



The photo shows a massive explosion from an Israeli airstrike on a munitions depot in the Syrian port city of Tartus on December 16, 2024.  
● AP



Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi in a televised interview with the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) on November 4, 2024.  
● IRNA

part of Lebanese society and has played a role in shaping the historical transformations of Lebanon over the past three decades. Our view of Hezbollah has always been based on the principles that its martyred leader and his brothers-in-arms held. Today, with the new leadership at its helm, we maintain the same perspective. Hezbollah has always been, for us, an influential social force, a defensive military power, and a political movement that maintains national cohesion, stabilizes security, and is a defensive and supportive element. This is the fundamental basis of our view of Hezbollah.

Of course, Hezbollah has also played an essential role alongside other Muslim and Arab nations in defending Palestine and resisting the aggressive and boundless expansion of Israel, which is a shared cause with us. I believe that all regional nations are indebted to the resistance of Hezbollah and the Lebanese people. Iran stands alongside the collective forces of the anti-Zionist Resistance Front and certainly supports all Islamic and Arab forces that are part of this axis. Again, I emphasize that resistance against occupation and continuous expansion by Israel is not just a matter of belief but a reality; This resistance is also the most important tool for maintaining the security and stability of the entire region.

#### The cease-fire agreement between Lebanon and Israel gives Israel the room to move and act. How do you evaluate this agreement?

First, I believe Israel accepted this agreement because it lacked the resilience and ability to sustain direct conflict. For over a year, the Israeli army has been targeting defenseless and innocent men, women, children, the elderly, the sick, and the disabled in Gaza, making them the primary targets of the most severe attacks and perpetrating a real genocide, which has been a tragedy for the contemporary world. What has been the outcome of such barbarism? Dragging the war to Lebanon and now attacking Syria? What benefits have these attacks brought to Israel? Has it left behind anything other than widespread global hatred and the exposure of the true face of the Zionist entity as a genocidal and war-criminal regime? Its leaders are now wanted by the International Criminal Court and admonished by the International Court of Justice. This is a harsh and unabating price that the Jewish people have been paying as prisoners of Zionist ideology. Zionism, yesterday in the form of Golda Meir and Sharon and today in the guise of Netanyahu, has violated both the faith of Prophet Moses and the Jewish identity. My assessment is that when Netanyahu violates the May 31, 1974 agreement and UN Security Council Resolution to halt the conflict with Syria and shows no commitment to any principles, he will not be loyal to the cease-fire. From this perspective, we believe countries should stand united and strong based on their national capabilities and the strength of their youth against this destructive and demonic force.

#### Will Iran help in the reconstruction of Lebanon?

Iran has shown its support for Leba-

non's survival in the most difficult conditions. Iran demonstrated its resolve on the day of the fuel crisis in Lebanon, which placed the country's economy on the brink of collapse and disintegration. There is no doubt that in that specific case, secretary-general Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah played an effective role, but aside from that, the historical ties and cultural interactions between the people of Iran and Lebanon, despite geographical distance, have established an essential historical empathy. For eight centuries, the poet Saadi, who wrote in both Persian and Arabic, has vividly described the behavior of our people: "If you have no sympathy for human pain. The name of human you cannot retain."

#### Iran has taken significant steps towards reconciliation with the Arab countries of the peninsula. There have also been efforts to normalize relations with Egypt. Will the new developments affect this?

The impact of regional developments on the normalization of relations between countries in the region is obvious, especially since all countries in the region have had bitter experiences from transformations resulting from interventions by extra-regional powers. The collective security and destiny of the region's nations require governments to take essential steps in organizing sustainable relations.

grams the focus of their actions. Activities of terrorist and separatist groups, drug trafficking, illegal migration, and environmental problems are clear examples of issues that no country can solve alone without elevating the level of political interactions.

A destructive element in the region, the Zionist regime, has been openly and continuously, for over a year, pursuing a colonial eradication project and destroying all basic living infrastructure in Gaza. Now, with the start of recent developments in Syria, this regime has violated agreements and UN Security Council resolutions, extending its aggression towards Syria. Attacks on defensive structures, scientific resources, development resources, cities, ports, transportation lines, and the massacre of defenseless civilians over the past few days have become a pattern for the regime to shift the overflow of Syria's problems to neighboring and regional countries. The destructive impact of such actions on the collective destiny of the major and minor countries of West Asia and North Africa is undeniable. So, prudence dictates that regional countries enhance the level of cooperation and the depth of relations between governments and peoples.

#### Some analysts believe that the current Iranian government has a reformist orientation. It is striving to

from Afghanistan to Iraq and Syria, and all the countries of West Asia. This unity in domestic politics has extended to our diplomacy and the implementation of our foreign policy.

Therefore, in our peaceful and civilian nuclear program, we have acted in accordance with accepted laws, and if there is no improper behavior, we have no intention to change our policy. Even when the JCPOA was agreed upon as a joint plan between us and the 5+1 countries, we took significant steps based on the same spirit of unity and agreement. Now, there is little doubt about our intention. This global model of unity suffered a blow when the US decided to withdraw from the agreement, and despite all the difficulties, we and some other members have worked to preserve it. From the perspective of the Islamic Republic of Iran, reviving the nuclear agreement and maintaining the spirit of trust and unity among the 5+1 members is the appropriate approach to initiating a new phase and achieving a fruitful outcome.

#### Do you have any thoughts on the future of relations between Tehran and Washington with the arrival of President-elect Donald Trump to the White House next month?

I'm not in the habit of judging based on imagination and speculation, but for evaluation and prediction purposes,

that have consistently trapped passengers in this kind of steep and dizzying slope. Paradoxically, sometimes an incomplete game or experience creates more awareness, leading to a brave decision to exit this road and, like a precise strike, put the ball in the hole. I see the leadership of the US during the 45th presidency of the country as a continuation of the traditional system of American politics, but for this upcoming period, some words and decisions are being discussed that need attention in the evaluation of our prediction.

For example, when an observer hears that an efficiency measure is planned in the implementation of government programs, they ask: What is the necessity of efficiency? Will the benefits and costs of the programs be considered? If this is truly the case, it means that the harm to the US from confrontation with Iran will be calculated, and the benefit of correcting the policy will be carefully examined, like a driver considering a change of road and choosing a new route. This route, even if it is longer than the steep and dizzying mountain road, allows for accelerating progress and bringing tired and anxious passengers to their destination in peace. Nevertheless, I believe we should remain cautious and wait for practical actions and the answer to the question of whether the 47th presidency of the United States will mark a distinct era in the country's history.

#### Is there a final message you want to send, in the midst of the changes we are witnessing, to the Middle East and the world? Who is the audience, and what is the content?

The fate of the West Asia region is shaped by the actions and behaviors of each country in the region. We are all responsible for not choosing a bitter fate in the difficult conditions that Syria faces. A destructive and highly brutal force has been targeting the people of this region for over a year, dismantling the defensive capabilities of countries, destroying scientific, educational, transit, industrial, and capital infrastructure, and violating the territorial integrity of countries as part of its strategy. These actions, which began in Gaza and extended to Lebanon, have targeted Iran and now, in an unfair manner, are pursuing a demonic and destructive plan on Syrian soil while the Syrian people need peace to make crucial choices. Israel stands against all of us and all the people of the region.

Regardless of whether we are in Tehran, Cairo, Beirut, Riyadh, Ankara, Abu Dhabi, Doha, or Baghdad, we are a diverse historical community with diverse languages — Persian, Arabic, Turkish, Kurdish, Coptic, and Aramaic — that needs to engage in dialogue. The language of this dialogue is no longer important; rather, we need to find the foundations of this dialogue. Our peoples want peace and cooperation and hope that major countries understand this message and act responsibly towards their past. Therefore, looking at the world as you requested, I would like to say: "Recompensing for the past is an opportunity that the near future is giving to the world."



Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) leader Abu Mohammed al-Jolani (c) speaks to a crowd at Ummayyad Mosque in Damascus, Syria, on December 8, 2024, after the militant group announced that it had ousted president Bashar al-Assad.  
● MAHMOUD HASSANO/REUTERS

For decades, we have witnessed the destructive effects of the "divide and rule" policy pursued by colonial powers in the 19th century and global powers in the 20th century on regional convergence. After that, in specific periods, the shared realization was that enhancing the level of constructive cooperation has led to an improvement in formal interactions, which has had a constructive impact on the social exchanges of the region's nations.

From this perspective, it is important to note that there are internal regional threats that, if ignored, can cause significant damage to the stability and development of our neighbors, who have made some important economic pro-

#### improve its relations with the West and is also interested in reviving the nuclear agreement. What is your view on this perspective?

The current government of Iran has based its domestic policy on one principle: national unity. It has shown that, despite political diversity, religious distinctions, and ethnic differences, a united and cohesive government can be formed, and diverse and different segments of the population can be invited to collaborate and cooperate in steering the country's destiny. This model of comprehensive governance is being implemented in Iran and is the same model we have applied in our compassionate consultations with our neighbors,

I pay attention to plausible signs and their analysis. Generally, regarding the 47th presidency of the United States under Trump, we need to wait for more signs. The fundamental change and transformation in the power structure of the US, which occurs with four-year elections, always allows the country's governments to review sometimes successful and sometimes ineffective policies. It is generally a good thing that the ruling body of a country can escape the steep and dizzying slope of chosen policies or the overwhelming approach of imposed policies.

From my perspective, the direction of US relations with Iran throughout the modern era has been guided by drivers