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## **Iran ready for war with US but open to negotiations, FM Araghchi says in Beirut**

*January 8, 2025* [jpost.com](http://jpost.com) reported: “Tehran remains open to negotiations with the United States as long as they are based on ‘mutual respect and interests,’ but it is also ready for war if that is Washington’s intent, Iran’s foreign minister said on Thursday.

Abbas Araghchi, speaking during a press conference in Beirut, added that the purpose of his visit to Lebanon was to discuss Israel’s ‘challenges and threats’ to regional security, as well as expanding bilateral ties.

Araghchi told the *Mehr News Agency* of his trip to Lebanon on Wednesday. The Iranian official noted that he would make the trip along with an economic delegation...”

## **Iran unrest: Protesters chant ‘Death to Khamenei,’ topple Soleimani statue**

*January 8, 2025* [israelnationalnews.com](http://israelnationalnews.com) reported: “Protesters took to the streets in Ilam in western Iran on Wednesday evening, chanting ‘Death to Khamenei,’ according to videos sent to the *Iran International* website.

Other footage posted to social media showed protesters destroying and toppling a statue of Qassem Soleimani, former head of the Quds Force of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), in Fars Province.

Protesters in Iran also set fire to a statue of Soleimani last week. The incident took place in the city of Lali in Khuzestan, located in southwestern Iran.

The incident took place on the eve of the anniversary of the elimination of Soleimani in a US drone attack in Iraq, on January 3, 2020...”



*Iranians protest against Ayatollah Khamenei*

## **Trump on collision course with Putin after US seizes Russian-flagged oil tanker**

*January 7, 2025* [independent.co.uk](http://independent.co.uk) reported: “US forces have seized a Russian-flagged oil tanker in the Atlantic in a dramatic move that could put Donald Trump on a collision course with Vladimir Putin.

The UK later revealed British armed forces provided support to the United States’ capture of the *Marinera*, a Venezuelan-linked vessel previously known as *Bella-1*, as it travelled north and eastwards through the waters between Iceland and Scotland on Wednesday.

The interception of the vessel comes amid a climate of global instability, with tensions also growing between Mr Trump and Europe over the US president’s repeated threats to take over Greenland...”

## **Israel, Syria return to US-backed talks with sharp disputes over withdrawal, demilitarization**

*January 6, 2025* [ynetnews.com](http://ynetnews.com) reported: “Israel and Syria are set to resume U.S.-mediated negotiations in Paris on Monday and Tuesday aimed at a security arrangement, after talks stalled for more than two months amid wide gaps that previously prevented an agreement despite American pressure.

Officials on both sides stress the discussions are focused on a security framework, not normalization of relations, which they say could be addressed later, if at all.

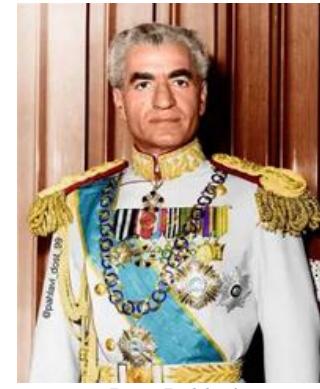
Israel currently maintains positions at several strategic points inside Syria, including in the Mount Hermon area. Damascus is demanding a full Israeli withdrawal to the border line. Israel, citing security concerns, is unwilling to withdraw immediately and is seeking a phased process, along with the demilitarization of southern Syria extending nearly to Damascus — a demand widely seen as unacceptable to the Syrian leadership. Jerusalem is also pressing Damascus to prevent a Turkish military buildup in Syria. While Syrian officials are unlikely to formally commit to such a provision, there is some expectation that informal understandings could be reached...”

## **Pahlavi dismisses calls for US op. to extract Khamenei, predicts Iran-Israel ‘Cyrus Accord’**

*January 6, 2025* [jpost.com](http://jpost.com) reported: “Iranian Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi does not believe that it is necessary for the US to extract Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and put him on trial for his crimes, downplaying chatter that the US military may conduct such an operation, similar to the extraction of Maduro from Caracas, Venezuela.

Pahlavi’s comments came during an interview with the *Wall Street Journal*’s Tunku Varadarajan via Zoom, published on Monday. ‘I think that change in Iran is ultimately in the hands of the people of Iran themselves,’ he affirmed.

‘Many governments have reasons to hold Khamenei accountable, but I think it will be far more appropriate for this to be solely in the hands of the Iranian people, and to have world governments be supportive’ of their fight to free themselves, he added...”



**Reza Pahlavi**  
Iran Crown Prince

## **Report: Khamenei preparing to flee to Moscow if forces desert**

*January 5, 2025* [israelnationalnews.com](http://israelnationalnews.com) reported: “A Western intelligence assessment shared with *The Sunday Times* says that Iran’s Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has prepared a secret escape plan should his security forces fail to contain the nationwide protests sweeping the country.

According to the report, Khamenei, 86, intends to flee Tehran with a small circle of aides and family members if he detects desertions or refusal to follow orders. ‘The ‘plan B’ is for Khamenei and his very close circle of associates and family, including his son and nominated heir apparent, Mojtaba,’ an intelligence source told *The Times*...”

## **Islamic Republic in ‘survival mode’ amid protests, Iranian officials said to believe**

*January 5, 2025* [timesofisrael.com](http://timesofisrael.com) reported: “Senior officials in Iran have acknowledged that the country has reportedly been ‘thrust into survival mode’ amid growing and increasingly violent protests against the Islamic Republic’s regime. At least 17 people have been killed during a week of unrest in Iran, a rights group said on Sunday, as protests spread across the country, sparking violent clashes between demonstrators and security forces. Deaths and arrests have been reported throughout the week, both by state media and rights groups, though the figures differed.

The protests are the biggest in three years. Some senior figures have struck a softer tone than in some previous bouts of unrest, at a moment of vulnerability for Iran with the economy in tatters and international pressure building.

After US President Donald Trump threatened to intervene if Iran killed peaceful protesters on Friday, the country’s Supreme National Security Council held a meeting to discuss how to temper the protests without reacting violently and avoid fueling the rage toward the regime, three Iranian officials familiar with government deliberations told *The New York Times* on Sunday...”

## **Katz instructs IDF to prepare to resume combat in Gaza as Hamas refuses to disarm**

*January 2, 2025* [jpost.com](http://jpost.com) reported: “Defense Minister Israel Katz instructed the IDF to prepare for the possibility of returning to intense fighting against Hamas terrorists in the Gaza Strip, *Walla* learned on Friday. The security establishment clarified that no instructions have been received from the political echelons to prepare for reopening the Rafah Border Crossing.

There is a slim chance that Israel will allow goods to enter the Gaza Strip, as this would mean allowing the rebuilding of the area without the remains of St.-Sgt.-Maj. Ran Gvili, the final hostage, being returned, the strip not being demilitarized, and Hamas not being disarmed, a security source clarified. However, the Trump administration is keen on moving towards Phase II of the plan, despite an impasse with Hamas. Since Israel is opposed at this stage, the US has proposed starting with reconstructing Rafah, free of weapons and terrorists.

It remains unclear at this stage whether Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has given in to US President Donald Trump on this issue...”