

FM spox says 'US words cannot be taken seriously'

International Desk

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei reacted to the recent remarks by the US officials on Washington's eagerness for negotiations with Iran, saying, "US's words cannot be taken seriously."

Speaking at a weekly press conference on Monday, Baqaei said that, "These words cannot be taken seriously because words must be proportionate to actions. You cannot threaten to destroy on one hand and on the other hand claim that you are interested in dialogue and talks."

Since taking office in January, US President Donald Trump has frequently expressed his eagerness for talks with Iran on its nuclear program.

However, tensions between Tehran and Washington have worsened after Trump reinstated his "maximum pressure" policy on Iran over its nuclear program.

At the same time, he has called for striking a deal with Iran.

"I would like a deal done with Iran on non-nuclear. I would prefer that



to bombing the hell out of it," Trump told the New York Post, adding, "If we made the deal, Israel wouldn't bomb them."

On Wednesday, President Masoud Pezeshkian said the US president wants to negotiate with Iran while closing all the doors for negotiations. He threatens the world not to establish relations with Iran and on the other hand, he suggests that we negotiate. Pezeshkian added that Iran will not back down and will not surrender in the face of any threat.

Berri: Tehran-Beirut flight tension should be resolved via negotiation

International Desk

Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri emphasized that a recent dispute between Tehran and Beirut over flights must be resolved through direct dialogue between the two countries.

Nabih Berri told the Lebanon's Al Joumhouria newspaper that the issue surrounding Tehran-Beirut flights should be resolved responsibly and wisely. He stressed that mistakes in this regard could plunged Lebanon into tensions that the country does not need. Berri also asserted that it is absolutely unacceptable for Israel to make decisions for Lebanon, particularly as it tries to prevent Iranian planes from landing in Lebanon.

"We are not Israel's colony, and we will not become one," Berri firmly stated. "We reject any foreign dictates that may harm our national sovereignty."

On Thursday, Lebanon's Directorate General of Civil Aviation said it had "temporarily rescheduled" some flights including from Iran until February 18 as it was implementing "additional security measures."

However, Lebanese authorities extended the suspension of inbound and outbound flights to Iran indefinitely. On Friday, two Iranian flights were barred from landing in Rafic Hariri international Airport – a move that has sparked several protests by the Lebanese people in Beirut.

Iran said in turn it would not allow Lebanese flights to land until its own flights were cleared to land in Beirut. The developments coincided with Israel's threats against Iranian planes landing in Lebanon.

Israeli military spokesman Avichay Adraee had warned the army was prepared "to thwart" any attempts to transfer funds or weapons to Hezbollah resistance group in Lebanon.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Cognizant of Iran's prowess, enemies resorting to soft war: *Leader*



Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei greets a group of people from East Azarbaijan Province in Tehran on February 17, 2025.
president.ir

International Desk

Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said the country's enemies have waged a soft war against the Islamic Republic as they are cognizant of Iran's "excellent" capabilities in countering harsh threats.

Addressing a group of people from the East Azerbaijan Province on Monday, Ayatollah Khamenei referred to the massive turnout in the 46th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution on February 10, saying that, "The massive march of the nation on February 10th showed that the enemy's soft threats have been ineffective against this country and this nation."

"Soft threats mean manipulating the public opinion; it means creating division; it means creating doubt in the fundamental principles of the Islamic Revolution; it means creating

doubt about steadfastness against the enemy. They are doing this," he said.

"By God's grace [however], they have not succeeded until today; until today, the enemy's temptations have not been able to shake the hearts of our people or deter our youths from their resolve and moving [forward]," the Leader added.

Ayatollah Khamenei advised the people functioning within the country's media industry, including broadcast apparatuses, authors, knowledgeable figures, cyberspace specialists, and authorities serving the education, science, and arts sectors across the nation as well as the country's youths to "focus their efforts on confronting the enemy's soft threats."

He commended the country's sufficient capability to fend off the enemies' "hard threats," noting, "Today, we have no concerns or issues re-

garding hard defense and the enemy's hard threats."

"Our ability to counter hard threats is at an excellent level, and the people feel secure in this regard."

Elsewhere during the speech, the Leader acknowledged that the Iranian people had some legitimate problems and expectations.

The predicaments, though, do not prevent the people from defending their Revolution, Ayatollah Khamenei underlined.

Ayatollah Khamenei, meanwhile, identified "the reason for the anger of the [world's] arrogant powers and colonialists towards the Islamic Republic" as "the steadfastness and resistance of the Iranian people."

He was pointing to the nation's unfaltering march towards the country's betterment and welfare in the face of illegal economic sanctions and mounting political pressure by the US and its allies.

Narrative of weakened ...

Iran's current stability and confidence are the results of a tumultuous history marked by territorial losses and periods of foreign dominance. Post-revolution, Iran has endured an eight-year war, prolonged economic sanctions, and relentless security challenges. Today, this resilience underpins its focus on development and the optimization of national interests across various domains. This strategic orientation aligns with President Pezeshkian's administration, which emphasizes growth and opportunity. Two irreversible developments since 2018 have made reaching an agreement more challenging: Firstly, Iran's advancements in nuclear technology, which are now ingrained knowledge rather than mere material or machinery, cannot be limited or reversed. Secondly, the impact on the Iranian economy and its related sectors such as development and healthcare has been profound.

Despite the sanctions of the past five years, Iran's economy has grown to a scale that defies easy disruption. Iran,

with its full spectrum of capabilities, is distinct from nations like Libya, Iraq, and Afghanistan. The only viable approach to engaging with Iran is from a stance of fairness, respect, and equality. Any deviation leads to a deadlock.

Should the West fail to seize this moment, it risks repeating historical errors, influenced not just by misperceptions but also by undue Zionist lobbying. Western policies over the past four decades have inadvertently bolstered the positions of Russia and China in Iran. By neglecting opportunities for constructive engagement, the West has relinquished influence to these powers, thereby fostering dynamics that disproportionately benefit Moscow and Beijing.

Iran presents substantial potential for regional and global collaboration. Its highly educated workforce, advanced engineering capabilities, esteemed universities, and nuclear expertise make it a valuable partner. Iran's cooperative initiatives with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) underscore its capability for meaning-

ful partnerships. Furthermore, Iran represents an untapped market and investment opportunity for Western and non-Western actors in today's post-polar world.

It is crucial to bridge the gap in mutual understanding between Iran and its counterparts. The Islamic Republic is prepared to leverage its hard-earned, self-reliant security for broader national and regional benefits. A critical step lies in the nuclear domain, where Iran's adherence to the framework of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) provides a viable pathway for progress. Instead of unnecessary escalation, constructive measures can transform this sector into a scenario beneficial for all, steering clear of historically futile confrontations.

Iran's administration envisions the future with a focus on opportunities — a moment ripe for all parties to engage constructively and achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. Parties would be better to use the opportunity of Iran's compliance with the deals and inspections.