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# Iran

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## Iran and Russia signed a Treaty on the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership

On 17 January, Iran's President Massoud Pezeshkian and Russian Vladimir Putin signed a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement in Moscow. The agreement is based on previous bilateral treaties of 1921 and 1940 and the 2001 Treaty on the Basis for Mutual Relations and Principles of Cooperation between Iran and Russia, which provided the legal foundation for bilateral relations. It consists of a [preamble and 47 articles](#) providing framework for long-term cooperation in various fields including economy, culture, trade and security. [Russian President](#), during a meeting with Pezeshkian stated that Russia and Iran “continue working on large projects, including those in nuclear energy. There are also other emerging projects in the energy sector and good prospects in logistics.” Unlike the Russia-North Korea Treaty of Comprehensive Strategic Partnerships signed in November 2024, which obliges both countries to provide immediate military assistance to each other using “all means” necessary if either faces “aggression”, the Iran-Russia agreement does not have a mutual defence clause. The two countries started work on the new treaty after former Iranian President’s visit to Moscow in January 2022.

## Iraq’s Prime Minister visits Iran

On 8 January President [Pezeshkian](#) received Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani in Tehran. Apart from bilateral issues, including the implementation of 2023 security agreement on relocating Iranian Kurdish groups in northern Iraq, “the meeting witnessed a discussion of cooperation and coordination in positions between the two countries regarding developments in the region, especially the [situation in Syria](#) and the necessity of joint work to establish security and stability there and preserve its

territorial integrity.” Al-Sudani, while affirming Iraq’s commitment to building balanced relations with all international and regional parties, proposed a [comprehensive regional dialogue](#) hosted in Baghdad. Al-Sudani’s visit to Iran comes after his [visit to Saudi Arabia](#) in December 2024, where he called for joint coordination in dealing with fallout of changes in Syria, and stressed Iraq’s keenness on the unity of Syrian territory and non-interference in Syria’s internal affairs. Baghdad has come under renewed pressure from Washington to control the Iranian-backed armed groups in the Popular Mobilisation Forces. On 4 January, a senior commander from Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba, a U.S.-designated terrorist organization was killed in a US air strike in Baghdad. On the same day, President-elect Donald Trump sent a message to Al-Sudani urging him to limit weapons to the state and to halt the activities of armed groups backed by Iran. Iran’s Supreme Leader [Ayatollah Khamenei](#) told Al-Sudani during their meeting, “as you have pointed out, the PMU is a crucial component of power in Iraq, and more efforts should be made to preserve it and to strengthen it even further.”

## Iran’s Foreign Minister visits Afghanistan

Iran's Foreign Minister Sayed Abbas Araghchi paid one-day [visit to Kabul](#) on 26 January 2025. It was the first visit by Iran's foreign minister to the Afghan capital since 2017. Araghchi met with several high-level officials of Taliban’s interim government, including Prime Minister Mohammad Hassan Akhund, Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi, Minister of National Defence Mohammad Yaqoob, Minister of Industry and Commerce, Nooruddin Azizi. In December last year, Bigdeli in his first meeting with Muttaqi had stated that he will facilitate a high-level delegation exchange between the two countries soon. President Pezeshkian, in an interview during a visit to

Sistan and Baluchestan had said that his administration plans to hold talks with Afghanistan to uphold water rights of the province from the Helmand River also known as Hirmand in Iran. The protracted dispute over sharing waters of the transboundary Helmand River and Harirud has become a key issue in Iran-Taliban relations. In December 2024, the Taliban announced that the construction of the Pashdan Dam in Herat is 80 per cent complete and will soon become operational. Iran protested the “[unilateral dam construction](#)” measures of the Afghan side and called for joint cooperation to evaluate and reduce negative cross-border effects.” Though Araghchi raised water sharing issues in all his meetings, Taliban [repeated its previous position](#) that “Afghanistan remains committed to its obligations regarding Iran's water rights” and insisting that the main obstacles were of climatic origin. In his meeting with [Mullah Yaqoob](#), Araghchi noted Taliban's efforts in combatting terrorism and drug trafficking and called for close cooperation and coordination between the relevant agencies. Araghchi's visit also saw discussion on economic issues including advancing negotiations on removal of trade barriers and tariffs, addressing challenges in border markets, increasing Afghan exports to Iran, reducing transportation and transit costs and maximizing the use of the [Chabahar port](#).

### **Iran Army and the IRGC carry out large-scale military exercise in western Iran**

On 4 January, the Ground Forces of Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) and Iran Army commenced large-scale military exercises, termed the “[19th Great Prophet Exercise](#),” in Kermanshah Province, which shares a 186-kilometer border with Iraq. In the initial phase of the drill, the Mirza Kuchik Khan Brigade, concentrated on rapid response operations, which included the swift deployment of troops and military hardware

to designated combat zones. Brigadier General Mohammad-Nazar Azimi, commander of Najaf Ashraf Regional Headquarters of the IRGC Ground Force, highlighted the significance of [conducting exercises in the border region](#) which saw defensive operations during the Iran-Iraq War and other operations to counter terrorist groups. During the drills, the Army practiced comprehensive assaults on terrorist positions with aerial support from over 100 helicopters and armoured drone units. Brigadier General Kiomars Heydari, commander of the Iran Army Ground Force, announced that Iran's helicopter missile range has increased from 2 kilometers to 200. The drill spokesman General Mohammad Hadi Sefidchian, highlighting the [dual role of quadcopters](#) as a threat and an opportunity for Iran, stated that “this time we operated many quadcopters, engaged in exercises that simulated electronic warfare, and also practiced countering cyberattacks.” On 14 January, in a ceremony attended by Iran's Defence Minister Brigadier General Aziz Nasirzadeh, [1,000 cutting-edge UAVs](#) were inducted into Iran's Army Combat Organisation. He remarked that these drones have granted the Iranian military the capability to “command the skies” and strike enemies decisively if required. On 11 January, the IRGC Chief Commander Major General Hossein Salami and Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh, commander of the IRGC Aerospace Force unveiled an advanced [underground missile base](#) housing a range of high-tech missiles, including the Emad, Qadr, and Qiam models, all of which operate on liquid fuel. During the facility tour, General Salami commended the IRGC forces involved in the recent operations against Israeli targets. He dismissed the notion that Iran's missile production capabilities had been hindered by external pressures. “Every day, the number of systems and missiles is increasing across this land,” Salami declared.