



Spotlight on Iran

June 9, 2022 – June 23, 2022

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Overview

- ▶ Following the strike on the International Airport of Damascus on the night of June 9, the Iranian minister of foreign affairs spoke to his Syrian counterpart and condemned the strike, which has been attributed to Israel. The spokesman of the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs declared that Syria can not serve as the backyard for Israeli aggression and that “resistance” is the right response to this aggression.
- ▶ On June 13, two Iranian oil tankers carrying about two million barrels of oil docked at a port along the Syrian coast, following an agreement reached during the last visit of President Bashar al-Assad to Tehran in May 2022. The Syrian newspaper al-Watan reported that the movement of the Iranian tankers to Syria was delayed in recent months due to challenges relating to the credit line Iran extended to Syria, and that this issue was resolved during the recent visit of President Assad to Tehran.
- ▶ In an interview, the Iraqi minister of foreign affairs voiced extraordinary criticism of Iran’s meddling in Iraq’s domestic affairs, stating that Baghdad has made it clear to Tehran that it desires Iran’s cooperation, but not intervention. He remarked that Iraq is interested in good neighborly relations with Iran, but that Iranian meddling in its affairs is unacceptable. This statement followed an attack by an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) on the American consulate in Erbil, northern Iraq, which was carried out on June 8, likely by pro-Iranian Shia militias.
- ▶ The Iranian ambassador to Baghdad held separate meetings with the former Iraqi Prime Minister and head of the Nasr Coalition, Haydar al-Abadi; with Sheikh Humam Hamoudi, the Chairman of the Supreme Islamic Council of Iraq; and with Seyyed Ammar al-Hakim, the Chairman of the Hikma Movement bloc in the Iraqi parliament. The meetings were held against a backdrop of a prolonged political crisis in Iraq, due to inability to form a government. The

crisis recently escalated with the resignation of all 73 members of parliaments of the Sadrist Current led by Seyyed Muqtada al-Sadr.

Iranian Involvement in Syria

► On June 10, the Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hossein Amir Abdollahian, spoke on the phone with the Syrian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Faisal Mekdad, and condemned the airstrikes, attributed to Israel, which hit targets south of Damascus on the night of June 9. Abdollahian proclaimed that Iran will always stand by Syria and that the ongoing Israeli attacks on Syrian infrastructure are a violation of Syria's sovereignty and of international law. He added that the silence of the international community in light of the Israeli strikes is unfortunate and shameful. The Syrian minister of foreign affairs thanked Iran for its support to his country, and added that the Israeli aggression in the region points to the weakness of the "Zionist regime" and are intended to embolden the terrorist groups still operating in Syria, including the Islamic State (ISIS) and Jabhat al-Nusra. He stressed that these strikes will only bolster Syria's determination to fight the occupation and terrorism (Fars, June 10). The spokesman of the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Saeed Khatibzadeh, claimed in his weekly press conference that the Israeli actions in Syria reflect its desperation, and insisted that Syria can not serve as the backyard for Israeli aggression. He added that the people of the region know that "resistance" is the right response to the aggression of the "Zionist regime" (Fars, June 13).

► The Syrians pro-regime newspaper al-Watan reported (June 14) that two Iranian tankers carrying about two million barrels of oil docked near Syria's coast following an agreement reached during the last visit of President Bashar al-Assad to Tehran in May 2022. The paper reported that in recent months, the supply of oil from Iran to Syria was halted due to challenges relating to the credit line Iran offered to Syria. The issue was resolved during the recent visit to Tehran of President Assad, who then signed an agreement to resume the Iranian credit line to Syria, which included the supply of oil products from Iran to Syria. Following this new deal, the resumption of the supply of oil from Iran to Syria via tankers was resumed, allowing the regime to partially address the severe energy shortage in Syria. According to this report, Iran will continue to dispatch tankers to Syria regularly, according to pre-determined timetables, and without delay.

► Ali Asghar Khaji, the Senior Adviser to the Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs, stated in an interview to the Russian Sputnik News Agency (June 15) that Iran's positions concerning Syria

and the settlement of the war there are close to the Russian position on these matters. Khaji participated in yet another meeting of the Astana Talks concerning the settlement of the war in Syria, which was inaugurated on June 14 in Nour Sultan, the capital of Kazakhstan, with participation of delegations from Iran, Russia, Turkey, Syria and the Turkish-backed Syrian opposition.



The meeting of the Iranian delegation to the Astana Talks with representatives of the United Nations.
Source: Tehran Times, June 17

Iranian Involvement in Iraq

► In an interview with the Arab TV network al-Ghad, which broadcasts from Egypt, the Iraqi Minister of Foreign Affairs, Fuad Hussein, stated that his country opposes Iranian meddling in its internal affairs. He remarked that Baghdad has made it clear to Tehran that it desires Iranian cooperation, but not intervention. He added that Iraq's relations with Iran have gone beyond the "silence stage" to the "honest stage," and that his country adopted a new approach in the talks it holds with the Iranian side. He stressed that Iraq is interested in good neighborly relations with Iran, but that Iran's meddling in domestic Iraqi affairs is unacceptable (Fars, June 13). The statement of the Iraqi minister of foreign affairs followed a UAV attack carried out in the area of the American consulate in Erbil, northern Iraq, on June 8. The attack, which was attributed to Shia pro-Iranian militias, wounded three people.

► On June 11, the Iranian Deputy President for Parliamentary Affairs, Mohammad Hossieni, met with the Iraqi Minister of Culture and Tourism, Hassan Nazim, to discuss cultural cooperation between the two nations. The Iranian deputy president remarked that the expansion of cultural ties can lay the groundwork for expanding bilateral and regional ties between Tehran and Baghdad. He called on Iraqi authorities to facilitate the entry of Iranian pilgrims to Shia holy sites in Iraq (ISNA, June 11).

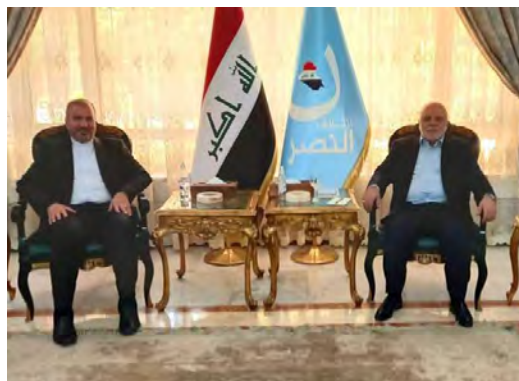


The meeting between the Iranian minister of culture with the Iraqi minister of culture and tourism.

Source: ISNA, June 11

► On June 12, the Iraqi minister of culture met with his Iranian counterpart, Mohammad Mehadi Esmaili, and signed a joint statement concerning the bolstering of cultural cooperation between the two countries (Tasnim, June 12).

► On June 12, the Iranian Ambassador to Baghdad, Mohammad Kazem Al-e Sadegh, separately met with the former Iraqi Prime Minister and Head of the Nasr Coalition Haider al-Abadi; and with Sheikh Humam Hamoudi, the Chairman of the Supreme Islamic Council of Iraq. No details were provided concerning the issues discussed in the meetings (ISNA, June 12). On June 14, the Iranian ambassador also met with Seyyed Ammar al-Hakim, the Head of the Hikma Movement bloc in the Iraqi parliament and discussed developments in Iraq and ways to expand bilateral ties (Fars, June 14).



The meeting between the Iranian ambassador to Baghdad with Haidar al-Abadi. Source: ISNA, June 12

► On June 17, the Iranian Ambassador to Baghdad, Mohammad Kazem Al-e Sadegh, met with the Iraqi Minister of Communications, Shihab Ahmed Kadhim, and discussed expanding cooperation between the two nations in the communications sector, particularly by promoting joint communications projects. In addition, the ambassador participated in a special workshop organized by the Iraqi Central Bank concerning “climate change, desertification and national security.” The workshop was attended by the governor of Iraq’s Central Bank, the Iraqi minister of agriculture and other senior Iraqi officials (IRNA, June 17).

Iranian Involvement in the Palestinian Arena

► In an interview to the Iranian news agency Iran Press (June 13), Nasser al-Sheikh Ali, the Deputy Chairman of the al-Ansar Charity Association in Gaza, stated that Iran provided assistance to families of "martyrs" and wounded in Gaza, in cooperation of the Palestinian Shahid Institution. He remarked that about 7,000 Palestinian families in Gaza receive humanitarian assistance from the Islamic Republic.



Nasser al-Sheikh Ali, the Deputy Chairman of the al-Ansar Charity Association in Gaza. Source: Iran Press, June 13

Iranian Involvement in Afghanistan

► On June 20, the Iranian Ambassador to Kabul, Bahador Aminian, met with the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Taliban government, Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanekzai, and discussed the matter of Afghan refugees in Iran, cross-border drug smuggling, and cooperation between the two countries. Additionally, in recent days, the ambassador held meeting with the former President of Afghanistan, Hamid Karzai, and with the former Chairman of the Afghan National Reconciliation Committee, Abdullah Abdullah, and discussed with them the latest developments in Afghanistan and the region (ISNA, June 20).



The meeting between the Iranian ambassador to Kabul with the former Afghan President, Hamid Karzai. Source: ISNA, June 20

► On June 16, the Iranian Consul General in Herat Province, Mohammad Sadighifor, met with the Governor of Herat, Noor Mohammad Islamjar, and discussed expanding trade and economic cooperation between Iran and the province. In the meeting, which was also attended by the executive director of the Iranian consortium of mining, the sides discussed the possibility of Iran investing in the Afghan mining industry (BakhtarNews.af, June 19).



The meeting of the Iranian consul general in Herat with the governor of the province.
Source: BakhtarNews.af, June 19