



Spotlight on Iran and the Shiite Axis

February 5 – 12, 2025

Editor: Dr. Raz Zimmt



Highlights¹

- ▶ Senior Iranian officials strongly condemned US President Trump's proposal to transfer the residents of the Gaza Strip to other countries and called for decisive action by the international community, especially the countries of the region and the Islamic countries, against the plan. The Iranian foreign minister led an extensive diplomatic campaign and held telephone conversations with his counterparts in the Arab and Muslim world, as well as with the UN secretary-general, in which he emphasized the opposition of Iran and the countries of the region to Trump's proposal.
- ▶ A delegation of senior Hamas figures visited Tehran and met with senior officials of the Iranian regime, headed by Supreme Leader Khamenei and President Pezeshkian. The senior Iranian officials congratulated the Hamas delegation on the "victory" of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and stressed Iran's support for the Palestinians and the "resistance."
- ▶ Iran's ambassador to Beirut stated that Iran intends to participate in the reconstruction of Lebanon in coordination with the new government in Beirut.
- ▶ According to an unconfirmed report, senior Iranian officials and senior officials of the former Syrian regime held a secret meeting in Iraq to formulate a plan to overthrow the new regime in Syria and assassinate President al-Shara.
- ▶ The Houthi leader threatened that if the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip collapsed, the Houthi forces would be ready to resume their attacks against Israel.
- ▶ Members of the US Congress have called on the Trump administration to add the pro-Iranian militias in Iraq to the list of terrorist organizations. A senior militia official made it clear that they would not change their positions.

¹ The weekly study includes the activities of Iran, the Shiite militias in Syria and Iraq, and the Houthis in Yemen.

References to developments in the Palestinian arena

Iran

► Senior Iranian officials condemned President Trump’s proposal, according to which the United States would take control of the Gaza Strip, and all Palestinian residents would be evacuated from the Strip to other countries, primarily Egypt and Jordan:²

◆ Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei issued a statement in Hebrew in which he said: “All of Palestine, from the river to the sea, belongs to the entire Palestinian people” (Iranian Supreme Leader’s X account, February 6, 2025).

◆ Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei strongly condemned Trump’s proposal. He said it is in line with the “Zionist regime’s” plan to erase “Palestine” and constitutes an unprecedented violation of international law and the UN Charter. He added that the Palestinian people, who for 76 years stood firm in the face of “the crimes and aggression of the occupying regime” and did not agree to leave the land of their forefathers, would not allow the United States and the “Zionist regime” to destroy its national and historical identity in other ways. He called on the international community and the United Nations to condemn this plan, and on the Muslim countries and countries of the region to take a clear and united position on this issue (Iranian Foreign Ministry website, February 5, 2025).

◆ Hossein Salami, the commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), said in a speech at the inauguration ceremony of a drone carrier in the port city of Bandar Abbas in southern Iran that those who live in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank are the original owners of the land and will remain there forever. He added that those who must leave are the “immigrants” who had been forcibly transferred to “Palestine” from other countries around the world (ISNA, February 6, 2025).

² For further information, see the ITIC’s study from February 7, 2025, “[The issue of emigration from the Gaza Strip in light of President Trump’s proposal](#)”



The IRGC commander (ISNA, February 6, 2025)

- ◆ In a meeting with Omani Chief of Staff Abdullah bin Khamis al-Raisi, Iranian Chief of Staff Mohammad Bagheri condemned Trump’s proposal. He said that in view of the “wild and expansionist nature of the Zionist regime,” the only way to deal with it is through unity and solidarity among the countries of the region (IRNA, February 11, 2025).
- ◆ Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi held a series of telephone consultations with some of his counterparts in the Arab and Muslim world to discuss President Trump’s proposal. In a conversation with Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty, Araghchi said the proposal is part of a plot to destroy “Palestine” and a serious threat to regional stability and security. He called for an immediate emergency meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to discuss the issue. In a conversation with the OIC secretary-general, Hossein Ibrahim Taha, the Iranian foreign minister stressed the responsibility of the Islamic countries to protect the rights of the Palestinian people and warned of the dangerous consequences of the Trump plan for the stability and security of the region (Iranian Foreign Ministry website, February 8-10, 2025). In a conversation with UN Secretary-General António Guterres, Araghchi called for decisive and clear action by the UN and the Security Council regarding Trump’s proposal, which he claimed contradicts the UN Charter and international law. Araghchi noted that the condemnation of the proposal by Islamic countries reflects the region's broad concerns over the ongoing violation of Palestinian rights and the continuation of "genocide" through other means. Referring to Prime Minister Netanyahu’s remarks concerning the possibility of transferring the Palestinians to Saudi Arabia, the Iranian foreign minister said it was a clear example of the “Zionist regime’s brazen and shameless approach” and that the international community must prevent the normalization of law-breaking and the perpetration of crimes by Israel (Iranian Foreign Ministry website, February 10, 2025).

► A delegation of senior Hamas figures, headed by Mohammad Ismail Darwish, chairman of the movement’s Shura Council, visited Iran and met with senior Iranian regime officials, including Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, President Masoud Pezeshkian, Foreign Minister Araghchi, Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council Ali Akbar Ahmadian, and Majles Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf. The main points of the meetings were as follows:

◆ Iranian Supreme Leader Khamenei said that the “great victory” in the Gaza Strip was shared by Hamas and Iran. He noted that Hamas had defeated the “Zionist regime” and, in fact, the United States, and had not allowed them to achieve any of their goals. He added that the suffering of the residents of the Gaza Strip over the past year and a half ultimately led to victory. Khamenei noted that it is the duty of the entire Islamic world and supporters of the “resistance” to help the residents of the Gaza Strip to alleviate their suffering. He stressed that the issue of “Palestine” is central to Iran and expressed confidence in the victory of the Palestinians (Iranian Supreme Leader’s website, February 8, 2025).

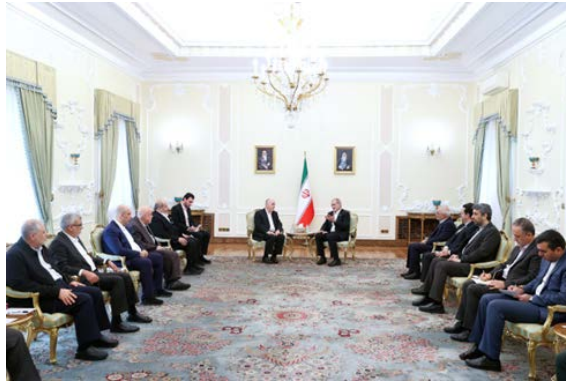


The Iranian Supreme Leader meets with the Hamas delegation (ISNA, February 8, 2025)

◆ Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian stressed Iran’s support for the residents of the Gaza Strip and said that Tehran was confident in the final victory of the Palestinian people. He added that the Islamic countries can rebuild the Gaza Strip and that an international coalition should be formed to bring the Gaza Strip back to life. Hamas members expressed their appreciation for Iran’s extensive assistance “in the campaign against the enemy.” They emphasized that the price paid during the war would not stop Hamas and that it would win through its ability and determination to liberate its country (IRNA, February 8, 2025).

◆ Iranian Foreign Minister Araghchi congratulated Hamas on “the historic victory of the Palestinian people over the Zionist occupying regime.” He said Israel had been forced to

negotiate and reach an agreement with a movement that it wanted to completely eliminate and that it had not succeeded in achieving its goals (IRNA, February 9, 2025).



**The Iranian president meets with the Hamas delegation
(Iranian president's website, February 8, 2025)**

◆ The Hamas delegation reportedly provided the Iranian government with a copy of the report of the findings of the investigation into the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh, the head of the movement's political bureau, in Tehran in July 2024. According to the report, the movement set up a special committee after Haniyeh's death and reached conclusions different from those of the Israeli government and the Iranians (Al-Rai al-Youm, February 10, 2025).

The Houthis

► Abd al-Malik al-Houthi, the leader of the Houthi movement, threatened that if the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip collapsed and Israel resumed its attacks in the Gaza Strip, the Houthi forces would be ready to resume their attacks against Israel. Al-Houthi added that the Houthis would stand by the Lebanese people if there was a new escalation there as well. He accused the Palestinian Authority of collaborating with the "Israeli enemy" by using its "oppressive apparatus" in Judea and Samaria. Regarding President Trump's plan to evacuate the residents of the Gaza Strip, al-Houthi said that this is an aggressive plan that ignores all the relevant principles and laws and that there is a consensus among the Palestinians, the Arab regimes, and the world that rejects the American position and the Trump plan (Houthi Media Center X account, February 11, 2025).



**Houthi forces' poster: "We will be present at every stage of escalation or aggression"
(Yemeni Combat Information Telegram channel, February 11, 2025)**

Iran's involvement in Lebanon

- Mojtaba Amani, Iran's ambassador to Beirut, said Iran intends to participate in the reconstruction of Lebanon in coordination with the new government in Beirut and that it is a humanitarian obligation. Amani stressed Iran's support for the "resistance," adding that the shaheeds Hassan Nasrallah and Hashem Safi al-Din have a great place in the hearts of the Iranian people and that official and popular delegations would attend their funerals. He also said that those who win the war are those who achieve their goals, not those who kill (Al-Manar, February 9, 2025).
- Ambassador Amani visited Al-Nabatieh in southern Lebanon and received an overview of the activities of the Iranian popular committees that are taking part in the efforts to rehabilitate schools, mosques, and religious centers in the region. The ambassador stressed Iran's solidarity with the Lebanese people (ISNA, February 9, 2025).



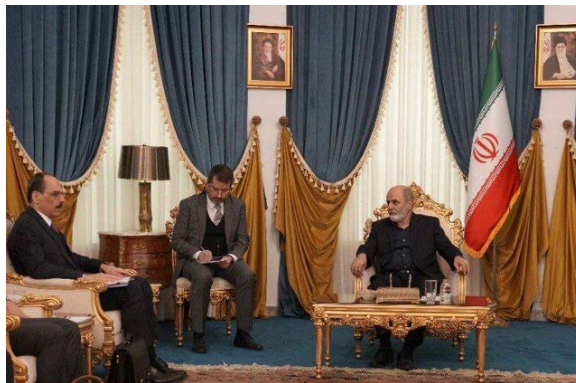
The Iranian ambassador (center) on a visit to Nabatieh (ISNA, February 9, 2025)

- The Tasnim News Agency, which is affiliated with the IRGC, commented on Hezbollah's situation following the establishment of the new government in Beirut. According to the article, the composition of the government proves that despite the internal and external pressures against the "resistance," and even though the current political process in the country has not served its interests to a large extent, Hezbollah has managed to maintain its political

status and thwart the plans of the United States and Israel. The article noted that while Hezbollah and Amal had not been able to retain all the central government ministries, including the ministries of transportation, industry, and agriculture, and had lost their veto power in the government, they managed to retain five ministries, including the Ministry of Finance, despite the efforts of the United States to prevent Hezbollah's participation in the government. Moreover, the Lebanese government's inability to force Israel to implement the ceasefire proves the central role of the "resistance" in defending Lebanon. In conclusion, according to the article, Hezbollah is currently in a transitional period characterized by "tactical patience." Although Hezbollah's political conditions have weakened to a certain extent compared to previous periods, the American-Zionist axis has not succeeded in achieving its political goal, both with regard to disarming Hezbollah and with regard to removing it from the political equation in Lebanon (Tasnim, February 11, 2025).

Iran in the face of events in Syria

► Turkish intelligence chief Ibrahim Kalin visited Tehran and met with senior Iranian officials, including Supreme National Security Council Secretary Ali Akbar Ahmadian and Intelligence Minister Esmail Khatib. The senior officials discussed, among other things, the situation in Syria (ISNA, February 8, 2025).



The meeting between the head of Turkish intelligence and the secretary of the Iranian Supreme National Security Council (ISNA, February 8, 2025)

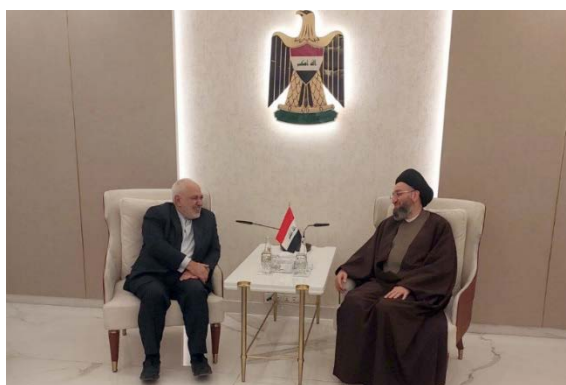
► According to a Turkish report the reliability of which is unclear, senior Iranian officials, including former Iranian ambassador to Damascus and former senior IRGC official Hossein Akbar, as well as the commander of the IRGC Air Force, Amir-Ali Hajizadeh, recently participated in a secret meeting with former senior officials of the Assad regime at the villa of a Shiite businessman in the city of Najaf, Iraq, to formulate a roadmap for the overthrow of the new regime in Syria. According to the report, the plans include a military coup, the assassination of Syrian President Ahmed al-Shara, and a series of measures designed to

destabilize the country. It was also claimed that talks are being held with the Druze and the Kurds, that secret cells had been set up, and weapons depots had been prepared, and that Hezbollah, the Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces, and Shiite militias are also preparing to participate in the fighting (Türkiye Gazetesi, February 11, 2025).

Iran's involvement in Iraq

► Iran's Vice President for Strategic Affairs, Mohammad Javad Zarif, arrived in Baghdad to participate in an international conference on the Shiites. During his visit, Zarif met with senior Iraqi officials, including Iraqi Prime Minister Muhammad Shia' al-Sudani, Iraqi Parliament Speaker Mahmoud al-Mashhadani, and Ammar al-Hakim, leader of the National Wisdom Movement. He also met with the UN Secretary-General's representative for Iraq, Muhammad al-Hassan. In his meetings, Zarif discussed developments in Iraq and the region and the relations between the two countries. He emphasized the importance that Iran attaches to maintaining stability and security in Iraq. He also visited the memorial site for Qassem Soleimani, the commander of the IRGC's Qods Force, and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the senior member of the pro-Iranian Shiite militias, in Baghdad (IRNA, February 6, 2025).

► A "senior source" in the National Wisdom Movement led by Ammar al-Hakim noted that the issue of armed militias is one of the main points of contention between Iraq and Iran regarding cooperation with President Trump's administration. According to the source, Iraq asked Iran to completely sever ties between the militias and the IRGC, and then force them to be subordinate to the state in order to reduce the possibility of US sanctions being imposed on Iraq. According to the source, Iran refused to commit to this (Al-Siyasa, February 6, 2025).



The Iranian vice president meets with Ammar al-Hakim (IRNA, February 6, 2025)

Iran's Involvement in Yemen

► On February 5, 2025, forces loyal to Yemen's internationally recognized government detained two individuals suspected of smuggling weapons from Iran to the Houthi rebels. The suspects allegedly belong to a network that traffics Iranian arms to the Houthis via sea routes.

According to reports, the two flew from Iran to a country neighboring Yemen, crossed the border to Yemen on foot, and boarded a vessel already laden with weapons. They were apprehended by Yemeni government forces while attempting to sail to Djibouti (Al-Ain, February 7, 2025).

► Mahdi al-Mashat, head of the Houthis' Supreme Political Council, congratulated Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on the 46th anniversary of the “victory” of the Islamic Revolution. In the statement, they congratulated Iran for its support of the “resistance” movement in “Palestine” and Lebanon and emphasized Yemen’s solidarity with Iran in the struggle against the “Zionist-American hegemony” that seeks to abuse Iran and its allies. It also stressed the desire to strengthen relations between the countries, noting that this is in the interest of the Yemeni people and the peoples of the entire Islamic nation (Al-Masirah, February 10, 2025).

► Houthi spokesman Mohammed Abd al-Salam, in a congratulatory message marking the anniversary of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, said that the Islamic Revolution has always expressed its support for the Palestinian cause and continued to support the “resistance” movements in “Palestine” and Lebanon. He also wrote that throughout the years of the revolution, Iran has been the most prominent Islamic country in its loyalty to “Palestine” (Mohammed Abd al-Salam’s X account, February 10, 2025).

Iraq and the pro-Iranian militias

The issue of dismantling the militias

► “Iraqi sources” said that the armed militias in Iraq demanded “sensitive positions that influence political decision-making” in exchange for agreeing to give up their weapons. According to the report, the militias demanded that Prime Minister Muhammad Shia’ al-Sudani entrust them with the positions of head of Iraqi intelligence, national security advisor, chief of staff of the Popular Mobilization, command of preventive security in the Popular Mobilization Forces, and responsibility for the intelligence division of the Popular Mobilization Forces (Saudi newspaper Okaz, February 11, 2025).

American activity against the militias

► Twelve Republican members of Congress appealed to US Secretary of State Marco Rubio to request that the administration put the pro-Iranian militias in Iraq on the list of terrorist organizations, impose sanctions on them, and even halt military aid to Iraq as long as the militias are not dismantled. Among the militias that the members of Congress demanded to be

classified as terrorist organizations are the Nujaba Movement, Kata'ib Sayyid al-Shuhada, and the Badr Movement (The New Arab, February 11, 2025).

► A “senior source in an armed Iraqi faction” stated that the new American threats of sanctions would not cause them to change their positions. The “source” claimed that US President Trump threatened sanctions not only against Iraq but also against various countries in the region, to steal their oil through intimidation. Ali Hussein, a senior member of the coordination committee of the pro-Iranian parties in Iraq, said that the issue of imposing sanctions is purely for media consumption and is not the official position of the American administration. He believed that the Iraqi government had good communication with the American administration and added that the factions were fully committed to all government decisions (Al-Akhbar, February 11, 2025).