

Gov't to weigh US proposals based on national interests: *SpoX*

International Desk

Iranian government spokeswoman Fatemeh Mohajerani said the administration considers any proposal which is in line with the country's interests, including possible talks with the United States. Mohajerani made the remarks during her weekly press briefing and in response to a question about the US possible request for negotiations with Iran.

"The government of the Islamic Republic of Iran will consider any proposal that is in line with Iran's interests, based on the three principles of dignity, erudition, and expediency that the Leader has outlined for international interactions." Her remarks came as Iran, France, Britain and Germany are set to hold talks in Geneva on Friday. US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Monday that

Washington will not participate in the talks in Geneva. Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei on Sunday announced the meeting of the deputy foreign ministers of Iran and the three European powers, which will focus on several issues including Iran's nuclear program. "A range of regional and international issues and topics, including the issues of Palestine and Lebanon, as well as the nuclear issue,



Iranian government spokeswoman Fatemeh Mohajerani speaks during a weekly press conference in Tehran, Iran on November 26, 2024.
● IRNA

will be discussed," Baghaei said. He described the upcoming meeting as a continuation of talks held with the countries in September on the sidelines of the annual session of the UN General Assembly in New York.



Iran's response to Israeli aggression 'beyond imagination': *Baqeri*

Iran's highest-ranking military commander said the Armed Forces have planned a "crushing" response to Israel's last month assault against the country, stressing that the retaliation will be "different" and "beyond the imagination" of the regime.

Speaking on Tuesday, Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri said that Iran already conducted two "different" anti-Israel operations in terms of tactics and weapons and that similarly, its future "response to the recent Israeli assault has been planned beyond the imagination of the regime's leaders," Press TV reported. "The Islamic Republic of Iran will never tolerate aggression against its soil or leave it unanswered, and in this case, too, it will definitely give an appropriate response," he added.



Mohammad Baqeri
● TASNIM

"For years, the Iranian Armed Forces have designed their defense doctrine based on a crushing, deterrent, and appropriate response to the highest level of threats by the enemy." On October 26, Israeli war-

planes used US-controlled airspace over Iraq to fire projectiles at military installations in Iran's Tehran, Khuzestan, and Ilam provinces in flagrant breach of the country's national sovereignty, killing four Army officers and one civilian.

Israel continues strikes on Lebanon before cease-fire deal

International Desk

Israeli warplanes struck central Beirut and the city's southern suburbs on Tuesday hours before a planned vote by the Israeli regime on whether to accept a cease-fire aimed at ending more than a year of fighting with Hezbollah.

The Israeli military issued a flurry of evacuation warnings and the occupation troops also reached parts of Lebanon's Litani River for the first time in the conflict.

The evacuation warnings covered many areas, including parts of Beirut that have not been targeted throughout the war. The warnings, coupled with fear that Israel was ratcheting up attacks in the final hours before a cease-fire is reached.

At least seven people were killed in Israeli attacks on a Beirut building housing dis-



● AFP

placed people.

"The Israeli enemy ... seeks revenge on supporters of the resistance and on all Lebanese," Lebanese lawmaker Amin Sherri said.

The cease-fire deal calls for a two-month initial halt in fighting and would require Hezbollah to end its armed presence in a broad swath of southern Lebanon, while Israeli troops would return to their side of the border. Thousands of Lebanese troops and UN peacekeepers would

deploy in the south, and an international panel headed by the United States would monitor all sides' compliance. "There is not an excuse for not implementing a cease-fire. Otherwise, Lebanon will fall apart," The European Union's top diplomat, Josep Borrell told reporters in Italy on the sidelines of a Group of Seven meeting. He said France would participate on the cease-fire implementation committee at Lebanon's request.

Iran and Europe...

The world is increasingly interconnected and complex, with momentous, rapid, and decisive developments that challenge countries and render their priorities obsolete for an extended period. The world is a realm of moments and opportunities. With the previous government's shift in approach and the unfolding events, including Russia's invasion of Ukraine (which is seen as an attack on Europe by a European citizen and official) and the release of news about Iran's alleged military aid to Russia, which dominated Russian and European media headlines, Europe has become increasingly disillusioned and pessimistic about engaging with Iran. The lack of any direct contact and face-to-face dialogue, coupled with other unresolved issues, as well as the absence of any economic ties, cooperation, and exchange which resulted in a lack of economic benefits, incentives, and efforts in the relationship, caused Iran's regional stances to go off the rails and its external relations to lose balance, rolling back the Iran-Europe relationship. Undoubtedly, in a historical assessment of Iran-Europe relations since the 1979 Revolution, the current state of relations has never been as chilly, tense, and fragile as it is today, despite the numerous ups and downs. Since 2022, all bonds that could have provided a semblance of dynamism and vitality to the relationship have

been cut off. All aspects of the relationship, including cultural, academic, artistic, oil and energy, banking, investment, and academic exchanges between researchers, have been dismantled, leaving no tangible attraction for the continuation of relations. The heinous and distressing events in the Middle East, the humanitarian crimes and genocide perpetrated by the occupying regime of Israel, and Iran's distinct and divergent regional policies, have, coupled with policies European leaders who claim to advocate human rights and numerous other unthoughtful and ill-informed events, driven Europe, replete with pride and prejudice, to take hostile actions, such as imposing sanctions on several Iranian airlines and, subsequently, Iran's shipping industry. The EU's ill-advised and malignant stance, marked by a new and misguided approach, has further complicated these already fraught relations, as exemplified by their unjustifiable position on Iranian islands at the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council and EU meeting, and, in a recent ill-timed move, their resolution against Iran at the recent Board of Governors meeting, adding to the complexities of these enchanted relations. A review of recent years shows that, as a nation that has long suffered under numerous sanctions, we must not waver in our effective presence on the global stage, not

even for a moment. We must not get bogged down in trivial protocols. What is crucial is leveraging all tools at our disposal, at every moment, to counter adversity and protect national interests. In the early days of the previous government, and in a regional conference that Iran had previously viewed negatively and one-sidedly, France took the initiative to host a summit of regional leaders in Baghdad, which Iran attended at the foreign minister level. On the sidelines of this summit, the French president invited Iran's foreign minister to visit Paris, an invitation repeated by France's Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian. However, Iran did not respond, as if a faction or school of thought in Tehran had concluded that relations with these countries might not be in Iran's best interest. This entire story could have unfolded differently, particularly in light of the Iranian foreign policy priorities announced by this government, which, despite using different words, always conveyed the same message. The priorities began with neighboring countries, followed by Russia, China, Africa, Asia, Latin America, and, finally, Europe. Even it was emphasized that Europe was not just a few countries. This explicit and repeated statement carried a connotation of disdain for Europeans, especially major countries, who, due to their pride and arrogance, would not easily forget such

words. Everything that transpired in the early months was enough to create a rift between Iran and Europe. Europeans wanted to continue their professional relationship with the previous Iranian government, but conditions had changed. Later, when Iranian officials and diplomats made a concerted effort to establish contact and meet, it was too little, too late. Other events further strained the already ailing relationship, pushing it to a new low. Now, both sides are gearing up for another round of talks to tackle a host of challenging issues. The significance lies not in the outcome, but in the fact that the meeting will take place, and perspectives will be shared. Every meeting, no matter how difficult, will not be in vain. Negotiations may drag on longer than either side would like, but that should never be used as an excuse to call off the talks. What matters is that face-to-face, eye-to-eye negotiations can yield breakthroughs that would not be achieved through phone calls, tweets, or other means of communication. Although the upcoming meeting between Iran and the three European countries is long overdue, we should have brought them to the negotiating table from the outset of the new government in Iran, whether overtly or covertly. Nevertheless, there is still an opportunity to make amends. Iranian officials are right in saying that they

have never walked away from the negotiating table, but this is only one aspect of the issue at hand. The forthcoming meeting, which comes after the adoption of their resolution at the Board of Governors, presents a different face of Iran, although it was reportedly agreed upon on the sidelines of the General Assembly in September. Perhaps the meeting could have been scheduled earlier or rescheduled to take place before the Board of Governors meeting. However, in diplomacy, timing and circumstances are not always in sync. In other words, with the return of Mr. Trump and the potential escalation of European and American challenges, there is a high likelihood that Europe will seek to increase tensions with Iran to gain leverage in future negotiations. Europe is not pleased with Trump's return, and their irresponsible, hostile, and aggressive actions toward Iran, which have intensified in recent months, are in line with their concerns and needs. Europe may even be worried about potential contacts and openings in the communication between Iran and Trump's America. Therefore, the upcoming negotiations with Europe, although belated, are a commendable and necessary step. If we consider the long-standing debate on the nuclear issue and the JCPOA, which is a crucial and decisive topic, and the limited time available to preserve the JCPOA, we must be diligent in manag-

ing the process and timing with them. We must convey to them a clear understanding of Iran's stance on the Russia-Ukraine issue. Neither the Russians nor the Europeans have the right to use Iran as a means in their own war, whether to gain an ally or to create a pretext for exerting pressure and exploiting the results in another context. Despite all these troublesome stories of one-sidedness, simplism, and Europe's excessive demands, both sides must acknowledge that Iran's relations with that continent have been historical and multifaceted, characterized by cooperation in various fields. The stability and security of the region and even the world depend on relations based on mutual respect and non-interference in each other's affairs. What is crucial for us today is to move beyond the stagnant bilateral relations and revive meetings, discussions, and negotiations to reach a level of understanding on the nuclear issue and Resolution 2231, considering the limited time remaining. This is a daunting and challenging task, and we hope that this meeting will not be the drop that overflows the already full glass, which would be unwarranted. History has taught us that in our absence from the international, regional, and global arenas, our rivals and adversaries will take advantage of the situation and spare no effort to undermine us.