

Iran's diplomacy:

A call to end

the war



A handout picture provided by the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) shows Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (R) meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi in Riyadh on October 9, 2024.

● SPA/AFP



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INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has embarked on a regional tour, visiting Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Iraq, and Oman in recent days. He has announced that the objectives of these trips are to express support for Lebanon and Palestine, as well as to push for a ceasefire and an end to the war. These diplomatic efforts come at a time when tensions between Iran and the Israeli regime have escalated, with Israel vowing to retaliate against Iran's missile attacks. The operation - dubbed Operation True Promise II - came on Oct. 1 in response to the assassinations of top resistance leaders, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah of Hezbollah, Ismail Haniyeh of Hamas and Abbas Nilforoushan of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC). Regional countries are growing increasingly concerned about the prospect of a direct confrontation between Iran and Israel. Iran Daily had a discussion with Qassem Moheb-Ali, a former diplomat and expert on West Asian affairs, regarding Iran's diplomatic efforts.



This handout picture provided by the Oman News Agency shows Oman's Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr al-Busaidi (R) receiving Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi in Muscat on October 14, 2024.

● AFP



Qassem Moheb-Ali



Iran's position is clear: Tehran is not seeking war and wants to stop the war in Lebanon and establish a ceasefire.

IRAN DAILY: What do you believe were the main objectives of the Iranian foreign minister's regional trips in recent days?

Moheb-Ali: From the foreign minister's own words, it's clear that one of the main objectives was to express support for the people of Lebanon and Palestine, as well as the Resistance Axis. Another key goal was to work towards achieving a ceasefire and preventing the conflict from spreading to the entire West Asian region.

Do the countries visited by the foreign minister have the regional and international clout to help Iran achieve its objectives, and do they share Iran's goals?

To some extent, every country involved in the regional and international crisis has an impact. However, in this specific case—namely, Israel's extensive attacks on Gaza and southern Lebanon—it appears that the only nation capable of making a significant difference is the United States. Other countries might exert influence by urging the US to apply more pressure on Israel. Israel disregards international organizations and the counsel of any nation, leaving the US as the sole entity capable of exerting pressure. However, whether the current US administration, led by Joe Biden and the Democrats, is willing to apply such pressure to secure a ceasefire remains a topic of debate. A ceasefire prior to the US presidential election could serve as a strategic advantage for the Democrats, but the US also aims to sup-

port Israel and is likely aware of the Jewish lobby's influence in the polls. Conversely, the Republicans and Donald Trump's campaign would prefer the war to persist until the election, as this would benefit them. Netanyahu is also leveraging this situation to extend the conflict.

Do the Arab countries in the region share Iran's goals of achieving a ceasefire and preventing war, and are they willing to support Iranian diplomacy?

We need to differentiate between the Arab countries. Not all of them have the same views, especially when it comes to Hezbollah and Gaza. For instance, some countries like Saudi Arabia have a poor relationship with Hezbollah and have even had tense relations with them in the past. Therefore, while they might support a ceasefire in the current situation, they are not necessarily supporters of Hezbollah. There are also various groups within Lebanon that oppose Hezbollah. However, it seems that all Arab countries agree on the need for a ceasefire in Gaza.

Despite having good relations with the US and some even having relations with Israel, the Arab countries have not been successful in achieving a ceasefire so far. Why is that?

Yes, they have not been successful because they do not have the capability to pressure Israel. Israel is not willing to accept a ceasefire. Despite the efforts made by Egypt and Qatar, the war in Gaza continues because the Arab countries do not

have the necessary leverage. Moreover, since the 1973 war, the Arab countries have decided not to engage in war with Israel due to their past experiences and defeats. Many of these countries have long-term economic plans that would be severely impacted by the loss of security. Some Arab countries have even signed defense and security agreements with Israel. Therefore, the policies of the Arab countries do not align with those of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and there are significant differences between them.

Foreign Minister Araqchi's diplomatic trips come at a time when tensions between Iran and Israel have reached an all-time high. Do you think his diplomatic efforts will address this tension?

Naturally, discussions have been held on this matter as well. Iran's position is clear, as stated by the president (Masoud Pezeshkian) and the foreign minister: Tehran is not seeking war and wants to stop the war in Lebanon and establish a ceasefire. One of the predictable scenarios in the Gaza war was the expansion of the war to other regions, particularly a direct confrontation between Iran and Israel. This situation is not in the interest of either Iran or the region. The regional countries, including Iran, agree that the war should not spread. They do not want a confrontation between Iran and Israel. Tehran's diplomatic efforts aim to prevent such a scenario and establish a ceasefire in Gaza and Lebanon, at least

stopping the war in Lebanon. Of course, Iranian officials, including the foreign minister, have emphasized that Tehran will stand firm against Israel's adventures and is not afraid of confrontation. However, war is not Iran's preferred choice. Diplomacy fundamentally involves give-and-take, and we need to see what Iran's diplomatic toolkit has to offer in its negotiations with Arab countries and the messages exchanged with the US or Europe that might make

or convince the other side to embrace Iran's perspectives and agree to a ceasefire. Can Iran's diplomacy, through talks with regional countries and possibly indirect talks or message exchanges with the US, prevent a large-scale war or deter Israel from responding to Iran's attack or affect the level of Israel's potential response? Only time will reveal the outcome. Nevertheless, the primary objective of Iran's diplomacy is to halt the war's expansion and secure a ceasefire.

