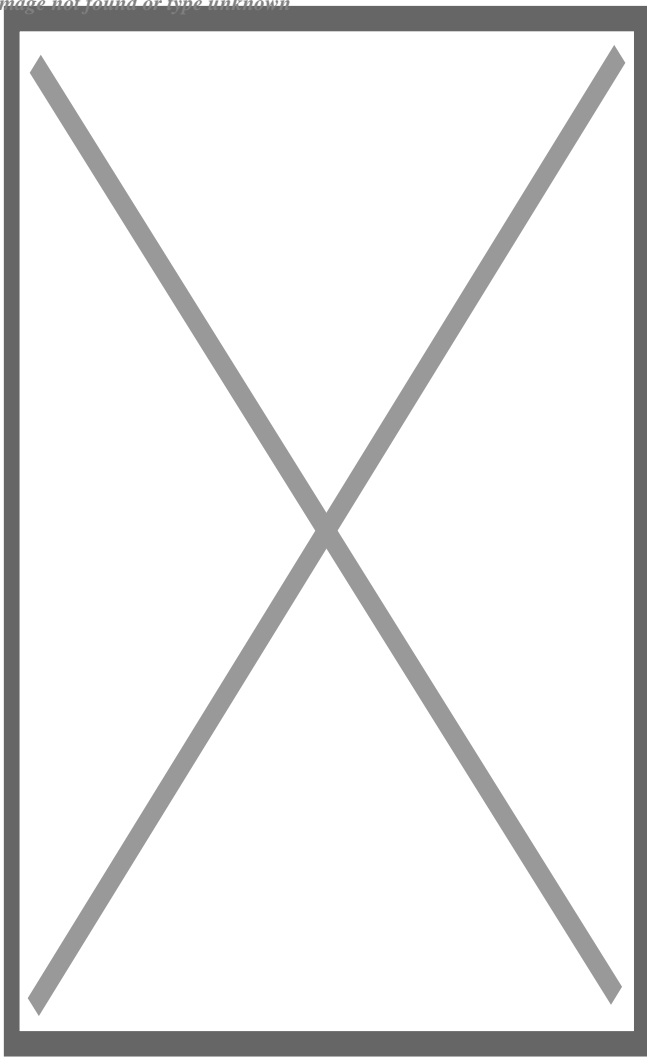


Iran ready to consider troop deployment to Syria upon official request

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Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi

Tehran, December 4 (RHC)-- Iran is prepared to consider deploying troops to Syria, where the government is combating a resurgence of terrorism, should Damascus make an official request, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said.

In an interview with the Qatari-owned news outlet New Arab, Araghchi warned that the surprise offensive by terrorist groups in northwestern Syria could pose a more serious security threat to neighboring countries, such as Turkey and Iraq, than to Iran.

He expressed his concerns about the potential collapse of the Astana process, a diplomatic initiative that began in 2017 and involves three main guarantor states: Russia, Turkey, and Iran.

The Astana process was established to facilitate dialogue and negotiations aimed at resolving the Syrian conflict, but its effectiveness has come under scrutiny as terrorist violence continues to escalate.

Under this initiative, the three countries committed to preventing a resurgence of militancy in Syria. However, the recent surge in terrorist activities has led to criticism of Turkey, a primary supporter of foreign-backed militancy in Syria since 2011, for failing to uphold its obligations.

Araghchi also discussed his recent visit to Ankara, noting that Tehran consistently seeks consultation and dialogue with Turkey regarding their differences. He said there are ongoing preparations aimed at calming the situation in Syria and creating opportunities for a lasting resolution.

On Iran's relationships with allies in the Axis of Resistance, Araghchi stated that "Iran does not command resistance factions in Arab countries and does not have organizational ties with them; rather, it supports their cause and provides assistance when necessary."

Regarding the possibility of an agreement to halt the Israeli campaign of genocide in Gaza, Araghchi said "if Israel enters negotiations with Hamas for a ceasefire and the release of captives, it would signify Israel's defeat."

On Iranian relations with Saudi Arabia, he indicated that they are progressing positively but emphasized that these relations are distinct from those between Tehran and Washington. Concerning Iran's negotiations with Europe regarding its peaceful nuclear program, Araghchi expressed "many reasons for pessimism" about these discussions.

He said Iran currently has no intention of engaging in dialogue with Washington due to a lack of basis for such discussions. "We are waiting to see how the new administration will shape its policies; then we will formulate our own policy."

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