



Leader's representative: Iran to keep fighting Islam's enemies at full strength

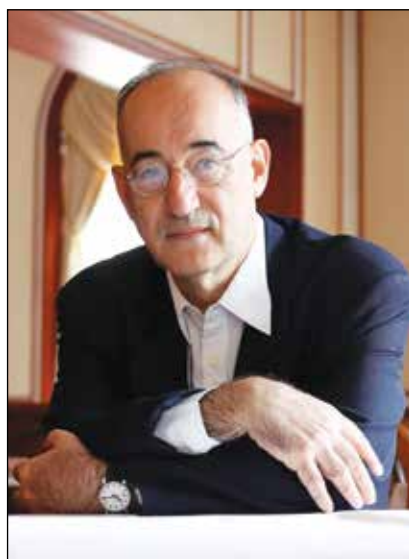


Palestinian groups hail 'heroic operation' in Tel Aviv

EXCLUSIVE

Croatian Ambassador to Iran Dr. Drago Štambuk:

Shared emotional, historical background can bring two nations closer together



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## China: US should make political decision on JCPOA

### Iran resolute to secure 'good agreement': FM

China's Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian urged the United States to make political decisions as soon as possible and actively respond to Iran's legitimate concerns if it wants a revival of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal in the Vienna talks.

Speaking at a press briefing in the Chinese capital of Beijing on Thursday, Zhao said negotiations on reviving the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) – as the deal is called – have entered the final stage, with all parties having reached a consensus on most of the issues while only a few remain to be resolved.

He said China believes that there is no better alternative to the JCPOA, Press TV reported.

"At this final phase, it is even more important that all parties boost confidence, step up diplomatic efforts, facilitate a smooth conclusion of the negotiations and avoid letting previous efforts come



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to naught," the Chinese diplomat said.

"As the culprit of the Iranian nuclear crisis, the US should make political decisions as soon as possible and actively respond to the legitimate concerns of the Iranian side," he added.

Zhao also said that China will continue to "participate in the negotiations constructively, help bring the JCPOA back to the normal track at an early date, uphold the international non-proliferation system and promote peace and stability in the Middle East".

**Iran determined on reaching 'good agreement'**

Also on Thursday, Iran's Foreign

Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian reiterated that he was "determined to achieve a good, strong and lasting agreement".

"Instead of putting forth excessive demands and slowing down the talks, the American side must adopt a realistic approach," Iran's top diplomat said.

He added that China, Russia and three European members of the Iran deal have been taking constructive positions during the talks.

Amir-Abdollahian said the European Union, especially its foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, and his deputy, Enrique Mora, who also acts as the coordinator of the Vienna talks, have been playing an active role in the Vienna talks.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Wednesday he was not "overly optimistic" at the prospects of concluding the Vienna talks. In an interview with MSNBC, Blinken said that "time is getting extremely short to restore the JCPOA" but added that a successful conclusion of the talks would be in the interest of the United States.

Negotiations have been held in the Austrian capital since April last year to restore the JCPOA, which was ditched by former US president Donald Trump in 2018. In quitting the agreement, Trump introduced what he called the "maximum pressure" campaign to bring Iran to its knees. Tehran maintains that the policy has failed dismally. The Joe Biden administration agrees, yet it has not taken any tangible steps to deliver on its promise of repealing the policy.

In recent months, Iran has cited Washington's indecisiveness as the reason behind the protraction of the talks, while a number of key issues remain unresolved, ranging from the removal of all post-JCPOA sanctions to the provision of guarantees by the American side that it will not leave the deal again.

The other parties to the talks – Russia, China, the UK, France, and Germany – have also noted that the negotiators are close to finalizing an agreement.

## Pakistan court orders PM confidence vote to go ahead

### Khan says ready to fight 'till the last ball'

Pakistan's parliament will convene today to vote on removing Imran Khan as prime minister, an official notice said on Friday.

The country's top court ruled late on Thursday that Khan must face the no-confidence vote meaning he would be ousted from office.

called an election.

The ruling was the latest twist in a crisis that has threatened political and economic stability in the country of 220 million people, where the military has ruled for half its history.

Khan, who opposed the U.S.-led intervention in Afghanistan and has developed



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relations with Russia since he became prime minister, has accused the United States of supporting a plot to oust him. Washington has dismissed the accusation.

If he loses the no-confidence vote, the opposition will put forward a candidate for prime minister.

Shehbaz Sharif, the younger brother of three-time former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, said after the court ruling that the opposition had nominated him to take over should Khan be ousted.

The rupee currency hit all-time lows on Thursday and foreign exchange reserves tumbled.

The opposition has said it wants early elections but only after delivering Khan a political defeat and passing legislation that it says is needed to ensure the next polls are free and fair.

The election commission has said the earliest it can hold elections is in October, which means any new government will have to deal with pressing economic issues before that.

Amir-Abdollahian made the remarks in a Thursday phone call with his Serbian counterpart Nikola Selakovic during which the two sides discussed bilateral relations as well as the most important international developments, including the ongoing Russian military operation in neighboring Ukraine.

Referring to the latest moves by the US-led North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) with regard to the war in Ukraine, Iran's foreign minister said "diplomatic path, dialogue and prevention of further spread of war constitute the most real way" to settle the Ukrainian crisis, Press TV reported.

Iran's top diplomat also reiterated the Islamic Republic's opposition to war and imposition of unilateral sanctions on countries.

Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a "special military operation" on February 24 to demilitarize Donetsk and Luhansk, largely populated by ethnic Russians, in eastern Ukraine.

The United States and its European allies have labeled the military operation as "Putin's land grab," imposing unprecedented sanctions on Moscow, which stresses that it will halt the operation instantly if Kyiv meets Russia's list of demands,

including never applying to join NATO. The Serbian foreign minister said his country supports protection of the territorial integrity of Ukraine and believes in a diplomatic path to promote peace in the region.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said no Ukrainian troops were at the station and blamed Russian forces for the strike.

Moscow has denied targeting civilians since the outbreak of the conflict. Ukrainian officials say Russia is regrouping forces after withdrawing from the capital Kyiv's outskirts for a new thrust to try to gain full control of the eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk partly held by pro-Russian forces since 2014.

On Friday, Ukrainian authorities said at least 39 people were killed and 87 wounded when two rockets hit a railway station in eastern Ukraine.

Pavlo Kyrylenko, governor of the Donetsk region, said thousands of civilians had been at the station at the time the rockets struck. Many of the wounded were in serious condition, he said, Reuters reported.

The Russian Defense Ministry was quoted by RIA news agency

## Diplomacy, dialogue best way to resolve Ukraine crisis: Iran

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## Yemen's Ansarullah welcomes Hadi decision to cede powers

After the exiled former president of Yemen officially handed powers, Yemen's Ansarullah movement said the move deprived the United Nations of its excuse to continue supporting the aggressors in the seven-year Saudi-led war.

Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi's "bogus government" has come to an end, Ansarullah spokesman Mohammed Abdul-Salam stated via his Twitter account on Thursday evening.

"The development has refuted allegations of the countries that attacked Yemen under the pretext of confronting coup plotters against him," Abdul-Salam said.

"The international community and the UN no longer have an excuse to continue using the term 'internationally recognized Yemeni government' to massacre the Yemeni nation and enforce a tight siege on the Arab country," he added, according to Press TV.



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Abdul-Salam also slammed talks hosted by Saudi Arabia on the Yemeni conflict, saying the future of the Arab country will be only determined by the Yemeni people.

"The Yemeni nation does not care about the talks sponsored by illegal parties. The only option for the Saudi-led coalition to promote peace is to stop the attacks, lift its siege and move out its forces. Other than that, efforts to settle the conflict are nothing but desperate attempts to regroup mercenaries and use them to escalate the tensions," the Ansarullah spokesman added.

Ansarullah has already shunned the meeting in Riyadh that was hosted by the Riyadh-led Persian Gulf Cooperation Council and involved representatives from the Saudi-backed Hadi administration as well as US Special Envoy for Yemen Tim Lenderking.

The Yemeni movement insisted that it would not travel to enemy territory for talks.

Earlier on Thursday, Hadi delegated power to a presidential council and dismissed his deputy.

Hadi also sacked his deputy Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar, a powerful military figure, and delegated al-Ahmar's powers to the presidential council.

Last week, UN Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg announced a two-month cease-fire that went into effect on April 2, saying the truce could be renewed with the consent of the parties.

The deal stipulates halting offensive military operations, including cross-border attacks, and allowing fuel-laden ships to enter Yemen's lifeline Hodeida port and commercial flights in and out of the airport in the capital Sana'a "to predetermined destinations in the region".

Saudi Arabia launched the devastating war against Yemen in March 2015 in collaboration with a number of its allies and with arms and logistics support from the US and several Western states.

The objective was to bring back to power Hadi and crush the Ansarullah resistance movement, which has been running state affairs in the absence of an effective government in Yemen.

The war has stopped well short of all of its goals, despite killing hundreds of thousands of Yemenis and turning the entire country into the scene of the world's worst humanitarian crisis.