

Araghchi: Iran ready for talks with Europe based on mutual respect, common interests

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Iran is ready to talk with European countries based on mutual respect and common interests as the Islamic Republic's peaceful nuclear program has once again come under the spotlight following US President Donald Trump's return to the White House and his administration's signals to resume negotiations with Tehran. The Iranian foreign minister made the remarks in a phone conversation with his Dutch counterpart, Caspar Veldkamp on Saturday. Araghchi underlined that Iran's government pursues good diplomatic relations with other countries. The Dutch top diplomat, for his part, referred to the long history of relations between Tehran and Amsterdam and the importance of Iran's role in regional developments and emphasized the necessity of utilizing all diplomatic

capacities to resolve differences between the two countries. Veldkamp also pointed to the three Iranian islands in the Persian Gulf which are claimed by the UAE, saying that this is an issue between Iran and the UAE and the Netherlands supports the settlement of the issue based on international law. Last year, a statement issued at the end of a joint meeting of the heads of state of the European Union and the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) accused Iran of "occupation" of the triple Iranian islands of Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb, and Abu Musa, and claimed that the islands belonged to the United Arab Emirates. Iran strongly condemned the statement with the Iranian foreign minister saying that the three islands have always belonged to Iran, and will forever remain as such. The three Persian Gulf islands have historically been part of Iran, proof of which can be found



Abbas Araghchi

Caspar Veldkamp

and corroborated by countless historical, legal, and geographical documents in the country and other parts of the world. However, the UAE has repeatedly laid claim to the islands. Relations between Iran and the EU have damaged over many issues including Iran's nuclear

program. The government of President Masoud Pezeshkian has been trying to resolve the differences between the two sides through dialogue. Iran and three European powers – France, Germany and Britain – have held several rounds of talks on the is-

sue over the past year. The three European countries are party to the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement. Their failure to fulfill their obligations under the agreement after the US unilateral withdrawal from the deal left the future of the agreement in limbo.

Iran, India FM's call for strengthening collaborations

Iranian FM Seyed Abbas Araghchi, wrote on X on Saturday that, "Today, we celebrate 75 years of diplomatic relations between modern states of Iran & India." Araghchi added, "Of course, our shared history and cultural bonds go back centuries if not millennia, joining our nations at the hip. These ties have been paramount in paving the way for mutual growth & cooperation. Looking forward to further strengthening our partnership for the prosperity of our nations." Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, the Indian FM wrote in response, "Thank you FM @araghchi for your warm wishes on 75 years of diplomatic relations between India and Iran." Our deep-rooted ties are driven by historical linkages. Confident that our cooperation will continue to grow in times to come, he added.

Iran envoy voices concerns about rising Islamophobia in Western countries



Amir Sa'eed Iravani

International Desk

Iran's ambassador and permanent representative to the United Nations, Amir Sa'eed Iravani, raised concerns over the growing Islamophobia in several Western countries, particularly instances of violence, defamation, and the desecration of Islamic values, shrines, and the Holy Quran under the pretext of freedom of expression. Speaking at the High-Level Meeting to Commemorate the International Day to Combat Islamophobia on Friday, Iravani urged nations to criminalize and prohibit violence and hatred against religious symbols and

holy books through their national laws and to take collective action against Islamophobia. Reaffirming Iran's stance, Iravani emphasized the Islamic Republic's unwavering support for efforts to combat Islamophobia and religious extremism. "The Islamic Republic of Iran expresses its profound concern regarding the extensive network of anti-Muslim campaigns, which includes the utilization of media outlets and social media platforms," he said. Iravani warned that these campaigns have "detrimental effects" on Muslims worldwide, particularly for those under foreign occupation or in minority communities. He also referenced UN General Assembly Resolution 76/254, adopted three years ago, which he said reflects a shared global commitment to tackling Islamophobia. He noted that last year's resolution on "measures to combat Islamophobia" further reinforced the urgent need for legislative and policy actions to eliminate Islamophobia in all its forms. "The resolution underscores the

critical need for increased efforts to raise awareness and combat the spread of hate speech, which includes, inter alia, urging the implementation of all necessary measures, such as legislative and policy actions, to combat Islamophobia," he stated. United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres also expressed concern over "a disturbing rise in anti-Muslim bigotry," calling on governments to protect religious freedom and for online platforms to curb hate speech. Rights groups around the world and the UN have noted a rise in Islamophobia, anti-Arab bias and anti-Semitism since the start of Israel's 17-month war on Gaza. "We are witnessing a disturbing rise in anti-Muslim bigotry. From racial profiling and discriminatory policies that violate human rights and dignity, to outright violence against individuals and places of worship," the UN chief said in a video post on X. "This is part of a wider scourge of intolerance, extremist ideologies and attacks against religious groups and vulnerable populations."

Tehran says national oil exports cannot be deterred by sanctions

International Desk

Iran's government spokeswoman Fatemeh Mohajerani said Western sanctions cannot halt Iran's oil exports, as the country is determined to protect its share of the global energy market. "The country's oil exports cannot be stopped. We will not compromise on Iran's share in the world oil market," Mohajerani wrote in a post on X on Saturday. She said several ministries are leading a campaign to counter the sanctions, with the Oil Ministry taking center stage. Mohajerani characterized new US sanctions against Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad as evidence of Washington's anxiety about Iran's successful efforts to circumvent previous restrictions. The US Treasury Department on Thursday issued new sanctions against Iran's oil minister, and some vessels that are part of a fleet involved in the Iranian crude oil exports. US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said in a statement Thursday that the sanctions designated Paknejad and three entities engaged in the Iranian oil trade in China, and named three shipping vessels as blocked property for their use in the transactions. Paknejad "oversees the export of tens of billions of dollars' worth of Iranian oil and has allocated billions of dollars' worth of oil to Iran's armed forces for export," the Treasury claimed. The designated vessels include the Hong Kong-flagged Peace Hill and its owner



Hong Kong Heshun Transportation Trading Limited, the Iran-flagged Polaris 1, the Seychelles-registered Fallon Shipping Company Ltd, and the Liberia-registered Itaugua Services Inc. "Today's action advances President Trump's policy of maximum pressure" on the Iranian government, US State Department spokeswoman Tammy Bruce said in a statement. The new administration at the White House has escalated these measures since taking office in January, reinstating the so-called maximum pressure policy, a campaign of hybrid warfare targeting the Islamic Republic. Iran has exported its oil despite the severe sanctions imposed by the US to drive Iran oil exports to zero. The Director General of the Iranian Oil Terminals Company Abbas Assadrouz said on Saturday that all stages of receiving, storing, and exporting oil at Iran's Kharg Oil Terminal, through which 90 percent of Iran's oil is exported, are carried out in compliance with the most stringent international standards and under the supervision of advanced laboratories.

Israel's offensive in ...

From Israel's vantage point, the ideal scenario would see a moderate government in Damascus—one that distances itself from Iran while maintaining the capacity to counter groups like ISIS. However, the reality on the ground suggests that further weakening Syria could backfire, fueling the rise of jihadist factions like Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS). The group, which has recently ramped up its rhetoric against Israel, may well exploit public discontent to recruit more fighters. The growing internationalization of the crisis adds another layer of complexity. The US, by issuing "General License 2" (GL2) on January 6, 2025, has effectively eased sanctions in favor of Syria's transitional government while keeping an eye on Iran's role. Conversely, the Arab League and Turkey have accused Israel of "violating Syria's sovereignty." The tensions could soon spill over into the UN Security Council, where, on February 12, 2025, the US envoy blamed Iran for "destabilizing Syria"—a charge that Tehran

swiftly dismissed as "baseless."

Test for Middle East power dynamics

Israel's assault on Syria is not just another border skirmish; it reflects a deeper power struggle between the Resistance Axis and the Israel-US-Arab coalition. While Israel has, in the short term, succeeded in degrading Syria's and Hezbollah's military capabilities, its occupation of buffer zones raises the specter of friction with local populations and further international entanglement. At the same time, Israel's claims of Iran's withdrawal from Syria remain far from certain, given Tehran's entrenched presence in Iraq and Lebanon. By opting for "buffer zone control" over diplomatic engagement, Israel appears to be walking a tightrope—one that may not secure long-term stability. Ultimately, Syria's fate hinges on Sharaa's ability to form an inclusive government while the international community's response to Israel's territorial advances will play a decisive role in shaping the region's future.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
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