



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

मनोहर परिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

Iran

Digest

September 2022

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Iran warns Azerbaijan against border changes in the Caucasus

As Azerbaijan and Armenia engaged in a fresh round of border clashes on 13-14 September, Iran called for restraint and peaceful resolution of disagreements while warning against any change in the border between the two South Caucasus countries. Iran's President [Ebrahim Raisi](#) in a telephone call with his Armenian counterpart Nikol Pashinyan noted that security in the Caucasus region is very important for Iran, and "the region cannot tolerate another war." After Azerbaijan secured control of swathes of land in the Nagorno Karabakh region in the 2020 war with Armenia, it has been overtly calling for the establishment of a land corridor linking its autonomous enclave of Nakhichevan to mainland Azerbaijan, a move that will virtually cut the Iran-Armenia border. The recent clashes raised concerns in Tehran about such possibility as Azeri troops were able to take several strategic heights inside Armenia's Syunik province of bordering Iran. If the land adjoining Iran's border with Armenia falls into Azeri hands, Azerbaijan and Turkey will be in control of Iran's overland access to the Caucasus and Europe. Iran also sees Armenia, as [its only land gateway](#) to the markets of the Eurasian Economic Union. As the US House of Representatives Speaker [Nancy Pelosi](#) blamed 'Azeri assaults' for the recent crisis, the Iranian foreign ministry spokesperson at his weekly press briefing emphasised on the "[use of regional capacities](#) to stabilise the region", while calling any other approach 'provocative.'

IRGC units launch strikes into Iraqi Kurdistan amid protests in Iran

On 24 September, ground forces of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) at [Hamzeh Seyed al-Shohada base](#) in Urmia, in Western Azerbaijan province, launched drone and missile strikes targeting the office of Kurdish opposition in Iraq's

autonomous Kurdistan region. The death of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year old Iranian girl, in the custody of morality police responsible for enforcing the mandatory 'Islamic dress-code' triggered protests in her hometown Saghez in Kurdistan province and quickly spread across the country. An IRGC statement noted that shelling targeted offices of Komala and the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) for allegedly sending "armed teams and a large number of weapons... to the border cities of the country to cause chaos." On 23 September, Kurdish rights group Hengaw posted a video showing that parts of [Oshnavieh](#), a town populated by Kurds in Western Azerbaijan, had fallen under the control of protesters. On 29 September, after [another round of shelling](#), with precision missiles shot 130km deep into Iraqi Kurdistan, an IRGC statement noted that KRG authorities had failed to heed their warnings "to dismantle the activities of anti-Iranian terrorist groups related to global arrogance (a reference to the United States) in their territory". Over the years, Iranian forces have frequently engaged in clashes with Iranian Kurdish militant groups based in northern Iraq.

Iran and the IAEA resume dialogue over 'safeguards issues'

[Mohammad Eslami](#), the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) addressing the annual conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) called for impartial verification of Iran's nuclear program by the UN nuclear watchdog. Criticising the agency's use of reports supplied by Israel, which it had allegedly stolen from Iran, Eslami noted that "We believe the Agency must avoid relying on unfounded information obtained through unreliable sources." In recent months, as Iran and the United States have attempted to narrow their differences over a European Union draft proposal to revive the nuclear agreement, the issue of IAEA investigation into the presence of uranium

traces at sites previously undeclared as part of Iran's obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) safeguards agreement, has emerged as a major roadblock. Following the conference, Eslami and IAEA Director-General Rafael Grossi discussed the state of play between Iran and the Agency and agreed to [resume their dialogue](#) on the pending safeguard issues. Foreign Minister Amir-Abdollahian calling for putting an end to "[unfounded claims against Iran](#)", made reference to a procedure followed in 2015, when the IAEA concluded its investigation into the "purported previous military dimensions (PMD) of Iran's nuclear program" thus allowing the implementation of the JCPOA.

Raisi supports 'Asian multilateralism' at SCO summit, meets PM Modi on the sidelines

President Raisi attended the Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Samarkand. In his address, he noted that Iran's focus on regional projects such as the SCO and BRICS shows its efforts to build a fair and partnership-based international system. He supported a [new security model in Asia](#) on the basis of "joint development and deepening of multilateralism without the interference of foreign powers". He argued that American unilateralism, which has weakened economic and political multilateralism, "seeks to hold countries back from their independent development path", and called on the SCO to prioritise financing of logistics and trade facilitation projects. Noting Iran's priority of "[deepening economic multilateralism](#)", Raisi underlined Iran's unique capabilities in ensuring energy security for members, namely its proximity to the world's two largest hydrocarbon fields in the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea, its transit location and expert manpower. He also called for the integration of electricity markets of the member countries. Raisi and Indian [Prime Minister Modi](#) had a meeting

on the sidelines where apart from discussing various aspects of the bilateral relationship, the two leaders reviewed the progress in the development of the Shahid Beheshti terminal, Chabahar Port and underscored the importance of bilateral cooperation in the field of regional connectivity. In Samarkand, Iran's Foreign Minister Amir-Abdollahian signed [documents of commitments](#) of Iran as a member of SCO.

Iran supplies Venezuela with 1.22 million barrels of crude; delivers third Iranian-made oil tanker

On 27 September, two Iranian tankers with approximately [1.22 million of Iranian crude](#) and two million barrels of condensate arrived at Venezuela's Jose terminal. Given that both the countries are under US sanctions, in recent years the two sides have made renewed efforts to strengthen their cooperation in the oil sector. Venezuelan President visited Tehran in June this year signing a 20-year 'cooperation road-map'. The countries also signed an [oil swap agreement](#) last year, based on which Iran sent shipments of its heavy crude to help Venezuela ramp up its oil and gas production and deal with the country's fuel crisis. In exchange, Caracas supplied Iran with jet fuel. Iran's supply of condensate helps Venezuela stabilize exports of Orinoco's crude blends and allows its own lighter oil to be refined in the country to produce badly needed motor fuel. In a related development, Iran delivered another advanced oil tanker to Venezuela. With a deadweight between 80,000 and 120,000 metric tons (mt), '[Aframax 2](#)' would carry 113,000 mt or 750,000 barrels of oil and is third such vessel delivered by Iran. In 2006, Iran Marine Industrial Company (Sadra) had signed an agreement with the Venezuelan state-owned oil and natural gas company (PDVSA) to deliver four tankers. Venezuela had received the second tanker on June 11, 2022, in a ceremony attended by the presidents of the two countries in Tehran.