

FM spox: Iran staving off confrontational approach to resolve nuclear disputes

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei said Iran has always been committed to diplomatic principles regarding its nuclear issue and has never had a confrontational approach toward resolving the dispute over the issue. "The Islamic Republic of Iran has always been committed to diplomatic principles regarding its nuclear issue, and we have never had a confrontational approach, because the nature of our nuclear activities is peaceful," Baqaei said during his weekly presser on Monday. "On the other hand, we see no justification for others to raise the issue of confrontation," he said, adding that naturally, the answer to confrontation will be confrontation. In 2015, Iran reached a nuclear deal with Britain, Germany, France, the United States, Russia and China, which is known

as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The US quit the agreement in 2018, during Donald Trump's first term as US president, and Iran began moving away from its nuclear-related commitments under the deal. The US unilateral withdrawal from the agreement and re-imposition of sanctions removed under the deal left the future of the JCPOA in limbo. However, Iran has been trying to revive the JCPOA during the past years and have held several rounds of talks with the European parties to the deal, which their non-compliance to the agreement had a great impact on the implementation of the agreement. There have been speculations on new negotiations between Tehran and Washington on Iran's peaceful nuclear program in recent months, especially after Donald Trump's return to power in the United

States in January. However, Trump's language of threats and imposition of sanctions against Iran have made Iranian officials skeptical of negotiations with the US. Iranian officials say that negotiations under pressure are not meaningful. In response to a question about any discussion about Iran's nuclear issue between Russian and US presidents during their recent talks, Baqaei said that, "There may have been some discussion between the US and Russia regarding the Iranian nuclear issue as one of the international issues." He also responded to a question about whether the Russian foreign minister had raised the idea of mediation during his recent visit to Tehran, saying that, "I have already said that regarding these issues, given their importance, some parties may express their



Esmail Baqaei
● IRNA

readiness to raise these issues in good faith. Therefore, from

this perspective, it is natural for some countries to raise the

issue of providing assistance if needed."

Zarif resigns from VP post over 'pressure and slander'

National Desk

Iran's Vice President for Strategic Affairs Mohammad Javad Zarif, who negotiated the landmark 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, has resigned from his post.

"Zarif's resignation letter was received by President Masoud Pezeshkian, who has not yet responded," the official IRNA reported, without giving further details.

In a Monday post on X, Zarif said he had "faced the most horrible insults, slander and threats against myself and my family, and I have gone through the most bitter period of my 40 years of service." He added, "To avoid further pressure on the government, the head of the Judiciary recommended that I resign and... I accepted immediately." Since he was tapped as vice-president, Zarif has been taking intense heat by a group of ultra-conservative lawmakers in Parliament who have argued that his appointment to a



Mohammad Javad Zarif
● AP

sensitive post is illegal because at least one of his children holds US nationality. According to Iran's Constitution, individuals who hold foreign citizenship or whose immediate family members hold such citizenship cannot be assigned to sensitive posts in the Iranian government. Pezeshkian, who took office in July, named Zarif as his vice president for strategic affairs on August 1 but Zarif resigned after less than two weeks, before returning to the post later in the month.

Zarif was Iran's top diplomat between 2013 and 2021 in the government of moderate president Hassan Rouhani. He became known on the international stage during lengthy negotiations for the 2015 nuclear accord formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. The deal was effectively torpedoed three years later when, during Donald Trump's first term as president, the United States pulled out of the deal and reimposed crippling sanctions on the Islamic republic.

IAEA chief calls on Iran, US to begin talks to defuse nuclear tensions

International Desk

The United Nations nuclear watchdog called on the US and Iran to begin talks, suggesting that US President Donald Trump holds the next move in trying to defuse tensions with the Islamic Republic over its nuclear activities.

"High-level engagement is indispensable to making real progress. My visit to Tehran last November, and meetings with President Masoud Pezeshkian and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi indicate that there may be room for constructive compromises. I hope to see them again soon and pursue effective dialogue and tangible results", Grossi said.

At a press conference in Vienna on Monday after the IAEA Board of Governors meeting Grossi stressed the need for Iran to provide answers.

"What we need is real answers (from Iran). What we need is an engagement that is moving forward. We need to stop talking about process and start getting some answers as soon as possible," he said when asked what the agency expects from Iran.

Addressing broader diplomatic efforts, Grossi said, "An important statement by President Trump was when he said that he wants to have some form of a deal, some form of an agreement (with Iran)," Grossi said. "We need to engage as soon as possible, because time is passing."

The International Atomic Energy Agency is holding high level talks with the White House and would like to see a "more systemic" approach to Iran.

While Trump said last month he's open to a



Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Grossi reacts prior to the start of the quarterly Board of Governors meeting at the agency's headquarters in Vienna, Austria, on March 3, 2025.
● ALEX HALADA/AFP

new Iran agreement, he's also pledged to reinvigorate sanctions aimed at choking off the country's oil exports. Tehran's government has rejected talks as long as the US maintains its maximum-pressure campaign against the Iranian economy.

On Monday, Grossi claimed that Iran has boosted its stockpile of near-weapons grade uranium by more than half over a span of three months. Tehran's growing stocks of 60 percent-enriched uranium make it "the only non-nuclear weapon state enriching to this level," Grossi told the IAEA's Board of Governors.

The IAEA chief claimed that the stockpile had grown from 182kg to 275kg in the previous quarter. He expressed "serious concern" at Iran's activities.

Lesson world should ...

Will they wait until 30% of their territories are occupied, as happened in Ukraine, before waking up from their complacency? Or will they rethink their approach and carve out independent foreign policies?

This situation highlights the strategic foresight of Iran's Leader, who has consistently warned against putting faith in Western powers. Unlike certain pro-Western voices within Iran who clung to the idea that a sit-down with Trump would wipe away Iran's troubles, the Leader saw through this wishful thinking. Even President Zelensky, who had the West's full backing, has now been hung out to dry, how could Iran have expected a different fate? As it stands, Zelensky finds himself stranded, abandoned by

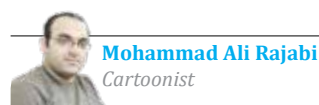
both the US and Europe—a sobering wake-up call for Iran.

This serves as a vital lesson for Iran, one that should be studied in Iranian universities, discussed in political science and international relations forums, and become the subject of numerous academic papers and dissertations. It could even be included in Iranian school textbooks as a historical lesson for Iranian children to understand the nature of dealing with such international powers that care about nothing beyond their own national interests and will trade you off when it suits their agenda.

As for Ukraine's future, with the shift in the US approach, the country should reconsider its actions. Ukraine has already created a war-torn environment with many refugees, de-

priving its citizens of a normal life. Ukraine should swiftly change course and seek peace, aiming to resolve its issues through negotiations with Russia itself, without relying on European or Western support. Ukraine should not invite extra-regional powers into its backyard, provoking Russia's reaction. If Ukraine continues down this path, it will only incite Russia against the powers that abandoned it when it needed them the most.

Zelensky now realizes that the West will not come to his aid. The only way forward is to resolve issues with the help of regional countries, without inviting extra-regional powers into the mix. Ukraine needs to learn from this experience and maintain its independence from extra-regional powers.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

