



## US 'fentanyl tariffs' severely damage trust: official

The so-called "fentanyl tariffs" imposed by the US are bullying behavior that have damaged the trust and dialogue foundation between the two sides: official from CNNCC 4

## China, US need real cooperation, not clash

I've lived 28 years in the US and 30 years in China, so I understand both side. Pragmatic cooperation is in the best interest of them, says US expert 7

## China-Russia Literature Salon builds new platform of exchange

The GT "Reading through the Seasons" China-Russia Literature Salon was held Thursday at the Russian Cultural Center in Beijing amid the "China-Russia Years of Culture" 14-15

www.globaltimes.cn

VOLUME 17 • NO. 4648 • FRIDAY JUNE 20, 2025 • PRICE 2 YUAN

人民日报社主管 环球时报社主办·出版

► Ceasefire an urgent priority, use of force not right way: Xi

# Xi, Putin discuss Middle East situation on phone

By Liu Xin and Li Yawei

Chinese President Xi Jinping said on Thursday that ceasefire is an urgent priority in settling the conflict in the Middle East, and the use of force is not the right way to resolve international disputes, according to the Xinhua News Agency.

During phone talks with his Russian counterpart, Vladimir

Putin, over the situation in the Middle East, Xi urged the conflicting parties, especially Israel, to cease fire as soon as possible.

The Chinese president said that protecting civilians' safety is the top priority amid the Iran-Israel tensions, calling on the conflicting parties to strictly follow international law, and resolutely avoid harming inno-

cent civilians.

Dialogue and negotiation are the fundamental solutions, Xi said, adding that communication and dialogue are the right ways to achieve lasting peace.

The international community's peacemaking efforts are indispensable, Xi said, adding that without stability in the Middle East, there can hardly

be peace in the world.

The conflict between Israel and Iran has led to a sudden escalation of tensions in the Middle East and severely impacted global security, Xi noted.

Putin, for his part, outlined Russia's views on the current situation in the Middle East, saying that Israel's attack on Iran's nuclear facilities is



## US to resume student visas but orders social media vetting

By Fan Anqi, Zhang Changyue and Zhang Han

The US State Department said it is restarting the suspended process for foreigners applying for student visas but all applicants will now be required to unlock their social media accounts for government review, AP reported.

Responding to the US Department of State's announcement, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun said at Thursday's press briefing that China-US educational cooperation is mutually beneficial.

"China consistently opposes the politicization of educational exchanges and hopes the US will translate President Trump's welcoming remarks toward Chinese students into concrete actions, effectively safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese students and scholars in the US," Guo noted.

The US last month temporarily halted the scheduling of new visa interviews for foreign students hoping to study in the US while preparing to expand the screening of their activity on social media, officials said, per media reports.

In interviews with the Global Times on Thursday, Chinese visa consultancies said some Chinese students who have been admitted to US universities are now choosing alternative study destinations. They revealed that US authorities have significantly tightened social media vetting procedures in recent years, with some Chinese applicants even being required to submit their Xiaohongshu (Red Note) account information for review.

Chinese students studying in



An Israeli police officers stands among debris near damaged cars at the site of an Iranian missile strike in a residential area in Ramat Gan, central Israel on June 19, 2025. Photo: VCG



## Aircraft hospital



At a one-stop aircraft maintenance industrial base in Hainan Free Trade Port, a mechanic, or "aircraft doctor," provides comprehensive maintenance services for an inbound aircraft. Backed by preferential policies, the base is becoming a "maintenance center" for global airlines. Photo: VCG

# Phone talks underscore 'joint de-escalation efforts, shared concern'

► Xi, from Page 1

extremely dangerous. The escalation of the conflict is in no one's interests, said Putin, noting that the Iranian nuclear issue should be resolved through dialogue and negotiation.

He also said that both sides of the conflict should ensure the safety of citizens of the third countries, adding that as the current situation is evolving rapidly, Russia stands ready to maintain close communication with China, and make joint active efforts to cool down the situation, so as to safeguard regional peace and stability.

The phone conversation between Xi and Putin comes as the Iran-Israel conflict reaches a critical juncture. Their direct communication underscores a joint effort toward de-escalation, echoing the shared concerns of the international community, Liu Zhongmin, a professor from the Middle East Studies Institute of Shanghai International Studies University, told the Global Times on Thursday.

Although the conflict ultimately hinges on the actions of the US, Israel and Iran, China and Russia – while not parties to the conflict – are working to promote de-escalation. Both China and Russia have voiced a shared commitment to lowering tensions in the Middle East, though meaningful progress will require broader international efforts, said Liu.

The expert noted that calls for dialogue are increasing. "Ultimately, negotiations may remain the most viable path forward," said Liu.

Amid rising tensions, many countries have worked to pull their citi-

zens from Israel and Iran, per multiple media reports.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun said on Thursday that up till now, Chinese Foreign Ministry and the Chinese embassies and consulates in Iran, Israel and other neighboring countries have organized and coordinated the evacuation of over 1,600 Chinese nationals from Iran to safety, and several hundred Chinese nationals from Israel.

## Urgent situation

The tit-for-tat strikes between Israel and Iran continued on Thursday. At least one of 20 ballistic missiles Iran launched at Israel contained a "cluster bomb warhead," reports The Times of Israel, citing the Israeli military's Home Front Command.

Meanwhile, Israel's military said its fighter jets attacked dozens of sites across Iran overnight, including the Arak heavy water nuclear reactor.

In the past two days, the topic of US President Donald Trump weighing options for involvement in the Iran-Israel conflict has drawn wide media attention. A Bloomberg report on Thursday claimed that senior US officials are preparing for the possibility of a strike on Iran in the coming days. The situation is still evolving and could change. Some pointed to potential plans for a weekend strike.

Trump told reporters at the White House on Wednesday he has "ideas as to what to do" and that he prefers to make the "final decision one second before it's due" because the situation in the Middle East is fluid.

Niu Xinchun, executive director of the China-Arab Research Institute of Ningxia University, told the Global

Times that in recent days, the US has been moving major forces into the Middle East – aircraft carriers, bombers, and refueling planes are now in place. "While Washington calls this a defensive move in response to Iranian threats against US bases, the shift from defense to offense could happen easily," said Niu.

While Washington claims non-involvement, its military support, missile interception, and intelligence assistance to Israel have already drawn it partly into the conflict. Full US involvement will depend on how the situation evolves and US strategic interests, Tian Wenlin, a research fellow at the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations, told the Global Times.

Trump's mixed messages on Iran-Israel conflict also raised concerns within the US. US Top Senate Democrats are demanding Trump outline a strategy for dealing with Iran, saying the administration has left Congress in the dark as he weighs direct US military involvement in the Israel's campaign against Tehran, according to Politico. It also noted that the escalating conflict could spiral into a regional war and put thousands of US troops in the Middle East at risk.

The US and Israel operate in a coordinated front-and-rear formation – Israel takes direct military action on the front line, while the US offers support and strategic guidance from behind the scenes. This clear division of roles enables Washington to pursue its Middle East objectives without direct exposure. "However, this approach heightens regional tensions and further complicates prospects for resolving the conflict," said Tian.

## Chinese students 'confused of vetting criteria, worry about future uncertainty'

► US, from Page 1

the US said the unclear criteria for such screening is "just an excuse to reject people arbitrarily," and makes them feel like the US simply does not welcome international students anymore.

Chinese observers added that such policy flip-flops could greatly undermine the US' appeal for foreign talents. Such inconsistencies in US policy, not only in the student visa domain but other aspects such as tariffs, will further erode trust among the international community.

## 'Utterly confusing'

Under the latest development in US visa processing, all applications for F, M and J nonimmigrant visas, which are for scholarly exchanges and research, will be reviewed, the New York Times reported.

Consular officers at missions overseas have been instructed to look for "any indications of hostility toward the citizens, culture, government, institutions or founding principles of the US." The State Department did not provide further details on how officers would define that criteria, the report said.

The new rule further states that this screening will apply for both new and returning student visa applicants. Consular officers must take "detailed case notes" about their review of applicants' online presences and "take screenshots to preserve the record against possible later alteration or loss of the information," reported Politico.

A Chinese student who had already scheduled a visa interview before the suspension to study in a US university for a Master of Arts program told the Global Times on Thursday that she had also been asked to provide her social media accounts during the visa application.

"This social media screening is utterly confusing. No one understands what they're actually screening for – is this targeting only Chinese students? What are the actual criteria? Feels like it's just an excuse to reject people arbitrarily," she said on condition of anonymity.

"Passing the visa screening doesn't mean you're done. Even with a visa, immigration officers can still pull you into secondary interrogation at entry point. Whether you eventually get admitted or not, the whole experience is incredibly stressful. My feeling is that the US simply doesn't welcome international students anymore," she continued.

The Global Times learned from two visa service agencies on Thursday that the US State Department directive allows diplomatic posts to resume the scheduling of interviews for educational and exchange visas, but the appointment system at the US embassies and consulates in China remains closed.

"Many students who have received offers from US universities have been waiting anxiously since the suspension of appointments for visa interviews in late May, as some programs start as early as August. Some students have already opted to study in the UK, Canada, or Australia instead," Shen Liyong, a visa service consultant working at Wulove Global Visa Center, told the Global Times on Thursday.

Upon learning the news, an education blogger who tracks overseas study trends posted on Xiaohongshu: "For Chinese students planning to study in the US, this undoubtedly adds more uncertainty to their academic pursuits. With this new policy, it feels like the bar for studying in America has been raised again."

