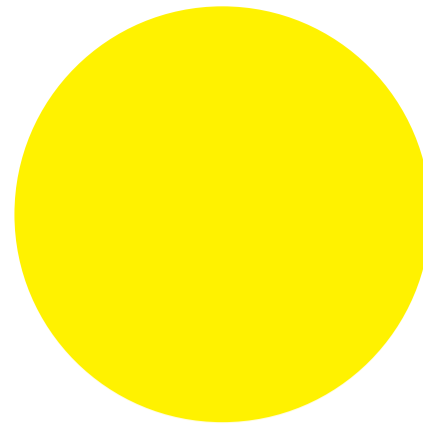


Iranian FM:
Operation
True Promise
'a warning'
to Israel

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Iran Daily



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Police officers detain a pro-Palestinian protester at Columbia University in New York City on April 20, 2024.



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NEWS IN BRIEF

Iran reports major rise in cargo transit via roads, railways



IRNA - Cargo transit in Iran through roads and railways has seen a major hike, the latest data showed.

Transit through roads in Iran accounted for 14.3 million tons last Iranian year (March 21, 2023 - March 19, 2024), marking a 54% surge compared to the preceding year (9.3 million tons), according to the latest statistics of the Iranian Ministry of Roads and Urban Development.

Of the 14.3 million mt of transit goods, 9.1 million mt was non-oil whereas 5.2 million tons was oil goods, the data indicated. The highest number of incoming transits from Port of Shahid Rajaei and Parviz Khan border crossing is four and three million tons, respectively, and the highest number of outgoing transits from Parviz Khan is 2.6 million tons. The transit of cargo through rails accounted for over 1.5 mt last Iranian year, registering a 10% rise compared to the previous year (over 1.4 million tons). Of the nearly 1.6 million tons of transit goods, 1.275 million tons was non-oil goods while 295,000 tons was oil goods.

Two-year FDI hits \$11.6b



SHANA - Iran attracted \$11.6 billion of foreign direct investment (FDI) in various sectors since the administration took office in 2021

Of the said figure, the share of the oil and gas projects has been \$4.8 billion which means the oil industry accounted for 41 percent of the country's total foreign investment in the two years. After the oil sector, the industrial sector has had the highest rate of investment attracting, as during the two-year period, over \$4.1 billion of FDI was attracted in the sector. The industrial sector accounted for 35.3 percent of the total foreign direct investment.

Continued military tension of Iran-Israel to leave fatal impacts on US economy: **MP**

By Sadeq Dehqan & Reza Abesh Ahmadlou
Staff writers

A member of the Energy Committee of the Iranian Parliament said the continuation of the military tension between his country and the Zionist regime will lead to fatal impacts to the economy of the United States.

Ramezani Sangdovini told Iran Daily that in the case of extended conflicts in the region, the US economy will suffer the most. "I think the occurrence of war and direct conflict between Iran and the Zionist regime will be unlikely, as going to war with Iran shows the depth of Israeli stupidity. However, if the Israelis want to continue their evil measures against Iran, Iran will respond to them with full power."

It is certain that any military conflict in any part of the world affects the oil market which causes its price to rise in the global market, the MP said adding that it would be more severe if one side of the tension is one of the major oil producers in the world.

Talking on the recent Operation True Promise of military response to Israel's military attack on Iran's consulate in Syria, the lawmaker stated that the military response had an immediate impact on the oil market as we saw



the rise of oil prices in the world market.

The turbulence of the oil market along with the impact on the global economy will affect all countries, including oil producers and consumers, he continued.

The MP said when an evil and criminal regime attacks a consulate, which is considered to be the territory of that country according to international rules, it cannot be left unanswered, as we witnessed, Iran gave a

punitive response to Israelis. "Iran's response to the Zionists was not only approved by the Iranian people, but also the noble people of the world defended it. But in any case, such military actions and conflicts show their impacts on the oil market and the world economy."

An increase in the price of oil may somehow ben-



efit oil producers and exporters, as Iran is one of the largest sellers of crude in the world, and a series of countries are buyers of Iranian oil, but if war develops in the region, all countries will suffer, he warned explaining that this issue includes all the oil exporting countries like the US and Russia.

"Iran enjoys resources of fossil fuels and a large

part of the country's need for gasoline and other fuels is met by Iranian resources, but we are considered one of the countries with the highest rate of fuel consumption in the world, so we should do better in terms of optimal fuel consumption," the lawmaker said.

Pointing out that on average, between 110 and 140 million liters of gasoline are consumed daily in our country, he clarified part of the high consumption of fuel is related to cars,

and the fuel consumption of some domestically produced cars is 12 liters per 100 kilometers, which is much more than the global standards.

One of the important issues addressed by the Seventh Economic Development Plan is the fuel consumption optimization, in this regard, the optimization of energy consumption, including oil, gas and electricity has been put on the agenda, Sangdovini concluded.



Iran, Azerbaijan, Russia power grids to be connected

An electricity connection project between Iran, Russia and Azerbaijan is at the final stage and will be implemented in the near future, an official at Iran's Ministry of Energy said. The implementation of this electricity project will provide the possibility to import electricity when the country needs it and export the surplus electricity to these countries, the head of the international office of the ministry stated, reported Tasnim News Agency.

Mojtaba Akbari also pointed to the possibility of exporting the electricity generated from renewable

sources to the three neighboring countries of Turkey, Afghanistan and Pakistan and noted that the Turkish minister of energy visited Iran last month and asked his Iranian counterpart to establish cooperation in the field of renewables and also exchange of the electricity. Expert-level talks for the exchange of electricity have started between Iran and Turkey, he said, adding that detailed information on this issue will be announced within the next two months.

On January 31, the head of the Iran Electricity Grid Management Company said the technical platform

for exchanging electricity between Iran and Turkey has been prepared using the world's latest technologies.

Mehdi Moqimzadeh pointed out that new technologies will make it possible for the country to export electricity to Europe. Upon the signing of a contract for the operation of a 400-kV BtB HVDC power transmission line between Khoy in Iran and Van in Turkey, it is possible to exchange electricity between the two countries with the most modern technologies, he noted.

He went on to say that the electricity exchange be-

tween the two neighbors will strengthen cooperation and economic development, adding that this provides diversification and reduces dependency on other energy sources. The Iran Grid Management Company and the Turkish Electricity Transmission Company (TEIAS) signed an agreement to make operational the Khoy-Van power transmission line during a recent visit by Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi to Turkey.

Energy deal with Qatar

Iran and Qatar plan to clinch new contracts in

the near future to boost bilateral ties in the energy sector, Akbari said on Saturday.

Connecting the electricity grids of Iran and Qatar is one of the main measures taken for the development of the electricity cooperation, he noted. Effective steps have been taken for connecting the electricity grids of the two countries in the administration of President Ebrahim Raisi, Akbari emphasized.

He went on to say that the chief of Qatar Electricity and Water Company has asked the Iranian energy officials to define a new

chapter of cooperation between the two countries in the fields of wastewater and solar energy systems. Akbari said Iranian energy officials will visit the Qatari capital of Doha later this month in order to clinch new contracts between the two countries in the relevant field. Competent Iranian companies will become active in this Arab country as consultants for the construction of solar farms, the official added.

The Qatari Electricity and Water Company has entered direct talks with the competent Iranian knowledge-based companies, he said.

Ancient Sassanid Bridge: A timeless icon of Dezful



● wikipedia.org

Iranica Desk

If you have traveled to Dezful in Khuzestan Province, you may have seen a historical and ancient bridge over the Dez River. This bridge is known by various names such as Sassanid Bridge, Shapur Bridge, Roman Bridge, and Qadimi Bridge. The Sassanid Bridge, considered one of the oldest bridges in the world, served as a route for vehicles, linking the road of Shushtar, Andimeshk, and Dezful until a decade ago. This bridge was a crucial link between the east and west of Dezful, and was once an important route connecting the region of Jundi Shapur and Mesopotamia. In order to preserve it, the municipality of Dezful constructed a brick square at the entrance of the bridge in 2011, transforming it into a pathway for pedestrians and tourists. The Sassanid Bridge is presently a significant tourist attraction in Khuzestan Province and has been included in Iran's National Heritage List.

History

The history of the ancient bridge dates back to the Sassanid period. In 260 CE, when Shapur I defeated the Romans in a battle, he ordered the construction of a bridge over the Dez River using Roman captives. At his command, 70,000 Roman

captives began building this bridge. To protect it, a fortress was built, and in its old section, a neighborhood by the same name (Qaleh) exists.

Since the Romans were involved in the construction of the bridge, it acquired the name Roman Bridge. However, Roman Ghirshman, the French archaeologist, said that the Iranians did not need Roman engineering knowledge and employed them as laborers in the construction of this bridge. By constructing this bridge, Shapur provided a platform for military expeditions and easy passage of his troops across the Dez River. They also built the foundations of the bridge in the form of a dam to raise the river's water level and irrigate the surrounding rivers. In addition, a great royal road was established with the construction of this bridge and other bridges in Shushtar and over the Karkheh River.

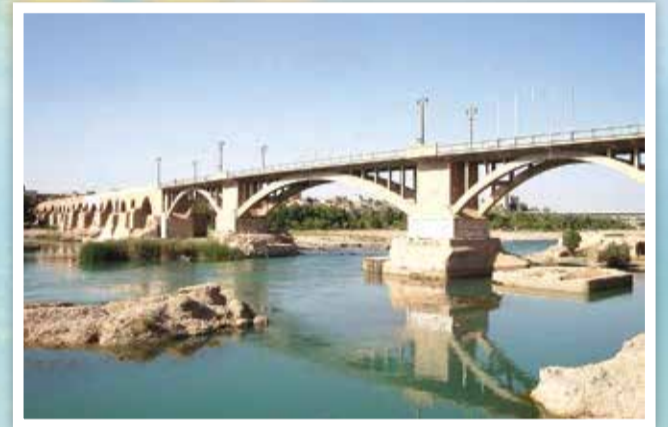
This ancient bridge, like other historical bridges, was constructed using materials such as bricks, stones, and sarooj. The construction of this bridge utilized large sandstone rocks from around Shushtar, interconnected with metal clamps. With 14 spans and a length of 370 meters, only the foundations of the original Sassanid bridge remain, upon which the current bridge stands, dating back to the Safavid era. The arches of the bridge are from this

era, while the bridge deck, made of modern materials like cement and metal, belongs to the Pahlavi era.

Architecture

Despite enduring significant damage over time from human and natural factors like wars and floods, the Sassanid bridge still stands strong, recounting its rich history and identity. The first recorded restoration of the bridge dates back to the fourth century during the rule of the Daylamites. Subsequent renovations took place in the Safavid era, expanding the bridge's width for easier passage, with further enhancements during the Afsharid and Qajar periods. In 1937, the bridge underwent restoration and revitalization to its present-day form.

Apart from the ancient Dezful bridge, other bridges span the Dez River. Another noteworthy structure is the New Bridge (Pol-e Jadid), located a short distance from the old one. This newer bridge was recently named after General Qassem Soleimani, the assassinated commander of the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps. Nearby, visitors can explore historical and aquatic structures, enjoy dining options, and witness the bridge's enchanting nighttime illumination, creating lasting memories of bridge tours in this historic city.



● IRNA



● iraniantours.com

Mystical journey of Attar, a great Persian poet



● iraniantours.com

Attar, a renowned poet and writer of the 12 century, remains a figure shrouded in mystery and intrigue. Born as Fariduddin Abu Hamid in the village of Kadkan, a part of Neyshabur, details about his early life are scarce. His father, a merchant dealing in medicinal herbs, passed on his trade to Attar, who continued the family business after his father's demise.

However, it was not long before Attar experienced a profound spiritual awakening that led him down the path of mysticism. Legends surrounding this transformation vary, with one particularly famous tale recounting a chance encounter with a dervish that forever altered Attar's course. Witnessing the dervish's peaceful departure from this world, Attar abandoned his commercial pursuits and sought the guidance of the esteemed mystic Ruknuddin.

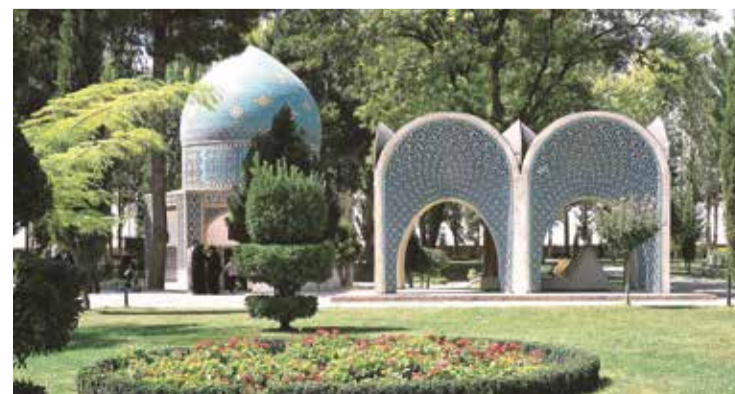
Embracing the nomadic lifestyle typical of mystics, Attar embarked on journeys that took him from Mecca to Mavaral al-Nahr, where he sought wisdom from revered sages of his time. His eventual fate, however, remains a subject of speculation, with some accounts suggesting his demise at the hands of a Mongol soldier during the tumultuous period of the Mongol invasion of Neyshabur, placing his death between 1229 and 1234. Today, the Attar Mausoleum stands as a testament to his enduring legacy in Neyshabur. Originally a modest structure, it was later transformed into a magnificent edifice during the Timurid era by Amir Alishir Navai. Despite subsequent periods of neglect and restoration, the mausoleum now stands as a revered site in Khorasan Razavi Province, a symbol of Attar's profound

influence on Iranian poetry and mysticism.

The architectural splendor of the mausoleum, characterized by its tiled dome, intricate designs, and poignant inscriptions, pays homage to Attar's poetic prowess and spiritual depth. The restoration efforts undertaken by the National Antiquities Association have revitalized the site, creating a serene environment that honors Attar's memory and artistic contributions.

Attar, whose name evokes the essence of his trade as an herbalist, transcended his earthly pursuits to become a luminary in the realm of Persian literature.

As Rumi aptly captured in his verses, Attar's spirit continues to resonate through the corridors of time, immortalized in the verses and legacy he left behind for generations to cherish.



● iraniantours.com



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America fueled the fire in Middle East



By Stephen M. Walt
Columnist

OPINION

Iran's decision to retaliate against an Israeli attack on its consulate in Damascus, Syria, by launching drone and missile strikes reveals just how badly the Biden administration has mishandled the Middle East. Having convinced itself on the eve of Hamas's October 7, 2023, attack against Israel that the region was "quieter than it has been for decades," US officials have since responded in ways that made a bad situation worse. The most one can say in their defense is that they have plenty of company; the Trump, Obama, Bush, and Clinton administrations mostly made a hash of things, too.

The administration's response to Hamas's brutal attack on October 7 has had three main objectives. First, it has sought to convey steadfast support for Israel: backing it rhetorically, conferring regularly with top Israeli officials, defending it against accusations of genocide, vetoing cease-fire resolutions in the United Nations Security Council, and providing it with a steady supply of lethal armaments. Second, Washington has tried to prevent the conflict in Gaza from escalating. Lastly, it has tried to convince Israel to act with restraint, both to limit harm to Palestinian civilians and to minimize the damage to the United States' image and reputation. This policy has failed because its aims were inherently contradictory. Giving Israel unconditional support gave its leaders little incentive to heed US calls for restraint, so it is hardly surprising that they have ignored them. Gaza has been destroyed, at least 33,000 Palestinians (including more than 12,000 children) are dead, and US officials now admit that civilians there are facing con-



Iranian protesters burn US flags during a protest to condemn the Israeli airstrike against the Iranian consulate in Syria, seen in Tehran on April 1, 2024.
MORTEZA NIKOUBAZI/NURPHOTO

ditions of famine. Houthi resistance groups in Yemen, claiming to demand a cease-fire, continue to target shipping in the Red Sea; a low-level conflict between Israel and Hezbollah is still simmering; and violence has risen sharply in the occupied West Bank. And now, Iran has retaliated against the April 1 bombing of its consulate by launching drone and missile strikes on Israel, raising the prospect of an even wider war. Because Americans are accustomed to hearing that Iran is the embodiment of evil, some read-

ers may be inclined to blame Tehran for all this trouble. Just last week, for example, the lead story in the New York Times alleged that Iran was "flooding" the West Bank with weapons in the hopes of stirring up unrest there. In this view, Iran is pouring gasoline on a region that is already in flames. But there's a lot more to this story, and most of it reflects poorly on the United States. But are Iran's efforts to smuggle small arms and other weapons to the West Bank (or Gaza, for that matter) especially heinous? And

is its decision to respond to Israel's recent attack on its consulate — killing two Iranian generals in the process — even remotely surprising? According to the Geneva Conventions, a population living under "belligerent occupation" has the right to resist the occupying force. Given that Israel has controlled the West Bank and East Jerusalem since 1967, colonized these lands with more than 700,000 illegal settlers, and killed thousands of Palestinians in the process, there is little doubt that this is a

"belligerent occupation". Acts of resistance are still subject to the laws of war, of course, and Hamas and other Palestinian groups violate them when they attack Israeli civilians. But resisting the occupation is legitimate, and helping a beleaguered population do so is not necessarily wrong, even if Iran has done this for its own reasons and not from a deep commitment to the Palestinian cause. Similarly, Iran's decision to retaliate after Israel bombed its consulate and killed two Iranian generals is hardly evidence of innate

aggressiveness, especially given that Tehran has repeatedly signaled that it had no desire to widen the war. Indeed, its retaliation was conducted in a way that gave Israel considerable warning and seems to have been designed to signal that Tehran did not want to escalate further. As US and Israeli officials typically say when they use force, Iran is simply trying to "restore deterrence".

Let's not forget that the United States has been "flooding" the Middle East with weaponry for decades. It provides Israel with billions of dollars of sophisticated military equipment every year, along with repeated assurances that US support is unconditional.

That support hasn't wavered as Israel has bombed and starved the civilian population in Gaza, and it wasn't affected when Israel greeted US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's recent visit by announcing the largest confiscation of Palestinian land in the West Bank since 1993. Washington didn't blink when Israel bombed Iran's consulate, even as it was condemning Ecuador's recent assault on the Mexican Embassy in Quito. Instead, top Pentagon officials headed for Jerusalem in a show of support, and President Joe Biden made a point of emphasizing that his commitment to Israel remains "ironclad". Is it any wonder that Israeli officials believe they can ignore advice from the United States?

Cabinets with unchecked power tend to abuse it, and Israel is no exception. Because Israel is vastly stronger than its Palestinian subjects — and deems itself more capable than Iran, too, for that matter — it can act with impunity against them, and it typically does. Decades of generous and unconditional US support have enabled Israel to do whatever it wants, which has contributed to its politics as well as its behavior toward the Palestinians becoming increasingly extreme over time.

The article first appeared on Foreign Policy.



By Dan Ladden-Hall
Reporter

PERSPECTIVE

An alleged Israeli attack against Iran early Friday came despite US President Joe Biden's stringent warnings against doing just that to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, with the leaders appearing to become increasingly at odds about how Israel should respond against its enemies.

The US was only tipped off about the attack "at the last minute," according to the Italian foreign minister who spoke to American officials at a meeting of the G7 on Friday morning.

Netanyahu just flat-out ignored Biden's warning over Iran

Iran has played down the significance of the attack, with local media describing the incident as involving a few drones that were taken down without causing damage. American sources have claimed the strike involved missiles.

What is clear is that the US fears the alleged retaliatory strike could cause Americans to be put in harm's way. The US Embassy in Israel on Friday issued a security alert restricting the personal travel of American government employees and their families outside of specific areas. The advisory specifically cited "reports that Israel conducted a retaliatory strike inside Iran" as the motive for the restrictions.

The embassy had taken a similar step last week over fears that Iran was planning to attack Israel in retaliation for the airstrike on the Iranian consulate in Syria. When the unprecedented Iranian attack did arrive on April 13, the US shot down scores of drones and several

ballistic missiles in flight.

Despite the huge show of military support, Biden warned Netanyahu that the US would have no part in any retaliatory strike against Tehran. He also cautioned against seeking vengeance at all, instead reportedly encouraging Bibi to "take the win" of preventing Iran's strike from causing widespread death and destruction. Cornelius Adebahr, an associate fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace think tank, says Netanyahu's disregard for Biden's admonitions is yet another illustration of the limits of US leverage on Israel.

"This is something we've seen over the past six months play out in Gaza, where the US president has also been very vocal on what to do and what not to do," Adebahr told The Daily Beast. "The jury is still out on what happens next with Rafah, for example. So, to an extent, [Israel's strike] is a confirmation of an existing pattern

that no, the US president cannot dictate to the Israeli prime minister what to do."

It wasn't just Biden. United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said over the weekend that the entire Middle East is "on the brink" and said the region is facing the "real danger of a devastating full-scale conflict." "Now is the time to defuse and de-escalate," he said. European officials similarly warned against further escalation.

But the US, whose troops in the Middle East have faced hundreds of attacks from Iranian proxies in recent months following Hamas' Oct. 7 rampage, has more to worry about than the risk of an all-out war between Iran and Israel. New assaults targeting American forces, Adebahr says, are a "real concern".

"The concerns are very concrete when it comes to US troops in the region," he said. "They are much broader when it comes to, you know, where does this conflict

The United States has been “flooding” the Middle East with weaponry for decades. It provides Israel with billions of dollars of sophisticated military equipment every year, along with repeated assurances that US support is unconditional. That support hasn’t wavered as Israel has bombed and starved the civilian population in Gaza, and it wasn’t affected when Israel greeted US Secretary of State Antony Blinken’s recent visit by announcing the largest confiscation of Palestinian land in the West Bank since 1993.



By Jeet Heer
Columnist

OPINION

Joe Biden destroying his own foreign policy by giving Israel impunity

There’s a story Joe Biden’s foreign policy team likes to tell itself about the recent history of the world — a tale of hubris, setback, and restoration. It goes something like this: Since the vanquishing of the Axis in the Second World War, the United States has been the foundation stone for a global peace based on maintaining and expanding the international liberal order. That order was dedicated to ever-growing and freer trade between nations and the expansion of democracy and human rights through a strengthening regime of international law, all undergirded by American military hegemony. With the vanquishing of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union from 1989 to 1991, this liberal international order stood unchallenged. But in its moment of triumph, the makers of American foreign policy made a series of arrogant mistakes that undermined the system previous generations had worked so hard to create.

By invading Afghanistan and Iraq, the administration of George W. Bush mired the United States in forever wars that drained treasure and blood while undermining the American public’s commitment to engagement with the outside world. Meanwhile, bipartisan elites ignored the fact that trade agreements, particularly with China, were destroying the economic security of middle-class America. These problems opened the way for the demagogue Donald Trump to run on a twin platform of unilateralism and protectionism. In response, the Biden team was prepared to restore the liberal international order — but on fairer and more stable terms, using infrastructure spending and military Keynesianism to rebuild the middle class while renegotiating trade agreements on terms more equitable to American interests. This would allow the United States to once more assume the mantle of global leadership with confidence.

This shared vision of recent history animates the lofty speeches and essays of Secretary of State Antony Blinken and national security adviser Jake Sullivan. As David Klion noted recently in *The Nation*, this is also the story told in Alexander Ward’s new book, *The Internationalists*, which relies heavily on interviews with Biden administration insiders such as Blinken and Sullivan. In a now-notorious essay for the November/December issue of *Foreign Affairs*, Sullivan argued that the Biden project of restoring American power is “absolutely necessary if the United States is to win the competition to shape the future of the international order so that it is free, open, prosperous, and secure.” In the original print version of that article, Sullivan boasted that “we’ve de-escalated crises in Gaza,” gloating, “Although the Middle East remains beset with perennial challenges, the region is quieter than it has been for decades.” Written shortly before Hamas’s attack on October 7, these embarrassing words were edited out when the essay was published online.

Sullivan’s rewrite wasn’t just an attempt to efface a personal embarrassment; it also underlines the ways in which the imagined restoration of the “liberal international order” is undermined by the administration’s blinkered support of Israel at all costs. After all, Sullivan’s boast in the original version of the essay was predicated on the idea that, thanks to American leadership, the question of Palestinian dispossession had been safely sidelined and the world was ready to move on. The idea of a “liberal international order” has long been criticized by the left as an ideological fantasy. It’s not difficult to document the innumerable cases where the imperatives of American hegemony overrode human rights and liberal democracy: the support of countless dictators all over the world in places such as Saudi Arabia, Guatemala, Chile, and Greece, as well as American war crimes in Vietnam and elsewhere. These violations of America’s stat-



A man walks past an anti-US mural on a wall of the former US embassy in Tehran, Iran.
AFP

ed principle are usually justified on grounds of realpolitik: To win the Cold War, the United States had to dirty its hands. But this was for the greater good, and in the long run, the result was a more liberal world.

Even if for the sake of argument we accept this defense of hypocrisy, it does not apply to Israel. There is no national security reason the United States should support atrocities and ethnic cleansing committed by Israel against the Palestinian people. The Palestinians are not a national security threat and, if only in a pro forma way, presidential administrations of both parties have long been committed to a two-state solution. Images of Palestinians being maimed and killed don’t make the United States stronger. Instead, in very obvious ways, they fuel terrorism and instability in the Middle East and elsewhere. Any real commitment to a liberal international order, even one predicated on American hegemony, would require reining in

Israeli violence against Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank.

The shielding of Israel from any consequences for its human rights abuses isn’t the familiar hypocrisy of realpolitik. Rather, it’s a curiously gratuitous hypocrisy — a violation of norms done because much of the American political elite regards Israel as a special pet, given a unique impunity.

On Thursday, *The Intercept* reported another example of the Biden administration’s two-faced approach to Israel/Palestine: “Ahead of the United Nations Security Council action to consider the Palestinian Authority’s application to become a full member of the international body, the United States is lobbying nations to reject such membership, hoping to avoid an overt ‘veto’ by Washington.” The news site added this is “at odds with the Biden administration’s pledge to fully support a two-state solution”.

Early Friday morning in the Middle East, Israel reportedly bombed Iran — appar-

ently part of a retaliatory tit-for-tat battle with the Islamic Republic. Israel took this action despite being advised by the Biden administration not to escalate. The fact that Israel feels secure in defying Biden like this is further proof of the special impunity it enjoys.

Such an egregious display of favoritism makes clear that the liberal international order means nothing more than a purely selfish assertion of dominance: Washington gets to set the rules and the rest of the world has to simply abide by them. But there’s little reason for the world, especially the countries of the Global South who don’t enjoy the special protection given to European allies, to submit to this regime. As America and its core allies become a smaller part of the world — in terms of both population and wealth — there’s no reason to think this version of the liberal international order is sustainable.

The full article first appeared on *The Nation*.



US President Joe Biden (L) talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Tel Aviv on October 18, 2023, shortly after Hamas’s attack against Israel on October 7.
HAIM ZACH/GPO

end and will there be a major war? So, the United States has to worry at different levels.”

“We are in uncharted territory, I have to say,” Adebahr added. “This is the third unprecedented strike of the past two or three weeks. The real question now is: Is this something that Iran feels it can or should play down?”

Edward Luce, author of *The Retreat of Western Liberalism*, pointed out that this could be an inflection point, and one where the White House has limited power to control events. “The degree of Netanyahu’s contempt for Biden is hard to overstate,” he wrote on X.

Nomi Bar Yaacov, an associate fellow with the London think tank Chatham House, said the limited scale of Israel’s attack showed that there was some evidence of successful pressure from Netanyahu’s allies.

“Israel’s dawn counter-attack in Isfahan, Iran was aimed at sending Iran a message that Israel has the capability to strike with precision deep inside Iran without the need to resort to fighter jets,” Yaacov said in a statement to *The Daily Beast*. “It was carried out in a manner that will allow Iran to deny the attack and draw a line under it.”

Yaacov added that the strike itself was “measured” following “pressure from the US, UK, and other allies not to escalate tensions in the Middle East, ensuring only the site from which Iranian drones were launched on Saturday night was hit, avoiding casualties.”

Disagreements over Iran aside, the White House on Thursday said it had once again “expressed concerns with various courses of action in Rafah,” the city in southern Gaza where over a million Palestinians are seeking shelter. Biden has repeatedly warned Netanyahu against a ground invasion of the city, fearing there is no way of conducting such an operation while adequately protecting civilians.

Netanyahu, on the other hand, has repeatedly vowed that an offensive in Rafah is on the way. Earlier this month, he said a date has been chosen for the attack to begin, though he did not publicly reveal when that will be. Netanyahu has also consistently promised to deliver a “total victory” over Hamas, insisting that Rafah remains the final Hamas stronghold in Gaza.

The article first appeared on *the Daily Beast*.

Asian OG Qualifier:

Iran's Azarpira, Emami punch tickets for Paris



Iranian 97kg freestyle wrestler Amir-Ali Azarpira reacts after securing the Olympic berth in the Asian OG Qualifier in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on April 19, 2024.
● UWW



Iranian 74kg freestyle wrestler Younes Emami is seen after the victory over Kazakhstan's Nurkozha Kaipanov in the Asian OG Qualifier in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on April 19, 2024.
● UWW

Sports Desk

Iran's Amir-Ali Azarpira and Younes Emami secured a couple of quotas for the Paris Olympics through the Asian qualification event in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, taking the country's freestyle wrestling berths in the French capital to five. Rising Iranian star Azarpira built on his impressive form in recent months to progress and is all but guaranteed the country's 97kg slot in Paris – ahead of two-time world 92kg champion Kamran Qasempour, who has been dealing with a groin

injury over the past year and was comprehensively beaten by American Kyle Snyder in January's Zagreb Open. Heading into Bishkek event on the back of a morale-boosting victory over Snyder in the Zagreb final, Azarpira defeated Mongolian Asian Games bronze medalist Gankhuyag Ganbaatar 3-0, clinching the victory with a takedown in the second period while on the activity clock. "Today's competition was very tough because the Olympic quota was on the line and there was no room for mistakes," two-time world U23 champion Azarpira said.

"I could be better than this but I had to be careful because I desperately wanted the quota, and my success here would settle the Iranian 97kg wrestler selection for Paris." In his only other match in Bishkek, Azarpira came out on top against Japanese Arash Yoshida – whose father is Iranian and runs a kids wrestling club where he began his career in the sport – in a bout that was close until the Iranian pulled away in the second period for a 9-1 win. Earlier on Friday, two-time world bronze medalist Emami punched

his Paris ticket in emphatic fashion, outmuscling former Asian champion Gong Byung-min of South Korea 15-4 before a technical-fall triumph over Kazakhstan's Nurkozha Kaipanov – a world silver winner in 2019 – in the 74kg semifinals. The Iranian cruised to a six-point advantage with three takedowns in the first period and then extended his lead with a stepout after the restart. A driving takedown was followed by a gut wrench as Emami finished off the contest in 3:49 minutes. Emami had won the 2021 Asian qualifier in Almaty though he

missed out on a place in the Tokyo Olympics, watching fellow-Iranian Mostafa Hosseinkhani suffer a first-round defeat against American Kyle Dake. Meanwhile, Ahmad Mohammadnejad Javan got off to a flying start in the 57kg contests with a 10-0 win against Tajikistan's Aiaal Belolyubskii but his campaign came to an end in the quarterfinals after a 14-3 loss to Mongolian Batkhuyagiin Mönkh-Erdene. Iran will still have a last chance to win a 57kg quota for a complete Olympic six-man squad

when the 2021 world silver winner Alireza Sarlak takes part at the World OG Qualifier in Istanbul next month. Rahman Amouzad (65kg), Hassan Yazdani (86kg), and Amirhossein Zare' (125kg) had already secured three quotas for the country through last September's World Championships. Iran will also be looking to win the remaining two Greco-Roman slots in Bishkek today when Amin Kavianejad and world silver medalist Alireza Mohmadi take on their Asian opponents in the 77kg and 87kg contests respectively.

Persian Gulf Pro League:

Esteghlal survives late scare against Shams Azar to move back on top

Sports Desk

Esteghlal held out a late surge by Shams Azar for a 3-2 home victory on Friday to move back atop the Persian Gulf Pro League table. Javad Nekounam's men began the day in the second place after archrival Persepolis had walked away with a 3-0 win at San'at Naft Abadan on the preceding night to overtake the Blues by two points. Mehrdad Mohammadi found the net midway through the first half and doubled his side's lead from the spot five minutes into the second half. Esteghlal's third came through Mohammad-Hossein Moradmand's 76th-minute header, leaving the Blues on their way to a comfortable victory against this year's surprise package of the Iranian top flight. However, Shams manager Saeid Daqiqi and his men had other ideas and when substitutes Faraz Emam-Ali and Mojtaba Fakhrian cut the deficit to one goal in the space of two minutes the visiting side seemed to be on course for a sensational comeback at the Azadi Stadium.

Esteghlal still managed to hang on to the narrow advantage to restore the one-point lead over Persepolis with six games to spare. In Abadan's Takhti Stadium, Danial Esmailifard headed home in the fifth minute before Issa Alekasir's composed finish in 66th minute, followed by Hossein Kan'anizadegan's penalty five minutes later, sealed a seventh win in eight league outings for Brazilian coach Osmar Vieira, while under-21 keeper Amir-Reza Rafiei, replacing injured Iranian international Alireza Beiranvand, registered a fourth successive clean sheet in the start to his senior career with the Reds. The defeat left San'at bottom of the table with 16 points – three points adrift of Nassaji Mazandaran, which ended a 13-game winless run with a massive 1-0 victory over Tractor and caretaker coach Mohammad Nosrati thanks to Mansour Baqeri's effort from the spot in the second half. Elsewhere, Esteghlal Khuzestan put in a late fightback to salvage a point in a 2-2 draw at Golgozar Sirjan.

Rising star Saeid Saharkhizan broke the deadlock for the host 10 minutes after the interval and Qaem Eslamikhah's strike in the final minute of normal time looked to be enough for maximum points, before Golgozar keeper Mohammadreza Akhbari made a mess of saving Iraqi Aso Rostam's header in the second minute of stoppage time and Mahmoud Motlaqzadeh completed the comeback with a sumptuous volley from the edge of the box two minutes later. Having spent the best part of the season rock bottom in the table, the southern Iranian Blues are now one point clear of the relegation zone. In Ahvaz, Saeid Vasei's second-half strike saw Mes Rafsanjan edge Foolad Khuzestan 1-0 and continue the impressive run since Moharram Navidkia took charge of the bench in the mid-season. Paykan and Havadar, meanwhile, played to a thrilling 2-2 draw in Tehran.



Esteghlal defender Mohammad-Hossein Moradmand (R) goes up for a header during a 3-2 victory over Shams Azar in the Persian Gulf Pro League at the Azadi Stadium, Tehran, Iran, on April 19, 2024.
● FFIRI



Iranian FM: Operation True Promise 'a warning' to Israel

'Iran could have hit Haifa, Tel Aviv'

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian speaks during an interview with NBC News on April 19, 2024.
NBC NEWS

International Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said Iran could have hit Haifa and Tel Aviv but the recent Iran's retaliatory attack against Israel intended to be "a warning." "We could have also targeted all the economic ports of Israel," the foreign minister, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, said in an interview with NBC News.

"But our red lines was civilians," he added. "We only had a military purpose." Iran launched extensive missile and drone strikes late Saturday night on the Israeli-occupied territories, marking the first direct attack by the Islamic Republic against the regime.

The series of retaliatory strikes, dubbed Operation True Promise, inflicted damage on Israeli military bases across the occupied lands. It was in retaliation for the Israeli attack on April 1 against the Iranian consulate in Damascus, located next to the embassy building in Damascus's Mezzeh district.

The airstrike killed two senior Iranian military personnel who were on an advisory mission to Syria as well as five of their accompanying officers. Referring to an alleged Israeli attack on Iran on Friday, he described the weapons that were used in the attack as more like children's toys. "What happened last night

was not a strike," Amir-Abdollahian said. "They were more like toys that our children play with - not drones." On Friday, the sound of explosions was heard near Isfahan and the northwestern city of Tabriz after air defense systems fired at "suspicious objects". Iranian officials said important facilities in the Is-

fahan Province, especially nuclear facilities, are completely safe and no incidents have been reported. Amir-Abdollahian said Iran was not planning to respond to the attack unless Israel launches a significant attack. "As long as there is no new adventurism by Israel against our interests, then we are not going to

have any new reactions," he said. But the foreign minister warned that if Israel did attack Iran, the response would be swift and severe. "If Israel takes a decisive action against my country and this is proven to us," he said, "our response will be immediate and to the maximum and will cause them to regret it."

Flash floods kill at least 10 in Iran's southeast



National Desk

At least 10 people have been killed in flash floods that have swept the southeastern Iranian province of Sistan and Baluchestan. Iranian lawmaker Moineddin Saeedi said that the floods have destroyed several villages and cut off water and electricity supplies to many villages. He said that floods have

also destroyed up to 70% of roads in south of the province and damaged many bridges. The spokesman for the country's Crisis Management Organization Hossein Zafari said several helicopters have been dispatched and rescue operations are underway in the flood-hit areas to help people trapped there. He said that Sistan and Baluchestan Province is

in emergency situation but it is under control. On Friday, Iran's Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi visited the flood-hit areas in the province which has been hit with second flood since March. According to Zafari, the southern provinces of Hormuzgan, Sistan and Baluchestan, Fars, Kerman and Bushehr have reported unprecedented rainfalls in recent days.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Attack on campus Over 100 pro-Palestinian protesters arrested at New York university

More than 100 pro-Palestinian protesters were arrested on Thursday on the campus of Columbia University after its president authorized New York police to clear an encampment set up by students demonstrating against Israel's genocide in Gaza. Columbia University President Nemat Minoche Shafik, who a day earlier came under fire from Republicans at a House of Representatives committee hearing on antisemitism on campus, said she had authorized police to clear an encampment of dozens of tents set up by protesters on Wednesday morning, Reuters reported. Shafik said the protesters had violated the school's rules and policies against holding unauthorized

demonstrations, and were unwilling to engage with administrators. New York City Mayor Eric Adams said police made over 108 arrests without violence or injuries. Police said the arrests were related to trespassing. Columbia said it had started to suspend students who had participated in the tent encampment, considered an unauthorized protest. "We are continuing to identify them and will be sending out formal notifications," a university spokesperson said by email. At least three students - Isra Hirs, Maryam Iqbal, and Soph Dinu - have received suspension notices from Barnard College, an affiliate of Columbia, for participating in the encampment, the pro-Pal-

estinian advocacy group Institute for Middle East Understanding said. Hirs is the daughter of US Representative Ilhan Omar, who had expressed support for protesters during the hearing at which Shafik testified on Wednesday. "Those of us in Gaza solidarity encampment will not be intimidated," Hirs said on social media after being suspended. The clash, reminiscent of the demonstrations against the Vietnam War at Columbia more than 50 years ago, is the latest in a series of demonstrations disrupting university campuses, bridges and airports since the Israeli regime began its genocidal war on Gaza Strip on Oct. 7. The war has claimed the lives of more than 34,000

Palestinians, mostly women and children. Protesters at Columbia have demanded a permanent cease-fire in Gaza and an end to US military assistance for Israel, as well as university divestment from companies profiting from Israel's incursion. The encampment was organized by a student-led coalition of groups, including Columbia University Apartheid Divest, Students for Justice in Palestine, and Jewish Voice for Peace. Separately on Thursday, about 500 demonstrators marched at the University of Southern California in support of Asna Tabassum, a Muslim student whose valedictorian speech was canceled by the university, which cited safety concerns.

Deadly explosion hits Iraq PMU's headquarters

One person was killed and eight wounded in an overnight explosion at an Iraqi military base housing Iraq's anti-terror Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), officials said Saturday. The full details remain unclear hours after the blast hit the Kalsu military base in Babylon Province south of Baghdad, where regular army, police and of PMU members are stationed, AFP reported. The Iraqi security forces' media unit said "an explosion and a fire" hit the

Kalsu base in the early hours of Saturday, leaving one person dead and eight wounded. Air defense command reported "no drones or combat aircraft in the airspace of Babylon Province before or during the explosion", it added in a statement. There was no immediate claim of responsibility. Shortly after the explosion, the US military said its forces were not behind a reported strike in Iraq. "The United States has

not conducted air strikes in Iraq today," US Central Command (CENTCOM) posted on social media platform X, adding that reports that American forces had carried out a strike were "not true". When reached by AFP, the Israeli army said it "does not comment on information published in foreign media". In a statement, the PMU said investigators had been sent to the site. On Saturday morning, however, the PMU issued



another statement that referred to a meeting between its chief of staff and investigation committees "on the site that has been attacked". The PMU is an integral part of the official Iraqi security apparatus under the authority of the prime minister.

Tehran book fair provides platform for Iran-India literary exchange



Arts & Culture Desk

The 35th Tehran International Book Fair offers a significant opportunity for cultural exchange between Iran and India, said Yaser Ahmadvand, head of the event. Ahmadvand expressed eagerness to engage with Iran's cultural community, aiming for greater recognition of contemporary Indian literature among Iranians, ketab.ir wrote. During a meeting with Shri Rudra Gaurav Shresth, the Indian Ambassador to Iran, officials discussed enhancing

cultural ties. Ahmadvand highlighted the fair's potential to facilitate familiarity with authors' works and foster connections between the literary communities of both nations. Ahmadvand mentioned ongoing discussions regarding translations of Iranian and Indian works and expressed hope for Indian publishers' participation in the fair's international section. He stressed Iranians' interest in Indian publications, positioning India as a gateway for global literary exchange. Ahmadvand, in reference to India's featured pavilion,

emphasized the East's hospitality tradition and pledged efforts to ensure a prominent presence for India at the fair. Shresth underscored the enduring cultural ties between Iran and India, citing their influence on various aspects of Indian culture. He highlighted the need to engage young generations through book fairs, fostering future cultural bonds. Proposals for joint activities between Iran and India during the Delhi International Book Fair were discussed, including showcasing classic and contemporary literature, signing agreements, and fa-

ilitating author interactions. Shresth expressed optimism about the positive impact of Iran and India's participation in each other's book fairs, hoping for increased mutual interest in literature. The 35th Tehran International Book Fair is scheduled to take place from May 8 to 18, both in-person and virtually, at Tehran's Imam Khomeini Mosalla.

Head of the 35th Tehran International Book Fair Yaser Ahmadvand (R) and Indian Ambassador to Tehran Shri Rudra Gaurav Shresth discuss literary cooperation during a recent meeting held in Tehran. ketab.ir

Ayatollah Khamenei exalts great Persian poet on Saadi Day



Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei praised renowned 13th-century poet Saadi as "one of the pillars of the solid foundation of Persian literature". Saadi is widely recognized as one of the greatest poets of the classical literary tradition, earning him the nickname "The Master of Speech" through 'Gulestan', a landmark of Persian literature and the most influential work of prose. His other magnum opus is the Bustan, a book of poetry, [Press TV](http://PressTV) wrote. "Saadi is definitely one of the pillars of the solid foundation of Persian literature, a product of

poetry and prose, and the constituent of one of the most graceful organs of the glorious body of our current culture," the Leader said in his message to a congress commemorating Saadi on Saturday. "Saadi's aphorism, which is derived from the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith, has always been a golden seal on the memory of learners, and his eloquent and explicit language has been the revealer of the treasures of meanings for the searching and eager hearts," the Leader said. His message came as Iranians marked the National Commemoration Day of

This file photo shows Ayatollah Khamenei visiting the grave of renowned Persian poet Saadi in Shiraz, southern Iran.

Saadi Shirazi. "The celebration of Saadi is the celebration of not only eloquent poetry and prose, but also morals, wisdom and knowledge," Ayatollah Khamenei said. "In this era when the blessed Islamic Revolution has made the life of our people the realm of Islamic values, and put wisdom and knowledge in its worthy place, it is appropriate that the beautiful mention of Saadi be repeated and emphasized," he added.



Iranian woman wins BIWFF in Lebanon

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian director-cum-actress Sahra Assadollahi won the Best Actress Award at the Beirut International Women Film Festival for her role in the short film 'Spasm.' The closing ceremony of the festival was held in Lebanon's capital on April 19, IRNA wrote. Assadollahi has previously been nominated for best actress at the Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival.

'Spasm,' directed by Assadollahi and produced by Zahed Barzegar, has also been featured at several international festivals in Vancouver, Seoul, Rabat, and the United States. The film stars Sahra Assadollahi, Tino Salehi, Nima Mazaheri, and Kaveh Souri. The Beirut International Women Film Festival highlights women's leadership roles in societies worldwide and is organized by the Beirut Film Society.

Iranian play to be staged in Russia

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's international theatrical project 'Quiet,' directed by Esmaeel Shafiee will be performed at the 28th International Theater Festival "Russkaya Klassika" in Moscow, from May 21 to 20. The project, featuring actors from Iran, Azerbaijan, and Russia, involves two Iranian actors, one Azerbaijani actor, and six actors from the hosting country, ILNA wrote. 'Quiet' debuted at last year's Harlequin festival in eastern Russia, featuring



actors from Omsk and Irkutsk, and this time, actors from Moscow are part of the cast. Shafiee conducts the actors' rehearsals online, aiming to explore a new experience of international

collaboration in theater. Parviz Arjmand, Reza Mahdizadeh, Afsaneh Qolizadeh, and Golnaz Golshan are respectively responsible for composing, stage design, makeup design, and costume design for this project. This year, the participation of the Chayka Theater Group in four international festivals has been confirmed. The theatrical project 'Quiet' won a special prize at last year's Harlequin festival - Russian National Award and Festival of Theatre Art for Children.

Palestinian journalists, writers unite: Boycotts in solidarity with Gaza

The Palestinian journalists are calling for a boycott of the White House Correspondents' Association's annual dinner in solidarity with Gaza. Meanwhile, writers are withdrawing from PEN America's literary awards to protest the organization's perceived failure to protect Palestinian writers in Gaza. The call for a boycott was made on Wednesday in an open letter signed by more than two dozen Palestinian reporters, writers and multimedia journalists who are

located both in Gaza and elsewhere, including Bisan Owda, Ali Jadallah, Hosam Salem, and Mohammed Zaanoun. "As Palestinian journalists, we urgently appeal to you, our colleagues globally, with a demand for immediate and unwavering action against the Biden administration's ongoing complicity in the systematic slaughter and persecution of journalists in Gaza," they wrote. "We insist you publicly boycott the upcoming White House Correspondents' Dinner on



April 27 as an act of solidarity with us - your fellow journalists - as well as with the millions of Palestinians currently being starved in Gaza due to the Biden administration's continued political, financial, and military backing of Israel and cut-off of funding for live-saving humanitarian aid". "For journalists to fraternize at an event with President Biden and Vice President Harris would be to normalize, sanitize, and whitewash the administration's role in geno-

cide," they said. In addition, thirty-one authors and translators have recently withdrawn their work from consideration for or declined PEN America's 2024 literary awards over the organization's "failure to protect" Palestinian writers in Gaza. While nearly 50 PEN centres signed PEN International's call for a ceasefire in late October, PEN America did not join the call until 20 March, which many protesting writers considered too late.