

# Additional Protocol adoption tied to sanctions relief in potential US deal: *FM spokesperson*

## International Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei said Tehran would only implement the Additional Protocol to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Safeguards Agreement on a voluntary basis under a possible deal with the United States, provided that the Islamic Republic received concessions, including economic sanctions relief.

Speaking at a regular press briefing on Monday, Baghaei said Iran had prior experience with the protocol during the implementation of the 2015 nuclear deal and described it as a confidence-building measure.

"Adoption of the protocol has precedent in Iran and is considered a tool to provide greater assurance about the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program," he said. His remarks come after Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said in an interview with CBS that Iran was ready to fully cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) under safeguards rules and could also accept the Additional Protocol under certain conditions. He did

not elaborate on the required conditions. The Additional Protocol is a supplementary agreement to the IAEA's Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement that significantly expands the agency's inspection powers. Under the 2015 deal, known formally as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Iran committed to temporarily implementing the protocol. After the United States withdrew from the accord in 2018 and reimposed sweeping unilateral sanctions, Iran gradually scaled back its commitments, including halting voluntary implementation of the protocol.

The last round of Iran-US negotiations began in early 2025 but stalled following an Israeli attack in June and the outbreak of a 12-day conflict, in which the United States also took part and bombed Iranian nuclear facilities. Since then, tensions have escalated, with an expanded US military presence in the region bringing the two sides close to renewed confrontation. However, diplomatic contacts between Tehran and Washington have resumed, with two rounds of talks held so far. Iran is expected to present its draft proposal

in the coming days, while the next round is scheduled for Thursday.

## No IAEA access without inspection protocol

During the press conference, Baghaei was also asked about IAEA inspections of Iran's bombed nuclear sites as a precondition to an agreement with Washington. Baghaei rejected the idea, saying cooperation with the IAEA in this regard is a separate matter. He argued that, for the first time, peaceful nuclear facilities of a country had been targeted by foreign military action, and no established mechanism exists for inspecting such sites.

"The agreement between Tehran and the agency to visit bombed facilities requires an understanding on a specific protocol. At present, we are not at this stage, although exchanges and contacts with the agency continue on a regular basis," he said.

Iran has refused to allow IAEA access to those facilities following the recent conflict, citing safety and security concerns. IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi has said in recent statements that no deal



Esmail Baghaei  
IRNA

would be reached if Iran does not allow verification of the damaged sites. Baghaei stressed that until a specific protocol is defined in this regard, Iran will not allow access to the damaged facilities.

Reports suggest that Grossi is set to participate in the Geneva talks set for Thursday, potentially to discuss technical details of a possible deal, including inspection of bombed sites.

## Army chief upbraids US invincibility boast as 'false and futile'

### International Desk

Top Iran's Army commander said on Monday that claims of US invincibility are "false and futile," warning that Washington would ultimately be defeated in any confrontation with Tehran.

Major General Amir Hatami, commander-in-chief of the Iranian Army, made the remarks at a graduation ceremony for PhD and master's students in Defense Management at the Army's Command & Staff University, according to Tasnim.

To support his argument, he pointed to the United States' protracted wars in Vietnam and Afghanistan, where it fought for two decades before ultimately withdrawing in disgrace, saying similar outcomes had unfolded in Iraq and other countries.

He stressed, however, that defeating an adversary requires a clear understanding of today's global realities as well as steadfastness and resilience among the Iranian people.

"In today's conditions, given the ongo-



Amir Hatami  
Tasnim

ing changes and developments, the responsibility of the Army is undoubtedly decisive," he said.

Hatami added that modern warfare has become far more complex, describing it as a hybrid conflict spanning political, economic, social, military, psychological and cognitive domains. He said that overcoming such threats depends on accurate awareness and understanding.

Iran's adversaries, he said, believe the country is currently in a position of weakness while they are strong, but said Iran's preparedness and resolve would prove them wrong.

Referring to the foreign-backed unrest in January that left many casual-

ties, Hatami accused Iran's enemies of attempting to stage a "quasi-coup" through miscalculation, but said the effort ultimately failed. Iran has explained that US-Israeli terrorists intervened in people's peaceful protests and caused fatalities.

Hatami warned that Tehran could face new forms of hostile plots in the future but pledged a "decisive and crushing response."

Hatami also said the enemy is pursuing a strategy of "strategic attrition" aimed at weakening Iran over time and exhausting its population, but argued that both the government and the public are aware of the broader plan and will counter it. He warned that undermining Iran's territorial integrity, as seen in some regional countries, is also part of hostile strategies, but vowed that the Iranian people would stand firm and prevent such plans from succeeding.

"We in the Army, with full awareness of our historic mission, will defend the independence, territorial integrity and the Islamic Republic of Iran to the last breath," he said.

## Deputy FM urges West to pursue diplomacy instead of sanctions in nuclear talks

### International Desk

Iran's deputy foreign minister said on Monday that sanctions and military pressure have failed to produce results against Tehran, calling on Western powers to "test respect and diplomacy" instead of nuclear negotiations with Washington gather momentum.

Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's deputy foreign minister for legal and international affairs, made the remarks at a high-level session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva, where he said years of pressure had proven ineffective.

"Sanctions and war have been tried in relation to Iran and have not worked. Now it is time to experience respect and diplomacy," he said. Iran and the United States have so far held two rounds of nuclear negotiations, with a third scheduled for Thursday in Geneva after Tehran submits its draft proposal. The renewed diplomatic push comes after months of stalled contacts following a 12-day conflict involving Israel and the United States, which disrupted earlier talks.

The latest efforts are unfolding amid a US military buildup in the region and repeated warnings from Washington that military action remains an option if diplomacy fails. Tehran has also warned that any aggression would face a firm response.

Gharibabadi stressed that while Iranians are not inclined to aggression, they are prepared to defend their country decisively.

"Iran and Iranians will stand with strength against any military or political plot targeting their homeland," he said.

He added that Iran's adversaries might be able to start a war but would not determine how it



Kazem Gharibabadi  
SNN

ends, warning that any conflict would not remain limited to the two sides but could engulf the wider region.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian also recently reiterated in a post on X that Tehran is committed to regional peace and stability. He said the latest negotiations involved the exchange of practical proposals and yielded "encouraging signals," while stressing that Iran continues to closely monitor US actions and remains prepared for all scenarios.

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi also said in an interview with CBS that there is still a strong chance of reaching a diplomatic solution based on a "win-win" framework.

"There is no need for any military buildup. Increasing military pressure cannot help and will not put us under pressure," he said. Meanwhile, Omani sources said Ali Larijani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, is expected to travel to Muscat on Tuesday as part of ongoing diplomatic efforts, potentially with a focus on the security dimensions.

Oman continues to mediate between Tehran and Washington, hosting negotiations in Muscat and other diplomatic venues.

## 'Token enrichment' aimed ...

**In your view, could such a proposal help break the current deadlock over enrichment?**

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Proposals of this nature may stem from what could be described as the US side's maximalist approach. In any negotiation, there is inevitably give-and-take. If one party receives concessions, it must also grant concessions. However, since they have sought to apply maximum pressure while also putting forward maximum demands, they resort to such terminology. If this spirit governs other issues as well, it could act as an obstacle rather than a facilitator, as has been the case so far. Still, the American side faces pressure domestically from certain factions and lobbies, as well as externally from actors such as Israel. The use of such terms may therefore be aimed at easing the atmosphere and reducing those pressures. From that perspective, it may assist the American side itself to some extent—rather than the negotiation process or Iran. Otherwise, it offers no particular advantage to the Iranian side or to the talks.

**How do you assess the narrative gap between Iranian officials and US media reports regarding the content of the recent talks? Is it a matter of negotiation tactics, a battle of narratives, or genuine differences in interpretation?**

By occasionally leaking incomplete or even inaccurate information, the American side attempts to turn up the heat on Iran's negotiating team, either at the table or outside the negotiating room, and in effect cast a shadow over the quality of negotiations or the manner in which the Iranian team grants concessions. Previously, Western media consistently reported that the US position was zero enrichment and that enrichment would not be accepted at all. Now, however, it is being suggested that a certain level of enrichment might be acceptable. From a psychological standpoint, such positioning may be important for the Americans; first, to avoid coming under pressure for having granted excessive concessions to Iran; and second, because the Trump administration, even while engaging in diplomatic talks with Iran, appears intent on preserving the prestige of maximum pressure and avoiding being accused of backing down—even if it steps back from the idea of zero enrichment and accepts enrichment at some level. From the outset, it was conceivable that if an agreement were to be reached, enrichment levels or the scale of enrichment in Iran would be significantly reduced. This does not necessarily contradict that prospect.

**Araghchi has rejected any proposal for a temporary halt or suspension of en-**

**richment by Iran. What do you see as the source of such claims in Western media? Could this be part of psychological pressure or an effort to manage domestic and international expectations?** Beyond the political-level negotiations being pursued, there is a battle of narratives unfolding between the two sides. Moreover, in economic, security, and even military domains, threats, pressures, and measures are seen from the American side, while the Iranian side has sought to adopt countermeasures in response. Narratives can, in essence, lay the groundwork for certain policies or even shape emerging trends. The American proposal under the banner of zero enrichment has long been their genuine policy demand—not only during Trump's tenure but also under previous US presidents, who likewise sought to ensure that Iran would have no enrichment capability at all. However, they were unable to achieve that objective. At the current juncture, despite having effectively accepted the issue of enrichment in principle, their repeated references to it outside the negotiating room appear intended to create ambiguity and doubt, thereby exerting pressure on Iran to extract concessions in other areas. In effect, they seek to let uncertainty hang over the talks and use it as psychological leverage.

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