

China, Russia Express Strong Support for Iran Against U.S.

BELJING (Dispatches) – China and Russia have reaffirmed their support for Iran amidst increasing U.S. military threats and regional tensions, as both countries stand against Washington's pressure on Tehran.

Speaking at a regular press briefing on Thursday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning emphasized that China is closely monitoring developments regarding Iran and opposes the use or threat of force in international relations. She stressed China's commitment to supporting Iran's national stability and its legitimate rights and interests, reinforcing the long-standing friendship between the two nations.

(Continued on Page 7)

Kayhan International



Mahdieh Esfandiari Sentenced to 4 Years in Prison in France

PARIS (Dispatches) – Mahdieh Esfandiari, an Iranian academic based in France, has been sentenced to four years in prison after publicly supporting Palestine and protesting Israel's genocide in Gaza.

Esfandiari, 39, was convicted of "public defense of terrorism" following posts she made on Telegram in October 2023, allegedly expressing support for Hamas-led Operation Al-Aqsa Flood against Israel. The Paris court sentenced her to four years in prison, with three years suspended and one year to be served. She had already spent eight months in pretrial detention. Additionally, Esfandiari was permanently banned from entering France.

(Continued on Page 7)

VOL NO: LV 12761 TEHRAN / Est.1959 **Saturday, February 28, 2026, Esfand 9, 1404, Ramadhan 10, 1447, Price 500,000 Rials**

**Top General:
U.S. Troops,
Assets Within
Firing Range**



**Remembering
Ali-Akbar Dehkoda:
Guardian of the
Persian Word**



**Three-Man Team
Captures Triple Gold
at UWW Ranking
Series in Tirana**



**Pakistan, Afghanistan
Declare 'Open War'
After Intensified
Border Clashes**



Passing Away of the Omm al-Momineen

By: Seyyed Ali Shahbaz

"O Muhammad! Khadijah is coming to your presence; convey salutations of Allah to her and give her glad tidings that Allah has made a house for her in Paradise wherein there is neither grief nor sorrow."

These words of Archangel Gabriel to the Almighty's Last and Greatest Messenger regarding his loyal and virtuous wife, the Mother of all True Believers (Omm al-Momineen), Hazrat Khadijah (SA), are found in all authentic books of hadith including those of our Sunni brethren Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) who over a quarter century of marital bliss with the First Lady of Islam and never took another spouse as long as she was alive, conveyed to her the Almighty's greetings.

The loyal wife, who as the "Maleekat al-Arab" (Richest Lady of Arabia) had spent all her wealth for promotion of Islam, feeding, clothing, and sheltering the neo Muslim community, thanked God Almighty, glorified Him as the Source of all peace, serenity, and salutations, and prostrated to Him out of gratitude.

The opening part of her praise of the Almighty Creator that includes the names of the 12 Infallible Heirs of her husband, beginning with Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (AS) and mentioning his Eleven Successors who are her own blessed progeny by virtue of her Immaculate Daughter, Hazrat Fatema az-Zahra (SA), reads:

"Allahomma Antas-Salaam, wa Minkas-Salaam, wa Lakas-Salaam, wa Ilayka ya'oud as-Salaam; Subhan Rabbeka, Rabb-il-Izzate, amma yasemoun; Salaam-un-ala'al-Murseeleen; wa'l-Hamdu-illil-lah Rabb-il-alameen; as-Salaamo Alayka ayyohan-Nabiyu wa Rahmat-Allaha wa Barakatuh..."

"O Allah! You are the Peace, the Source of all peace, Peace to You, and to You (all) Peace returns; Glorified are You Lord, the Lord of (all) Dignity from whatever is ascribed; Greetings to the Messengers; Praised be Allah the Lord of the universe; Greetings to you O Prophet and Allah's Mercy and Munificence (upon you)..."

This praise of the Lord Most High (complete in its Arabic form), is recited by the faithful after the daily prayers.

Books of hadith of all denominations of Islam including the Sunni canonical works – "Sahih Bukhari", "Sahih Muslim", "Sunan Abi Da'oud", "Sunan Tirmidhi", etc. – have mentioned these words of Hazrat Khadijah (SA) although with slight variations, while in Shi'ite Muslim texts the complete praise is found, ending with the name of the Awaited Saviour of mankind, Imam Mahdi (AS).

Every year on the 10th of fasting Ramadhan, we refresh our grief the "Real Mother of the Momineen", whose departure from the mortal world, shortly after easing of the 3-year economic-social boycott imposed by the Arabs on the Prophet was a great blow for the loving husband, as well as the orphaned daughter that she was leaving behind.

She died in a state of poverty with no money for even a shroud, let alone inheritance for little Fatema az-Zahra (SA), after having spent all her proverbial wealth for the welfare of the persecuted Muslim community.

The aggrieved husband, not destined to find a worthy replacement for Khadijah (SA) – despite taking several spouses in the last ten years of his life out of social necessity – dug the grave, descended into it to smooth the earth and bless it, wrapped his faithful wife in the heavenly shroud brought by Archangel Gabriel, and laid her to eternal rest.

After performing the last rites, the widower Prophet consoled his orphaned daughter as tears rolled down her cheeks, and for a while became speechless to her question: O Father, where has my mother gone, when Gabriel descended, and revealed the following to him:

"Your Lord commands you to inform Fatema that He sends His blessings upon her and says: Your Mother is in a house of brocade, its corners are made of gold, and its poles are of rubies. It is located between the houses of Asiya bint Muzahem (the tyrant Pharaoh's virtuous wife) and Maryam bint Imran – the Virgin Mother of Prophet Jesus (AS)."

Little Fatema (SA) was a picture of profound patience and expressing gratitude in the Divine Court, said: "Surely Allah is Salaam (Eternal Peace), and peace is from Him and to Him." Hazrat Khadijah (AS) needs no introduction. The Daughter of the wealthy monotheist merchant, Khuwailed ibn Assad, she was linked by five generations to the same pedigree as that of the Prophet's clan of Qoraiysh.

Known for her wisdom, knowledge, dignity, excellent temperament and spotless character, and was acclaimed as "Tahera" (Pure and Chaste) even in those pre-Islamic days. Her trade caravans plied the routes from Mecca to Yemen, Syria and other far off places.

On hearing of the reputation of Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) – not yet been commanded by God to announce his universal mission of Islam – she entrusted him with management of her trade affairs. Impressed by the 25-year old youth's honesty in discharging his duties and having confirmed his scrupulous handling during a trade trip abroad, through her servants in the caravan that he was really "Sadeq" (Truthful) and "Ameen" (Trustworthy), she proposed marriage to him.

The Prophet consulted his uncle and guardian Hazrat Abu Taleb (AS), and soon solemnized the nuptials with great rejoicing, to the extent that for over a month the whole of Mecca was entertained to a daily feast.

The excellent couple were indeed a "made-for-each-other pair" and fifteen years later when Divine Revelation dawned upon the husband the dedicated wife immediately believed in his mission as the Almighty's Last and Greatest Messenger to mankind. Thereafter, she spent all her wealth in the propagation of Islam.

couple had several children including son Qasem, from whom the Prophet derived his "kunya" (agnomen) "Abu'l-Qasem", but all died in infancy except the youngest daughter Fatema az-Zahra (SA), who was conceived after the Prophet's return from Me'raj (ascension to the heavens in the twinkling of an eye) and his tasting of the fruits of paradise. This is among the reasons God has referred to Hazrat Fatema (SA) as "Kovthar" (Spring of Perpetual Abundance) in the Holy Qur'an. Islam will always remain indebted to Hazrat Khadijah (SA). Her house was the cradle of Islam, and she nursed and reared it for over ten years until her passing away.

As her future son-in-law, the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (AS), who grew up in her house as the Prophet's ward, said decades later in one of his famous sermons titled "al-Qas'iah" (Sermon 191 of Nahj al-Balagha):

"In those days Islam did not exist in any house except that of the Prophet of Allah (SAWA) and Khadijah, while I was the third after these two. I used to see and watch the effulgence of Divine Revelation, and breathed the fragrance of Prophethood."

Even after death, although the Godless Wahhabis destroyed her holy tomb in 1925, Khadijah (SA) reigns supreme. In every era and place, it was her offspring, who rose to the defence of Islam, as is evident by the tragic martyrdom of her grandson, Imam Husain (AS) in Karbala.

Iranian FM Araghchi Demands After Third Round of Indirect Talks: U.S. Must Drop 'Excessive Demands'



The Iranian delegation arrives at the venue of indirect talks with the U.S. in Geneva on Thursday.

TEHRAN/GENEVA – Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Friday that Washington must drop its "excessive demands" for a nuclear agreement to take place.

"Success in this path requires seriousness and realism from the other side and avoidance of any miscalculation and excessive demands," Araghchi said in a call with Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty.

The call came after Iran and the U.S. concluded the latest round of indirect talks which Araghchi

described one of the best, most serious, and longest to date.

"Today I can say that one of the most serious and longest rounds of our negotiations was held. Approximately four hours were held in the morning and two hours in the afternoon," he told reporters in Geneva after the talks Thursday night.

He said the discussions were conducted indirectly with mediation by Oman's Foreign Minister Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, and that UN nuclear agency chief Ra-

fael Grossi also relayed technical points between the two sides.

"His presence was technically useful. The Omani foreign minister also played an active role, as in previous rounds," Araghchi added.

"Overall, during these long and very intensive hours, good progress was achieved, and we entered a serious review of the elements of an agreement, both in the nuclear field and on sanctions."

He said that on some issues,

Devastating Consequences of Iran War Alarm Zionists

TEL AVIV (Dispatches) -- Israel's army chief Eyal Zamir has privately warned about the devastating consequences of a potential war with Iran as an increased U.S. military presence in the region raises the risk of a multi-front escalation.

Zamir has chosen to remain publicly silent about the potential consequences for Israel's security if the United States were to launch an aggression against Iran, Israel's Ynet reported on Thursday.

In closed-door discussions, however, Zamir has presented and emphasized to the political leadership the implications and risks of such a campaign, it added.

"The military are careful not to brief on the matter, amid pressure from the political echelon not to make public the implications and risks of the move," the Israeli outlet reported, referring to pressure being put on the army by prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's regime.

There is a belief in Israeli army circles that a U.S.-Israeli escala-

tion could lead to a "war of attrition" that would include devastating Iranian missile strikes on Israeli occupied territories.

"Such a war of attrition could last for many months, with the primary cost carried by the Israeli economy," the report said.

The report further warned that missiles could also be fired at Israeli targets in Lebanon, Yemen and Iraq following any U.S. aggression.

Earlier this week, Netanyahu, during a briefing in the Knesset, said that "we are in very complex and challenging times."

Jewish settlers are anxious that any new war might see even greater destruction inside Israeli settlements than that caused in June last year.

All the while, the Israeli army is doing nothing, according to Ynet, to reassure the public, as "the constant stream of reports about yet another U.S. aircraft landing in Israel and another destroyer entering the Mediterranean only further heightens the Israeli anxiety."

On Thursday, Haaretz spoke

with several settlers who are still struggling to return to normal life after being impacted by last year's war.

According to Haaretz, hundreds of Israeli settlers have still not returned to their settlement units eight months on from the 12-day war between Israel and Iran.

Senior US officials want Israel to strike Iran before Washington launches a renewed assault on the country, POLITICO reported on 26 February, to gain more support among US voters for war.

U.S. outlet Politico said advisors to President Donald Trump were "privately arguing that an Israeli attack would trigger Iran to retaliate, helping muster support from American voters for a U.S. strike."

"The calculus is a political one – that more Americans would stomach a war with Iran if the United States or an ally were attacked first," the magazine added.

Influential conservative journalist Tucker Carlson has expressed his opposition to any attack on Iran, saying it would be done on behalf of Israel.

understandings had come very close. "Of course, there are still disagreements, which is natural, but compared with the past, both sides are showing greater seriousness in reaching a negotiated solution," Araghchi said.

He said it was agreed that starting Monday, technical teams in Vienna at the International Atomic Energy Agency would begin detailed technical reviews to organize certain technical issues within a defined framework, which would then be aligned with the political demands and considerations of both sides.

Araghchi added that it was also decided that the next round of talks would take place in the near future, likely in less than a week.

"As I mentioned, this round of negotiations was one of our best, most serious, and longest. The Omani Foreign Minister also tweeted that very good progress had been achieved."

On sanctions, Araghchi said Iran had clearly set out its expectations: what measures should be taken, which U.S. sanctions should be lifted, and the process to be followed regarding issues raised at the UN Security Council.

"Existing disagreements and necessary measures were clearly explained by us, and it was agreed that in the next session, we will examine these issues in greater detail," he said.

Regarding the next round, the fourth, Araghchi said it had been agreed to hold it soon.

"I expect this meeting to take place in about a week."

(Continued on Page 7)

"What I really object to, what makes me mad, is when American leaders, whose job it is to represent Americans, are more loyal to a foreign country than they are to their own," he said on Saturday.

Trump is reportedly under pressure from the Israeli prime minister, who visited the White House last week to insist that U.S. negotiators demand that Iran give up its nuclear program, ballistic missile program, and its support for resistance movements in the region, including Hezbollah in Lebanon and Ansarallah in Yemen.

According to Politico, war raises fears that the U.S. military's supplies of missile defense interceptors will quickly be depleted while seeking to stop barrages of Iranian ballistic missiles on U.S. warships and bases in the region.

"There's a high likelihood of American casualties. And that comes with lots of political risk," it said, citing what it called one person familiar with the discussions.

(Continued on Page 7)