

Top defense official reaffirms Iranian missiles not up for negotiation

Iraqi FM says opposes use of force against Iran

International Desk

Iran's Secretary of Defense Council Ali Shamkhani said on Friday the country's missiles were a "red line" and non-negotiable amid a fresh round of talks with the United States on Tehran's nuclear program. The negotiations began on February 6 in Oman to resolve a decades-long dispute which has already caused a brief military conflict between the two countries. Washington has long sought to extend talks to cover Iran's missile program. Iran has said it is prepared to discuss curbs on its nuclear program in return for the lifting of sanctions, but has repeatedly ruled out linking the issue to other issues including missiles. "Our missile systems are a red line and not up for negotiation," Shamkhani told Al Jazeera as reports suggest that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Ne-

tanyahu had in a Wednesday meeting with US President Donald Trump to include Iranian missiles into terms of a probable deal. "There was nothing definitive reached other than I insisted that negotiations with Iran continue to see whether or not a Deal can be consummated," Trump wrote in a post on Truth Social after meeting with Netanyahu. "If it can, I let the Prime Minister (Netanyahu) know that will be a preference. If it cannot, we will just have to see what the outcome will be." In his online post, Trump suggested that he was restraining Netanyahu but also said that further strikes could be a result if Iran does not agree to a new nuclear deal. Shamkhani in his interview with Al Jazeera also warned that Iran would deliver a "strong, decisive, and appropriate" response to any aggression.

He noted that Tehran was ready for any scenario. "Our military readiness is high. The cost of any miscalculation by any party will be significant." The Iranian official added that diplomacy could succeed under fair conditions. "If negotiations are realistic and free of excessive demands, they can move in a positive direction and serve the interests of all parties." Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has described the first round of the talks as a "good start," adding that the talks are limited strictly to the nuclear file. Iranian officials say their main demand in Muscat is the effective and verifiable lifting of economic and financial sanctions. Tehran insists that any deal without tangible economic benefit would be meaningless. It also maintains that uranium enrichment on Iranian soil is a legal right and a non-negotiable principle.



Ali Shamkhani
● IRNA

Iraqi opposition

Meanwhile, Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein said on Friday that Baghdad opposed the use of force against Iran. "We are not mediating between

Iran and America. But in any case, negotiations are under way and we hope the process of talks in Oman has gone well so far," Hussein said on the sidelines of the Munich Security

Conference. "We are following the entire process. We support dialogue and negotiation. And of course we oppose any use of force against Iran," he added.

Iran puts 'Jam-e Jam 1' satellite into orbit

Iran's national broadcaster successfully launched its first dedicated geostationary satellite "Jam-e Jam 1", internationally registered as "Iran DBS", marking a strategic step toward strengthening the country's space-based media infrastructure.



The satellite, owned by the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), was launched into space from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan. Jam-e Jam 1 was placed into orbit minutes after liftoff aboard a Proton-M carrier rocket, alongside a Russian meteorological satellite, Press TV reported.

According to IRIB's Media Development and Technology Department, Jam-e Jam 1 represents the first technical and operational step toward implementing next-generation interactive radio and television broadcasting technology.

The satellite has been designed to transmit interactive audio and video signals to ground-based public broadcasting stations, laying the groundwork for interactive mass broadcasting services. Based on the scheduled plan, Jam-e Jam 1 will be transferred and stabilized at its final orbital position at 34 degrees East within less than three weeks. The designated orbital slot is expected to provide optimal coverage for IRIB's communications requirements. Officials stressed that Jam-e Jam 1 is application-oriented in na-

ture. Unlike direct-to-home (DTH) broadcasting satellites designed for household receivers, signals from this satellite require professional and specialized equipment and cannot be received through ordinary home satellite receivers. The project guarantees the necessary communications framework for consolidating interactive broadcasting technology within the national broadcaster and opens what officials described as a new chapter in the technical independence of Iran's national media in the space-based domain. Iran first entered the global space arena in February 2009 with the launch of its domestically produced Omid (Hope) satellite aboard a Safir rocket. Since then, Iran has expanded its civilian space program and is now considered among the world's top countries capable of developing and launching satellites.

Pezeshkian: Enemies exploit national crises to upend unity

International Desk

The Iranian president described the national unity as the first step to overcome the crises facing the country, saying that enemies are trying to exploit the country's problems to sow discord between the people and authorities.



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Masoud Pezeshkian made the remarks in a meeting with intellectuals, political, social, and cultural figures in the northern province of Golestan on Thursday. Referring to numerous problems in the country including electricity shortage, water crisis, environmental issues, and inflation, Pezeshkian said that problems can be resolved only through unity. Deepening disagreements pushes society toward weakness and collapse, the president warned. He said that foreign powers, including the United States and Israel, exploit Iran's challenges without genuine concern for the country's welfare. "It is undeniable that Israel and the US take advantage of our country's situation. They have done nothing but create problems for us. Their hearts are not with Iran," Pezeshkian underlined. Referring to the recent riots across the country, Pezeshkian added, "During the recent incidents, Trump and Netanyahu beat the drum of protests. Did they intend to solve our nation's problems? Has anyone other than them caused issues for us? They have blocked all our paths, frozen our transactions, and obstructed our

work, while telling some inside the country that they want to 'save' us." On January 8 and 9, protests sparked by economic grievances turned into unruly scenes of mayhem and destruction. Armed groups infiltrated the demonstrations, leading to damage to shops, government buildings and public facilities, as well as casualties among civilians and security forces. A total of 3,117 people lost their lives during the riots, including 2,427 innocent civilians and security personnel. "A great wound has been created. We must repair and heal it with unity and cohesion, not deepen it with division and discord, which only increases the country's problems," Pezeshkian said. He also highlighted the longstanding pressure Iran has faced, asserting that those who themselves commit genocide "speak of humanity and human rights, and accuse us of massacre and plunder." He noted that since the beginning of the Islamic Revolution, "all kinds of pressures and conspiracies have been applied to prevent us from serving the people properly."

Iran-US deal carries ...

As a result, regional states view a confrontation between Iran and the United States as a serious and immediate threat.

For Persian Gulf countries, a large-scale conflict would put both their economic interests and global standing at risk. Should the United States carry out major strikes against Iran, the fallout would not be confined to Iran alone. The reverberations would extend to the Persian Gulf states and potentially beyond.

The possibility that a war could quickly become regional has prompted governments to step up efforts to prevent it. Persian Gulf states and other Middle Eastern countries, including Egypt, along with actors beyond the region, are working in earnest to avert a military clash between Tehran and Washington. From a strategic standpoint, this lends added importance to the current negotiations. US policymakers may conclude that reaching some form of agreement is necessary. Otherwise, a serious

divergence could emerge between American interests and those of regional partners. Unlike in the past, US objectives might not enjoy full regional backing if they are seen to jeopardize local interests. For these reasons, an agreement at this juncture would carry strategic significance. A deal would serve the interests of regional states, Iran and the United States alike. The prospects for achieving such an understanding appear stronger in this round. Diplomacy, after all, is rarely straightforward. It is a layered and intricate process, shaped by multiple tools, tactics and formulations. Publicly declared positions are a routine feature of international negotiations and, on their own, do not predetermine the outcome. History offers ample evidence that even after decades of entrenched disagreement, negotiators can eventually craft language that preserves main positions while narrowing gaps through careful wording and, at times, constructive ambiguity. From that vantage point, there is

greater room now than before for cautious optimism about the diplomatic track.

Pressure from hawkish factions has long weighed on US administrations. This time, however, Trump appears to face a set of challenges that encourage greater caution. The accumulation of political and strategic pressures surrounding him has reduced his room to align fully with pro-Israel and warmonger Republican lobbies as in previous instances. With elections approaching, the political outlook remains uncertain. A defeat would expose him to the deeply unwelcome prospect of impeachment and intensified domestic pressure. At the same time, regional states are unlikely to lend support if their own interests are put at risk. There are additional concerns that weigh on the current administration. Taken together, these factors suggest that lobbying forces may not exercise the same degree of influence as before. In that sense, the present circumstances leave room for guarded hope.



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