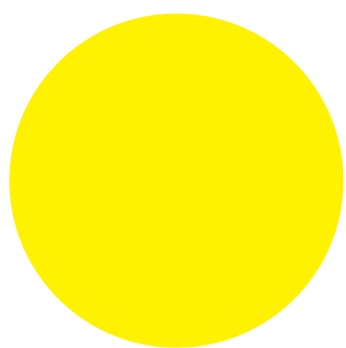


Senior Iranian cleric urges Pope to counsel US president

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Iran 'committed to peace' but not hesitant in defence: *Pezeshkian*

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Iran, the United States and Imperialism



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OPINION

Recent events, namely the abduction of Venezuela's President, Nicolas Maduro and his wife Cilia Flores by the United States, the US and US-backed Israeli war of against Iran, the unjust blockade of fuel shipments to Cuna and, of course, the Israeli genocidal war against Gaza with full US backing, have all merely served to confirm the reality of imperialism in our contemporary lives. If Western imperialism took the form of direct colonial rule since the European conquest of the Americas in the late fifteenth century till the mid-twentieth century, today it operates indirectly through the economic, political and cultural control of the Global Majority via persuasion, intimidation, threats and intervention. Despite the vast majority of the world having undergone formal decolonization, we are still subject to domination, particularly by the United States, that the form of economic controls or political coercion. This is what President Sukarno, at the Asian-African Conference of 1955, also known as the Bandung Conference, referred to as neocolonialism.

Recently, two chief diplomats, the American Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, and the Iranian Foreign Minister, Abbas Araghchi, spoke at separate international forums and reflected in their speeches two widely differing visions of what the world should be like. One was a grotesque display of the imperialist impulse while the other a plea for international order, respect and peace.

Araghchi spoke at the Al-Jazeera Forum in Doha, held on February 7-9 this year. He spoke about the right to self-determination [of Palestinians], of the need to maintain the utmost respect for international law, and of the importance of struggling against an order in which borders are temporary, sovereignty is conditional, and security is determined by military occupation. Araghchi spoke in the context of the Israeli colonization of Palestine, but he could just as well have been speaking about Venezuela or Iran. What the Iranian diplomat was calling for is the decolonization and deimperialization of the world. This comes at a time when the United

States is working to consolidate imperialism and rewesternize the world. This brings us to Rubio's speech which was delivered at the Munich Security Conference; one week after Araghchi spoke in Doha. Remember that Rubio was addressing the Europeans. In the early part of his address, Rubio glorified the founding of America, never once referring to the genocide that the European "discoverers" perpetrated against the natives. Instead, he referred to the Christian faith as a sacred inheritance brought from Europe by those who settled what they called the "New World," but which was known to the indigenous natives as Abya Yala. Rubio stressed that "[we] are part of one civilization - Western civilization. We are bound to one another by the deepest bonds that nations could share, forged by centuries of shared history, Christian faith, culture, heritage, language, ancestry, and the sacrifices our forefathers made together for the common civilization to which we have fallen heir." He went on to recount the great scientific and cultural achievements of Western civilization, without making any reference to the significant contributions of the Chinese, Indians and Muslims to the making of the modern West, not to mention Europeans and American racism, misogyny, slavery and colonialism that the modernization and industrialization of the West was founded on.

Not only was Rubio's speech completely devoid of a multiculturalist sensibility, it secreted xenophobia. He lamented opening "our doors to an unprecedented wave of mass migration that threatens the cohesion of our societies, the continuity of our culture, and the future of our people." He glorified the bombing of Iran in June 2025 as well as the abduction of Venezuela's president and first lady.

Bemoaning the anti-colonial movements that contributed to the decline of the Western empires, Rubio called for the renewal and restoration of Western civilization to "build a new Western century." He noted that for five centuries, Western civilization had expanded through the work of its missionaries and soldiers, and settled continents and established empires. But, the West began to contract from 1945. Rubio told the audience in Munich that President Trump and the United States wanted to work with Europe to return to the Western age of dominance.

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Iran's missiles, drones target Israel, US positions in region

IRGC fires advanced Khorramshahr-4 missile toward occupied territories

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The screengrab shows Iran's Khorramshahr-4 missile being fired from an unknown location toward Israel's positions in the occupied territories on March 6, 2026.

National Desk

Iran's Armed Forces launched new missile and drone attacks against the US and Israel's positions on the seventh day of the joint aggression against Iran on Friday. The Islamic Revolution Guards

Corps (IRGC) fired a number of Khorramshahr-4, Khaybar and Fattah missiles at Israel's positions in the occupied territories during the force's 22nd wave of the True Promise 4 Operation.

Iran's Army also said its air defense systems managed

to shoot down an advanced American MQ9 drone in the Western province of Lorestan as well as an Israeli Hermes drone over the capital Tehran. Spokesman for the Iran's Khatam Al-Anbiya Central Headquarters Ebrahim Zolfaghari said that attacks by Iranian

forces on enemies' positions will be more extensive in the coming days.

He said that the Army's naval and air forces targeted an Israel air base and a radar system in the occupied territories with drones.

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Iran 'committed to peace' but not hesitant in defence: *Pezeshkian*

International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian stated that while his country remains "committed to sustainable peace in the region," it will not "hesitate a bit in defending its dignity and authority."

Writing on X on Friday, Pezeshkian said his government has been approached by some countries to mediate between Iran and a US-Israeli coalition, but insisted that the subject of any mediation efforts must be "those who, by undermining the Iranian people, ignited the fire."

The United States and Israel have been attacking Iran since February 26 amid ongoing nuclear talks between Tehran and Washington. On the first day of the attacks on Tehran, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei and several top Iranian military command-

ers were martyred. Iran responded with widespread missile and drone attacks against Israel and US bases in the region.

Meanwhile, the Iranian envoy to the United Nations once again condemned the "brutal and illegal" aggression by the United States and the Israeli regime on Iranian soil, stating his country "will continue to exercise its inherent and legitimate right of self-defense under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, and in this regard, will take all necessary measures to protect its sovereignty, territorial integrity, people, and vital national interests."

In a letter to the Security Council, the UN Secretary-General António Guterres, the Security Council, and other senior officials of the international body on Friday, Amir-Saeid Iravani said Iran "will take all necessary



Masoud Pezeshkian
● IRNA

measures to protect its sovereignty, territorial integrity, people, and vital national interests."

The Iranian diplomat called upon the United Nations to urge the United States and the Israeli regime "to immediately cease all military aggressive acts against the sovereignty

and territorial integrity of the Islamic Republic of Iran, put an end to deliberate and indiscriminate attacks against civilians and civilian property, which constitute a gross violation of international humanitarian law."

Iravani also requested the international body to en-

sure "accountability and responsibility for the gross violations of international humanitarian law and war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by the United States and the Israeli regime against the Iranian civilian population and infrastructure, both past and ongoing."

Reminiscent of Nazi era

Saeid Khatibzadeh, the Iranian deputy minister of foreign affairs, denounced the US Army's targeting of the Iranian warship Dena this week.

The destroyer was targeted by a US submarine and sunk while returning from a joint naval exercise with India off the coast of Sri Lanka, killing more than 80 crew members.

"The sinking of an Iranian ship on its way back from this mission is very regrettable and indeed a very unfortunate incident," the Iranian diplomat, who was in Delhi to meet his Indian counterparts, told reporters on Friday.

Stating that the Iranian warship was part of the exercise at the invitation of Indian friends, Khatibzadeh said, "This presence had a purely ceremonial nature; the vessel was unarmed and carried no military cargo."

Khatibzadeh emphasized,

"The only precedent that can be found for such an action dates back to the Nazi era in Germany, when they attacked unarmed ships outside the conflict zone. The Americans are actually following the same procedure as seen during the Nazi era." "Many young Iranian sailors who were present to participate in this exercise lost their lives, and such an action cannot remain without a response and without accountability for its perpetrators," added the senior Iranian official.

"The United States has created another tragedy, this time 2,000 miles away from Iranian shores in international waters," Iranian Foreign Minister Amir-Abbas Araqchi wrote on X on Friday.

Araqchi noted that the Iranian ship was hit without warning, emphasizing: "You will see; the United States will deeply regret the precedent it has set."

Senior Iranian cleric urges Pope to counsel US president

National Desk

Ayatollah Seyyed Mostafa Mohaghegh Damad, a prominent scholar and head of the Islamic Sciences Department at the Academy of Sciences, addressed a letter to Pope Leo XIV, urging him to intervene following recent military actions against Iran. He called on the Pope to remind the US President of the teachings of Jesus Christ to halt further aggression.

In his letter, Mohaghegh Damad noted that after the bloodshed of the Middle Ages and two World Wars, humanity moved toward rationality by establishing the UN Charter and the Geneva Conventions to prohibit aggression and mandate humanitarian principles. He emphasized that peace, justice, and ethics are the core of all divine religions, according to IRNA.

Regrettably, he stated, the US President — who claims to follow Jesus Christ — initiated an act of aggression against Iran alongside the Zionist regime, despite significant domestic opposition. The letter highlights the martyrdom of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatullah Seyyed Ali Khamenei through a ruthless assassination



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and the devastating bombing of schools, kindergartens, and medical centers, which flagrantly violates international law and the immunity of such institutions.

He urged the Pope to guide the president back to the path of Christian teachings to prevent further bloodshed. He concluded by expressing hope that world governments will abandon conflict in favor of friendship and kindness, focusing their efforts on improving human life and deepening moral values.

Iran's missiles, drones ...

Army's naval forces also launched drone attack on US troops stationed in a military base in the neighboring Kuwait while the ground forces attacked "American terrorists" in Iraq's Kurdistan region.

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Ready for long-term war

Army's spokesman Mohammad Akraminia underlined that the Army is certainly ready for a long-term war.

Iran's Khatam Al-Anbiya Central Headquarters said the US Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier was hit by the country's drones.

"The aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln, which had approached 340 kilometers from Iran's maritime borders in the Sea of Oman in a bid to manage the Strait of Hormuz, was hit by the IRGC drones, spokesperson for the Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters said.

The spokesperson added the ship rapidly fled with its destroyers, and is now thousand kilometers away from the region.

A few days ago the IRGC announced that the USS Abraham Lincoln has been targeted by four ballistic missiles as part of Operation True Promise 4.

Iran's retaliatory attacks came as the US and Israel continued their brutal aggression against Iran on Friday, targeting many residential buildings, government's offices and military bases across the country.

Government spokeswoman Fatemeh Mohajerani said on Friday that 3090 residential buildings, 528 business centers and 13 health centers have been target-



● ISNA

ed by the US and Israel.

At least 1,230 people have been killed in the US-Israel aggression against Iran since February 28. Mohajerani said that 30 percent of the victims are children.

The US and Israeli armed forces began their aggression against Iran on February 28 by attacking 30 targets across the capital Tehran, killing several senior Iranian officials.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei was also martyred in the Saturday attack.

Since then, Iranian Armed Forces have swiftly and decisively retaliated against these

strikes by launching barrages of missile and drones against the Israeli-occupied territories as well as US bases in region.

According to the IRGC, Iran's retaliatory strikes left more than 680 casualties for American troops in various US bases in the first two days of the war.

Iranian officials have stressed that targeting US military bases in the region constitutes "legitimate self-defense."

Referring to Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, they say that Iran has the legal right to defend itself against "acts of aggression" by the US or the Israeli regime.

Iran, the United States ...

For us in Asia, Africa and Latin America, this must be read as the will to re-esternize us, that is, to reimpose the Western mode of modernity on us. The spirit that Rubio wishes to ignite among the Europeans, one which "sent ships out into uncharted seas and birthed our civilization," is decidedly imperialist. We fear that the recent United States initiatives in Gaza, Venezuela and Iran are the workings of that spirit.

The reassertion of the West's superiority and expression of the will to renew its dominant, imperialist role in the world is likely a reflection of perceived weakness and fear of becoming a "faint and feeble echo," as Rubio put it, of their past. It is something that the Third World, Global Majority, the peoples of

Asia, Africa and Latin America must be weary of and guard against. The anti-imperialist impulse had always been there, but has alarmed the West due to certain changes and movements that have arisen in recent years. These include the rise of BRICS and the idea of de-dollarization, regional re-alignments in the African Sahel that reject French and United States control, the consolidation of ties among socialist states such as China, North Korea and Russia to counter Western dominance, and the Latin American The Pink Tide, that is, the wave of leftist political movements and governments that emerged there since the beginning in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Iran's steadfast anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist stance and its firm opposition to US interference in the af-

fairs of West Asian nations is a part of global anti-imperialism.

The West, led by the United States is, therefore, a declining hegemonic power. This is not just an objective reality but is also perceived to be the case by all, including those in the West. While on the decline, the West will fight to regain its glory.

We in Asia, Africa and Latin America, our citizens, civil society movements and governments, must decide on what side of history to stand. Do we allow for the erosion of international law and sovereignty, and the promotion of neo-colonialism and imperialism, through the active participation in that process or complicity via silence, or do we join the forces of anti-imperialism. The time is coming for us to consider these choices.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

