

Araghchi stresses Iran's right to uranium enrichment

Tehran sees talks as 'tool' to safeguard interests: *Leader's aide*

International Desk

Iran's top diplomat hit back at recent remarks by the US secretary of state over the country's uranium enrichment, defending the "right to possess the full nuclear fuel cycle."

"Iran has every right to possess the full nuclear fuel cycle," Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi wrote on X on Saturday, citing Tehran's long-standing membership of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Araghchi was responding to Marco Rubio who called on Iran to "walk away" from enrichment.

In a Thursday interview with Fox News, Rubio claimed that "the only countries in the world that enrich uranium are the ones that have nuclear weapons."

However, Araghchi said that there were several NPT members which enriched uranium while wholly rejecting nuclear weapons.

He had previously called Iran's right to enrich uranium "non-negotiable."

Rubio also said Iran should allow inspec-

tions of its nuclear facilities, including by US experts. Iran currently enriches uranium to 60-percent purity.

The US and other Western countries have long accused Iran of pursuing atomic weapons – a claim Tehran denies, insisting that its nuclear program is solely for civilian purposes.

On Monday, French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot claimed that Iran was "on the verge of acquiring nuclear weapons," and said UN sanctions could be re-imposed if Tehran's actions threatened European security.

Iran rejected the comments by France – a signatory to the 2015 nuclear deal – as "simply absurd."

Iran and the United States have engaged in nuclear talks since April 12, their highest-level contact since Washington withdrew from a landmark deal with Tehran in 2018, during Donald Trump's first term as US president. A fourth round of talks initially scheduled for Saturday was postponed, mediator Oman said earlier this week, citing "logistical reasons."

Despite the three rounds of Iran-US negotiations, the US has continued to threaten with military action and impose sanctions on Iran. Iran's government spokeswoman Fatemeh Mohajerani said on Saturday that the Islamic Republic was ready for any scenario.

"We are not interested in a conflict in the region at all. That is why we are interested in negotiations and dialogue," Mohajerani said, adding that "We did not enter into negotiations to waste our time. We are definitely interested in the negotiations reaching a conclusion."

Talks a means to guard interests

Meanwhile, Ali Larijani, as advisor to Iran's Leader said Tehran only sees negotiations as a "tool" to secure its interests.

"Sometimes you think that the country can secure its interests through talks—then negotiations take place. When interests are not secured, there is no reason to negotiate. Negotiation is a tool," Larijani said on Saturday.

He said the standoff over Iran's nuclear



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (R) visits the Muscat International Book Fair in Oman on April 25, 2025.
● FATIMA SHBAIR/AP

program is not legal but "political in essence."

Larijani further noted that Iran could not be forced into "giving in to anything" in the course of the nuclear talks with the US. "Iranians have a profound civilization

and a great history, and for this reason, they are not like some countries that are rootless," the top aide pointed out.

He warned that the Iran would not be "handicapped" to defend itself in the face of mounting enemy pressure.

Tehran says Israeli attacks on Syria aim to destroy Arab country

Iran said the Israeli regime's airstrikes on Syria are primarily intended to destroy the defensive, economic, and infrastructural capabilities of an independent country.

In a statement on Saturday, Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei strongly condemned the Israeli regime's military attacks on various areas in Syria and the destruction of the country's civilian facilities and defense capabilities in Damascus, Latakia, Idlib, Hama, Quneitra, and Dara'a, Press TV reported.

"It is clear to everyone that the main goal of the occupying regime is to destroy and eliminate the defensive, economic, and infrastructural capabilities of Syria as an independent country, so that it [Israel] can pursue its malicious interests in this country and the region," he said.

He added that the Israeli attacks on Syria are also aimed at continuing simultaneously the genocide in occupied Palestine and aggression and occupation in Lebanon.

Local journalists reported that Israeli warplanes carried out

at least 20 airstrikes across the countryside of Damascus, Dara'a, and Hama, targeting military sites and warehouses on Friday night. Baqaei acknowledged the responsibility of all sides involved in the current situation in Syria by preparing the ground for the Israeli regime's exploitation and expansionism in the Arab country.

Tensions between Israel and Syria have soared this week after Israel accused the Syrian authorities of failing to protect the country's Druze minority.

The Israeli military claimed in a statement that it had attacked a military site in Syria, as well as "anti-aircraft guns and surface-to-air missile infrastructure."

The Israeli military said the attacks aimed to send "a clear message" to Syria's transitional government, led by President Ahmed al-Sharaa.

Later in the day, Al-Sharaa's office described the Israeli military strikes near the palace as a "reprehensible attack [that] reflects the continued reckless actions seeking to destabilize the country and exacerbate security crises."

WHO: How much blood is enough to satisfy political objectives in Gaza

'We are breaking bodies and minds of children of Gaza'

International Desk

The World Health Organization decried the horrifying situation unfolding in Gaza, with one top official saying, "How much blood is enough to satisfy whatever the political objectives are."

"We have to ask ourselves: How much blood is enough to satisfy whatever the political objectives are," the UN health agency's emergencies director Mike Ryan told reporters in Geneva.

"We are breaking the bodies and the minds of the children of Gaza. We are starving the children of Gaza, because if we don't do something about it we are complicit in what is happening."

Israel strictly controls all inflows of international aid vital for the 2.4 million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

It halted aid deliveries to Gaza on March 2, days before the collapse of a cease-fire that had significantly reduced hostilities after 15 months of war.

Since the start of the blockade, the UN has repeatedly warned of the humanitarian catastrophe on the ground, with famine again looming. Supplies are dwindling and the UN's World Food Programme (WFP) last

Friday said it had sent out its "last remaining food stocks" to kitchens. Ryan pointed to the more than 1,000 children in Gaza that have missing limbs, saying, "Thousands of children with spinal cord injuries, with severe head injuries from which they'll never recover" and psychological conditions.

"We are watching this unfold before our very eyes, and we're not doing anything about it."

Addressing the other WHO experts and journalists gathered at the agency's Geneva headquarters, Ryan said "I'm angry."

"As a physician, I'm angry with myself that I'm not doing enough. I'm angry with everyone here."

"This cannot continue... This is an abomination."

A baby girl identified as Janan Saleh al-Sakafi died of malnutrition and dehydration in the Rantisi Hospital, west of Gaza City, more than two months after the start of Israel's blockade on the Gaza Strip, according to Al Jazeera.

Gaza's Government Media Office says at least 57 Palestinians have starved to death in the enclave due to the blockade, urging the international community to take action to secure the reopening of the borders.

Iran FM to visit Pakistan, India amid tensions between two neighbors

International Desk

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said the country's top diplomat is scheduled to visit Pakistan and India amid soaring tensions between the two neighbors.

Baqaei said that the Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi would leave for Pakistan on Monday to meet with the country's high-ranking officials over the recent developments at the regional and international levels.

According to the Foreign Ministry spokesman, Araghchi will also pay an official visit to India this week.

The visits come amid heightened tensions between the two nuclear-armed countries over the April 22 terrorist attack in the Indian-administered Kashmir, which claimed the lives of 26 people. India has blamed Pakistan for the attack, but Pakistan has rejected the accusations. Since then, the two countries have taken several measures against each other.

On Saturday, New Delhi widened tit-for-tat measures against Islamabad, blocking access to the social media accounts of Pakistani actors and cricketers, as well as extending trade blocks and stopping postal services. Pakistan's military said it carried out a "training launch" of a surface-to-surface missile weapons system on Saturday, further heightening tensions. On Saturday, India's communications ministry issued a statement saying it had "decided to suspend the exchange of all categories of inbound mail and parcels from Pakistan through air and surface routes".

The arch-rivals had already expelled each other's citizens and closed the main border crossing, and barred aircraft from each other's airspace.

Nuclear talks to ...

When a government throws caution to the wind like this, it is no surprise that its Iran policy is a mix of sanctions and threats. The US slaps new sanctions almost daily, which, even if not very effective, are wielded as a stick at the negotiating table.

There are two schools of thought here: some argue that negotiating with such a government is a dead end, while others, myself included, believe that talks should go ahead to strip away Washington's propaganda tool that claims Iran refuses dialogue. It is imperative to show up with strength and speak up for Iranian nation's rights, without letting threats and sanctions derail the process or bring talks crashing down.

For Iranian officials, negotiation is a core principle aimed at hammering out a diplomatic solution to end the unjust sanctions imposed on the Iranian people. There is no alternative to talks for lifting these sanctions. While focusing on the domestic economy and reforms can blunt the impact of sanctions, the reality is that to maintain international trade, attract foreign investment, and get back into the global arena, sanctions must be addressed, and that requires effort at the negotiating table. Therefore, the public should not be led to buy into the narrative that one missed session on the calendar means the whole process is about to fall apart. In my view, the talks will move forward. As for the recent ousting of the US national security adviser and the

temporary appointment of the secretary of state to the post, it is unlikely this shake-up is directly tied to Iran. The real story is a major blunder by the adviser, a position critical in shaping US foreign policy, who let slip private discussions in a group chat by mistakenly adding a journalist. The adviser was shown the door for personal failings and lack of qualification.

While such a reshuffle does not directly relate to Iran, removing a hardliner who was dead set against talks could take some of the wind out of the sails of those opposed to negotiations. Still, with figures like the secretary of state, who digs in his heels against Iran, calling the shots, any weakening of the anti-talks camp will likely be limited.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

