



Spotlight on Iran

September 15, 2022 – September 29, 2022

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Overview

- ▶ Iran International channel, which is aligned with the Iranian opposition, reported that the strike attributed to Israel, carried out near Damascus on the night between September 16th and 17th targeted the Iran's logistics unit of the Lebanon Corps of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), which is responsible for coordinating the transfer of equipment and weaponry from Iran to Syria. Meanwhile, Syrian sources reported about the arrival of three Iranian cargo planes to the Damascus International Airport between September 19th and 21st.
- ▶ In late September, “Iran Culture Week” was inaugurated in Syria, with prominent cultural and artistic figures from both countries participating in the events.
- ▶ Iran informed an official delegation from the Lebanese Ministry of Energy its willingness to provide Lebanon with 600,000 tons of fuel over the span of five months. In a meeting with the Lebanese foreign ministers on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York, the Iranian minister of foreign affairs voiced Iran’s willingness to provide additional fuel and other types of assistance to Lebanon.
- ▶ Also in New York, the Iranian president met with the prime minister of Iraq and expressed hope for a quick resolution to the political crisis in Iraq, and the formation of a stable government.
- ▶ On September 20, the Iraqi national security adviser met with the deputy commander of the Intelligence Organization of the IRGC and discussed ways to bolster intelligence cooperation between the two nations.

Iranian Involvement in Syria and Lebanon

- ▶ Iran International channel, which is aligned with the Iranian opposition and enjoys Saudi financial support, reported (August 20), that the strike attributed to Israel in the area of Damascus on the night between September 16th and 17th was aimed at the logistics unit of the

Lebanon Corps, which is responsible, among other tasks, for coordinating the transfer of equipment, including weaponry, from Iran to Syria and Lebanon. The report alleged that this unit is directed by someone identified as Seyyed Reza, who is the head of the office in the Damascus branch of the logistics unit. Other senior officials at this unit whose identity was revealed in the report are Abdollah Ebadi, who deals with the transfer of weapons, mainly through luggage carried on passenger flights from Iran to Syria; and Meysam Katbi, in charge of transferring personnel and weaponry from Iran to Syria.

► The pro-opposition Syrian outlet Euphrates Post reported (September 26) that the IRGC recently transferred equipment and weaponry to militias it backs, including the Iraqi Shia militias Liwaa' Abu Fadl al-Abbad and Liwaa' Dhu al-Fiqar, which operate in the Hama region. According to this report, the IRGC transferred a number of trucks laden with weapons and equipment, including rockets and machine-guns, to the headquarters of the pro-Iranian militias in Rahbat Khitab and Qomhana in Hama's countryside. Additionally, the militias received 4X4 pickup trucks. These supplies were sent from the storage facilities of Division 47, located in the Ma'arin area south of Hama city.

► The opposition-aligned Syrian outlet Ayn al-Furat reported (September 25) on the arrival of three Iranian cargo planes to the Damascus International Airport between September 19th and 21st. According to this report, the planes landed at dawn to avoid Israeli airstrikes. Two of the planes unloaded some of their cargo in Damascus and then continued to the Aleppo International Airport to off-load the remainder. The unloading was carried out under the oversight of IRGC and Hezbollah advisers and commanders, who later transferred the equipment to areas outside the airport to forestall the bombing of the storage facilities at the airport.

► On September 21, the foreign ministers of Iran, Russia and Turkey met on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly and discussed developments in Syria. The meeting was also attended by Geir Pedersen, the UN Special Envoy to Syria. During the summit, the Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Amir Abdollahian, stated that Iran believes there is no military solution to the crisis in Syria, and stressed the need for countries illegally occupying parts of Syria to withdraw their forces. He called for respecting Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity, for removing the economic sanctions imposed on it, and for expanding the provision of humanitarian assistance to the country's citizens (Fars, September 22). On September 25, Abdollahian met in New York with the Syrian Foreign Minister, Faysal Mekdad,

and discussed developments in Syria, bilateral relations, and developments in the regional and international spheres. Abdollahian condemned the foreign meddling in Syria's domestic affairs, and stressed Iran's support for a political solution to the crisis in Syria (Tasnim, September 26).



**The meeting of the Iranian, Turkish and Russian ministers of foreign affairs in New York.
(Fars, September 22)**

► On September 19, the Iranian Ambassador to Damascus, Mehdi Sobhani, met with the Syrian Minister of Religious Endowments, Mohmmmed Abdul Sattar. In the meeting, the two discussed religious and cultural cooperation between the two countries. In addition, the Iranian ambassador met with Fadi Salti al-Khalil, the Chairman of the Syrian Committee for Planning and International Cooperation, and discussed bilateral cooperation (ISNA, September 19).



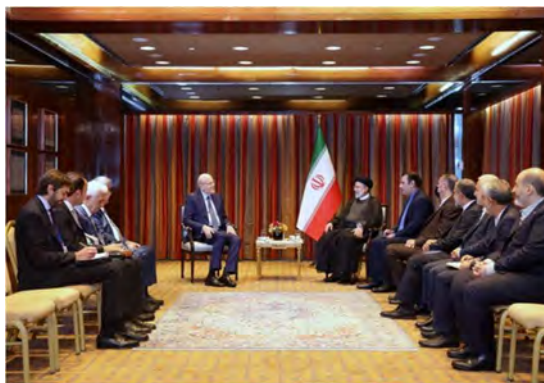
The meeting between the Iranian ambassador to Damascus with the Syrian minister of religious endowments. (ISNA, September 19)

► On September 28, "Iran Culture Week" was inaugurated in Damascus. On September 26, the Head of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization, Hojjat ul-Islam Mohammad Mehdi Imanipour, arrived in Damascus to participate in the opening ceremony of the event, and to meet with prominent Syrian cultural figures. In attendance at the Iran Culture Week were the Syrian Minister of Culture, Labana Mushawah, who had recently visited Tehran, the Iranian

Ambassador to Damascus, Mehdi Sobhani, and Iranian cultural and artistic figures (ISNA, September 26).

► The al-Manar TV station, which is affiliated with Hezbollah, reported (September 20) that Iran informed an official delegation of the Lebanese Ministry of Energy, which arrived in mid-September for a visit in Tehran, about its willingness to provide 600,000 tons of fuel over the span of five months. During their visit to Tehran, the members of the delegation met with senior officials at the Iranian ministries of petroleum and energy and discussed the provision of Iranian fuel to Lebanon, restoring the Lebanese electrical grid, and establishing Iranian power stations in Lebanon. On September 20, the Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hossein Amir Abdollahian, met with the Lebanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abdallah Bou Habib, on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, and expressed Iran's willingness to send additional fuel and assistance to Lebanon.

► On September 21, the Iranian President, Ebrahim Raisi, met in New York with the Prime Minister of Lebanon, Najib Miqati. The Iranian president proclaimed that Lebanon has demonstrated that only "resistance" can stop the cruelty and aggressiveness of the "Zionist regime." He remarked that the formation of a strong government in Lebanon is of strategic importance, and that Iran supports any step or process that would bolster Lebanon's stability and security. The Lebanese prime minister stated in the meeting that his country is interested in maintaining the warmest relations with Iran (Tasnim, September 21).

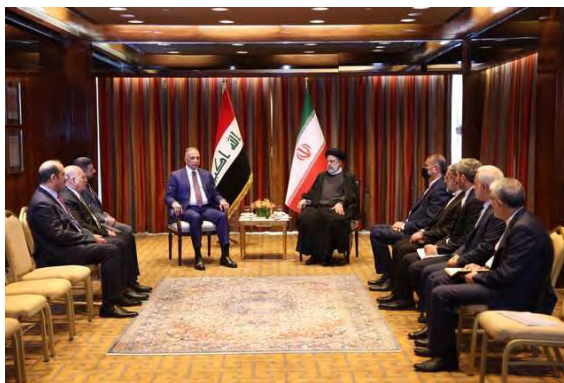


The meeting between the Iranian president and Lebanese prime minister.
(Tasnim, September 21)

Iranian Involvement in Iraq

► On September 20, the Iranian President, Ebrahim Raisi, met with the Prime Minister of Iraq, Mustafa al-Kadhimi, on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly. Raisi expressed his hope for a quick resolution on the ongoing political crisis plaguing Iraq, and the formation of

a stable government. Additionally, the Iranian president voiced his appreciation for Iraq's efforts to improve relations between the countries of the region, including between Iran and Saudi Arabia. The Iraqi prime minister provided an update to President Raisi about the political developments in his country, and thanked the efforts of the Iranian government to bolster cooperation between the two nations (ISNA, September 20).



The meeting between the Iranian president and Iraqi prime minister. (ISNA, September 20)

► On September 20, the Iraqi National Security Adviser, Qasim al-Araji, met in Baghdad with the Deputy Director of the IRGC's Intelligence Organization, Hassan Mohaqeq, and discussed ways to bolster cooperation between the two countries in the intelligence sphere, to better control the borders and preventing the smuggling of goods. The senior Iranian official thanked the Iraqi government for its role in organizing the pilgrimage to Karbala on the occasion of Arbaeen. The Iraqi national security adviser stressed his country's opposition to any use of its territory by opponents of Iran or Turkey to strike at those countries (Shafqana, September 20).



The meeting between the Iraqi national security adviser with the deputy director of the IRGC's Intelligence Organization. (Shafqana, September 20)

► The Iranian embassy in Baghdad denied reports published on social media alleging that the Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hossein Amir Abdollahian, ordered to void the residency of the leader of the Sadrist Current, Muqtada al-Sadr, and his family, in Iran. This

step was allegedly taken after the Sadrist Current supposedly meddled in Iran's domestic affairs by spreading fake news, including photos and videos, concerning the wave of protests rocking Iran. A tweet on the embassy's Twitter account claimed that the letter attributed to the Iranian minister of foreign affairs on this matter, was faked in an effort to harm relations between the two countries (ISNA, September 24).