

EU urged to honor JCOA role amid snapback push

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Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (3rd R) attends a meeting with senior Hamas officials, including Khalil al-Hayya (2nd L), a member of the movement's Political Bureau in Gaza, during high-level talks in Doha on September 4, 2025.  
• Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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## Tehran's path to preserve nuclear power, stay ready to negotiate

By Roxana Niknami  
Political analyst

O P I N I O N

The best course for Iran today lies in preserving its nuclear capability while remaining prepared to return to the negotiating table. This dual approach, often called a hedging strategy, offers Iran the flexibility to adapt to shifting international conditions.

Unlike a passive stance, hedging combines preventive measures with a balance of threats, allowing Iran to respond intelligently to global developments.

Europe's decision to trigger the "snapback" mechanism against Iran marked a significant diplomatic maneuver. The three European signatories of the 2015 nuclear deal framed their move as a bid to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons and to restore full international monitoring.

The action cast a shadow over Tehran's relations with Europe and again exposed the limits of the UN Security Council system. Observers argue that politics, a desire to signal loyalty to Washington, and the ambition to revive Europe's influence in regional affairs were also at play. In the coming weeks, both Tehran and the European trio will face a critical juncture. Europe hopes maximum pressure will force Iran back into talks and constrain its nuclear program. Iran, meanwhile, insists on exercising its legal rights while maintaining the hedging approach. The standoff, defined by mistrust on both sides, could shape the future of the nuclear deal and Europe's broader foreign policy in the Middle East.

Europe's snapback decision was driven by both domestic and international factors. European leaders said their main goal was to forestall nuclear proliferation, portraying the move as a preventive measure in response to concerns over Iran's cooperation with the IAEA and speculation about withdrawal from the NPT.

But this came at a political cost. The snapback created a short-term media and diplomatic advantage for Europe, yet it failed to alter Iran's behavior. It underscored miscalculations in Europe's reading of Tehran's strategy.

Other motives were equally important. The snapback offered Europe a chance to reassert itself in Middle Eastern diplomacy, after losing visibility as a mediator between Washington and Tehran and appearing passive during the Gaza crisis. By pressing ahead, Europe signaled to the Trump administration its willingness to align strategically. It also sought to reassure public opinion at home. After the war in Ukraine, many Europeans viewed Iran with increasing hostility, and governments faced domestic pressure to act firmly. Timing also mattered: Europe chose to move before Russia assumed the rotating presidency of the Security Council, avoiding complications Moscow could have introduced.

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## Tehran's comprehensive diplomacy in first year

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