

# Tehran favors peace over war; ready for 'fair' US deal: Araghchi

## International Desk

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said that the Islamic Republic has consistently prioritized peace over conflict and is ready for a "fair" agreement with the United States if Washington changes its approach and treats Iran with respect.

In an article published by The Wall Street Journal on Wednesday, Araghchi also warned that US hostile actions toward Iran, from sanctions to military threats, have failed to achieve their goals.

Iranian foreign minister also warned the US that Tehran will be "firing back with everything we have if we come under renewed attack," following US president's threats of military aggression against Iran on the pretext of supporting Iranian demonstrators who took to the streets over the past weeks to protest the coun-

try's economic situation which later turned bloody.

"Our powerful armed forces have no qualms about firing back with everything we have if we come under renewed attack," he wrote, referring to the 12-day war launched by Israel and the US on Iran in June last year.

The foreign minister argued this was not a "threat," "but a reality I feel I need to convey explicitly, because as a diplomat and a veteran, I abhor war."

He added that, "An all-out confrontation will certainly be ferocious and drag on far, far longer than the fantasy timelines that Israel and its proxies are trying to peddle to the White House. It will certainly engulf the wider region and have an impact on ordinary people around the globe."

Araghchi's comments came a day after Trump repeated a warning that Iran would be wiped "off the

face of this earth" if it ever succeeded in assassinating the US leader.

"I have very firm instructions. Anything happens, they're going to wipe them off the face of this earth," Trump said in a News Nation interview that aired on Tuesday.

Earlier on Tuesday, in response to any threats facing Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, Iranian General Abolfazl Shekarchi was quoted as saying that Trump already knew Tehran would not hold back if the tables were turned.

"Trump knows that if a hand of aggression is extended toward our leader, we will not only sever that hand, and this is not a mere slogan," Iranian state media reported, quoting Shekarchi. "But we will set their world on fire and leave them no safe haven in the region."



Abbas Araghchi

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## UN nuclear chief upbeat about diplomatic push for Iran-US de-escalation



Rafael Grossi

REUTERS

## International Desk

Head of the UN nuclear agency expressed hope that diplomatic efforts aimed at reaching a broader agreement between Iran and the United States would lead to an understanding without the threat of new military operation.

Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency Rafael Grossi made the remarks in an interview with Reuters at the

World Economic Forum in Davos on Tuesday. One of the "real world" realities Grossi said he must face is the influence of diplomatic efforts aimed at reaching a broader agreement between Iran and the United States that has been spearheaded by US special envoy Steve Witkoff.

"I cannot ignore it, and I wish it well so that there can be an understanding without the looming threat of new military activity over

there or something of the sort," he said.

Grossi said that the standoff with Iran over accounting for its stock of highly enriched uranium and inspecting nuclear facilities bombed by the US and Israel cannot go on forever.

He said that the IAEA inspected all 13 declared nuclear facilities in Iran that were not bombed, but has been unable to inspect any of the three key sites that were bombed in June – Natanz, Fordow or Isfahan.

"This cannot go on forever because at some point, I will have to say, 'Well, I don't have any idea where this material is,'" Grossi said.

"I do not have that conviction or conclusion at the moment, but what we are saying to Iran is that they need to engage."

Grossi said he was ex-

ercising "diplomatic prudence," but that Iran had to meet its obligations as a party to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

"This cannot go on like this for a long time without me, unfortunately, having to declare them in non-compliance," he said.

Following the US-Israeli aggression against Iran in June, the Islamic Republic has called for clear procedures to be established for wartime situations.

Back in December, Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Mohammad Esfahani said political and psychological pressure over inspection of damaged nuclear facilities will have no effect, adding that there is currently no codified instruction for inspecting nuclear facilities that have been damaged by military attacks.

## Iraqi MP warns of US exploitation of Syria tensions to import Daesh

## International Desk

An Iraqi politician and lawmaker warned about the US taking advantage of recent tensions in Syria to insecure Iraq.

In recent weeks, Syria has seen deadly clashes between forces of new rulers and the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) over territories held by Kurdish forces since the defeat of Daesh in the Arab country.

Despite an earlier cease-fire agreement to end the clashes, Kurdish officials said that negotiations collapsed between the Syrian new government and the SDF.

The Syrian army said on Monday that it has taken control of the Shaddadi area and its prison holding thousands of Daesh members in northeastern Hasakah Province after the SDF reported a loss of control over the facility.

The Syrian army said it



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has secured the prison complex and immediately launched search operations to recapture escaped inmates. In an interview with Iraq's Al-Maloumeh News Agency, the Iraqi lawmaker Mukhtar al-Musawi warned of consequences of a worsening security situation on the Iraq-Syria border and called for strengthening security at the common border to prevent any attempted infiltration by the Daesh terrorists from Syria. He underlined that the current security developments near the border pose a serious threat to Iraq's security.

The Iraqi politician also warned of the possibility of the US taking advantage of the situation to bring back the Daesh terrorists into the Iraqi territory, "similar to what happened during the previous American withdrawal."

Iraqi Defense Minister Thabet Mohammed al-Abbsi said on Tuesday that the country's armed forces are fully prepared to defend Iraq's borders, citing concerns about potential Daesh's penetration from neighboring Syria.

## Tehran rebukes Daesh terrorist attack in Kabul



Iranian Foreign Ministry's spokesman condemned a terrorist attack at a Chinese restaurant in Afghanistan's capital of Kabul that left several Afghan citizens as well as Chinese nationals dead or injured.

In a statement on Tuesday, Esmail Baqaei expressed condolences to the

families of the victims and expressed Iran's solidarity with the governments and peoples of Afghanistan and China.

Referring to the principled position of Iran in unequivocally condemning all forms and manifestations of terrorism and violent extremism,

Baqaei emphasized the necessity of strengthening regional and international cooperation to fight the heinous phenomenon.

The Daesh terrorist group later claimed responsibility for the explosion at the Chinese restaurant in the Afghan capital that claimed at least seven lives and left more than a dozen others wounded.

The terrorist group said in a statement that a suicide bomber entered the restaurant in Kabul used by Chinese nationals and detonated an explosive vest.

The spokesperson for the Afghanistan Interior Ministry Mufti Abdul Mateen Qani, however, said on Tuesday that the cause of the explosion in the commercial Shahr-e-Naw area was "unknown so far and is being investigated."

Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist

## CARTOON

