

**Oman FM: Next Iran-U.S. Talks in Rome Friday**

TEHRAN -- Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Wednesday Iran is considering whether to participate in the next round of indirect nuclear negotiations with the U.S.

Araghchi said the Iranian delegation is reviewing the proposed time and venue of the 5th round of talks even as he emphasized the country's resolve to confront excessive U.S. demands.

Oman's Foreign Minister Badr al-Busaidi said later in the day that the fifth round of the negotiations will take place in Rome on Friday.

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# Kayhan International

**Belarus, Iran Discuss Enhancing Defense Ties**

TEHRAN -- Senior commanders weighed plans at a meeting in Tehran Wednesday to promote military cooperation between Iran and Belarus.

Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Belarus Vladimir Nikolaevich Kuprianyuk met with Iranian Army Commander Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi. They explored avenues to enhance military and defense relations between Tehran and Minsk, strengthen cooperation in training programs, and exchange experiences.

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## What is Behind Sudden Surge in Anti-Iran Fabrications in UK?

By: Robert Inlakesh

The arrest of a group reportedly consisting of Iranian nationals, accused of planning an attack on the Israeli embassy in London, has coincided with an aggressive lobbying campaign to classify Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist organization in the UK. While details of the case remain sparse, previous such allegations suggest that linking this plot to Tehran without substantiated evidence is politically motivated.

On May 7, The Telegraph claimed that five individuals were detained in what the UK Home Secretary described as one of the "biggest counter-terrorism operations in recent years." According to the report, four of those arrested were Iranian nationals, apprehended under Section 5 of the Terrorism Act 2006, allegedly for plotting an assault on the Israeli embassy in London.

Yet, contradictions in the report raised significant public skepticism. While The Telegraph asserted that "the suspected terror cell was hours from unleashing the attack when the men were arrested," it also noted that the suspects were detained in cities across England – three of them located around a four-hour drive from London, and another an hour away. The disparity sparked a wave of theories and doubts among the British public.

As these logistical inconsistencies drew scrutiny, right-wing media outlets in Britain seized the moment to stir anti-immigrant sentiments. On Talk TV, Kevin O'Sullivan descended into hysteria, warning, "We are going to have a Southport 2 unless we are careful," invoking a racially charged incident that had ignited riots. The immigration status of the suspects became the focal point for many conservative commentators.

Simultaneously, the pro-Israel lobby began exploiting the incident to reinvigorate its campaign for the IRGC's designation as a terrorist organization. On April 28, Progressive Britain—a group aligned with the Blairite wing of the Labor Party – published an article titled "Why the UK Should Proscribe the IRGC." Its author, Gemima Shelley, is not only a non-resident fellow at Labor Friends of Israel (LFI) but also a senior analyst at United Against Nuclear Iran (UANI).

UANI has played a recurring role in previous efforts to influence British policy against the Islamic Republic. Masquerading as a neutral non-profit, the group is chaired by Jeb Bush and features an advisory board packed with pro-Israel operatives.

Former Mossad Director Meir Dagan was a member until his death, and the U.S. Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth currently sits on its Veterans Advisory Council.

Nigel Farage, leader of the far-right Reform UK Party, opportunistically called on the Labor government to proscribe the IRGC, bizarrely claiming that "friends of mine who live in the Middle East are astonished we haven't done it."

On October 8, 2024, MI5 Director General Ken McCallum delivered a speech at London's Counter Terrorism Operations Centre, stating:

"Since the killing of Mahsa Amini in 2022 we've seen plot after plot here in the UK, at an unprecedented pace and scale. Since January 2022, with police partners, we have responded to twenty Iran-backed plots presenting potentially lethal threats to British citizens and UK residents."

Although McCallum insisted that the intelligence agency does not politicize terrorism cases, his speech disproportionately emphasized threats from Russia, China, and Iran – the UK's designated strategic adversaries. Commentators quickly seized on his remarks to bolster narratives of Iranian culpability.

Despite referencing 20 "Iran-backed" plots, British authorities have failed to provide concrete evidence linking Tehran to any of them. Officials argue that such ambiguity is strategic, offering "plausible deniability." But in most cases, their accusations rest on tenuous associations, such as Tehran's political animosity toward the individuals in question.

Consider the highly publicized case of Austrian national Magomed Husejn Dovtaev, who was convicted in February 2023 after recording video footage of the offices of Iran International, a Saudi-funded Persian-language news outlet based in London.

Dovtaev claimed he had been defrauded of €20,000 and was seeking those responsible at the location. Despite denying any connection to Iran, he was convicted of collecting information likely to be useful for terrorism.

The current frenzy echoes the Israeli embassy bombing in London in 1994. Initially blamed on "pro-Iranian extremists" allegedly tied to Lebanon's Hezbollah, the attack resulted in the arrest of five Palestinians. Two of them, Jawad Botmeh and Samar Alami, were convicted of conspiracy despite no direct evidence or allegation that they planted the bomb.

At the time, human rights group Amnesty International issued a statement raising concerns that neither Botmeh nor Alami had been granted "their right to a fair trial because they have been denied full disclosure - both during and after the trial - of all information."

"There was no direct evidence connecting either of them to the attacks and both had alibis. The appeal was based on the grounds that the convictions were unsafe, including due to the failure of the prosecution to disclose evidence to the defense, and on the length of the sentences."

When the late veteran journalist and long-time West Asia correspondent Robert Fisk wrote on the case for the Independent in 1998, he described it as follows:

"The trial was, to put it mildly, a very puzzling affair. Even before it began, the case developed unusually. First of all, the police charged Nadia Zekra, a very middle-class

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## Parliament Passes Partnership Pact With Russia



TEHRAN -- Iran's parliament on Wednesday approved a 20-year strategic partnership pact with Russia that was reached at the start of this year, Tasnim news agency reported.

"In a public session, representatives agreed with a majority vote to urgently review this bill, and the bill was placed on the parliament's agenda for today," it said.

"After hearing the opinions of those in favor and those opposed, the representatives approved the general outline of the bill with 191 votes in favor, eight votes against, and two abstentions," the

agency said.

The Comprehensive Strategic Partnership agreement was signed in January in a ceremony held by Russian President Vladimir Putin and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian.

Last month, the Russian Duma ratified the deal, which was set for 20 years with the possibility of a subsequent five-year extension.

The pact aims to deepen bilateral ties, particularly in defense cooperation. It also includes enhancing finance, energy, and trade cooperation.

While it stops short of a mutual

defense clause, it commits both countries to joint action against shared military threats, enhanced military-technical collaboration, and joint exercises.

"In order to enhance national security and confront common threats, the intelligence and security agencies of the Contracting Parties shall exchange information and experience and increase the level of their cooperation," the agreement states, adding that the "Contracting Parties shall consult and cooperate in countering common military and security threats of a bilateral and regional

nature."

Iran and Russia have stepped up defense ties in recent years. The ratification comes as Iran continues to face sanctions and the threat of a U.S.-Israeli attack on its atomic energy program – despite nuclear talks between Tehran and Washington.

Russia and Iran have been targeted by harsh U.S. economic sanctions in recent years.

For Tehran, the pact offers a strategic hedge as nuclear talks with the U.S. falter over uranium enrichment. For Moscow, it secures a critical partner in West Asia amid its ongoing war in Ukraine and growing isolation from the West. The timing also underscores a broader geopolitical realignment, as Iran and Russia seek to challenge U.S. influence by building alternative defense and economic frameworks.

The agreement aims to circumvent Western financial systems by linking national payment infrastructures, with over 95 percent of bilateral trade conducted in rubles and rials.

A separate free trade deal between Iran and the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union came into effect last week, reducing tariffs and boosting trade. Russia has also committed to assisting Iran in developing its nuclear energy sector, including the construction of additional nuclear power units.

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## Israel Obliterating Gazans With Mix of Massacre & Starvation

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza (Dispatches) — Israeli strikes continued to pound the Gaza Strip Wednesday, despite a surge in international anger at Israel's widening onslaught. The attacks killed at least 82 people, including several women and a week-old infant, according to the Gaza Health Ministry and area hospitals.

The Zionist regime claimed it had begun allowing dozens of humanitarian trucks into Gaza on Tuesday, but the aid has not yet reached Palestinians in desperate need.

The continuing blockade came after a United Nations chief warned that up to "14,000 babies" in Gaza could die "within the next 48 hours" if humanitarian aid doesn't reach them promptly.

Speaking to BBC Radio 4's Today program, the UN's humanitarian chief Tom Fletcher emphasized the urgency of the situation.

Jens Laerke, the spokesperson for the UN's humanitarian agency, said no trucks were picked up from the Gaza side of Kerem Shalom, the border crossing with southern Gaza.

UN spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric said Tuesday that although the aid had entered Gaza, aid workers were not able to bring

it to distribution points, after the Israeli military forced them to reload the supplies onto separate trucks and workers ran out of time.

The UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, said its staff had waited several hours to collect aid from the border crossing but were unable to do so on Tuesday.

A group of diplomats came under fire while visiting Jenin, a city in the Israel-occupied West Bank, according to the Palestinian Authority. The diplomats were on official mission to observe the humanitarian situation in Jenin when shots rang out.

An aid worker, who did not want to be named for fear of reprisal, said a delegation of about 20 regional, European and Western diplomats were standing near the entrance of the Jenin refugee camp when they heard gunshots Wednesday, she said. No one was injured, she added.

Jenin has been the site of Israel's widespread crackdown against West Bank since earlier this year.

On Jan. 21 — just two days after its ceasefire deal with Hamas in Gaza — Israeli forces descended

on Jenin as they have dozens of times since Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, operation inside southern Israeli settlements. The invasion displaced tens of thousands of Palestinians, one of the largest West Bank displacements in years.

Meanwhile, Israeli strikes continued across Gaza. In the southern city of Khan Yunis, where Israel recently ordered new evacuations pending an expected expanded offensive, 24 people were killed, 14 from the same family. A week-old infant was killed in central Gaza.

Experts have warned that many of Gaza's 2 million residents face a high risk of famine. At one displacement camp in Gaza City, a charity group distributed thin and watery lentil soup.

Somaia Abu Amsha scooped small portions into bowls for her family, saying they have not had bread for over 10 days and she can't afford rice or pasta.

"We don't want anything other than that they end the war. We don't want charity kitchens. Even dogs wouldn't eat this, let alone children," she said, pointing at the soup.

Israeli troops also have sur-

rounded two of northern Gaza's last functioning hospitals, preventing anyone from leaving or entering the facilities, hospital staff and aid groups said this week.

Moshe Feiglin, a former Knesset member and affiliated with prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud Party, on Tuesday openly advocated for the extermination of Palestinian children in Gaza, labeling them as "enemies."

In an interview with Israel's far-right Channel 14, Feiglin said, "Every child, every infant in Gaza is an enemy."

An Israeli settler living in the illegal Shiloh settlement in the occupied West Bank also publicly advocated for the complete annihilation of Palestinians in Gaza.

Rivka Lafair, who identifies herself as a "proud Jew", openly expressed her desire to eradicate Palestinians in Gaza from existence, Israeli daily newspaper Haaretz reported.

She is reportedly associated with the 'YogiNazis' trend, a marginal movement that merges spiritual practices with Nazi ideology.

She has said that the genocide and

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