

Ukraine's anti-Iran moves made at behest of third parties: *Former envoy*

INTERVIEW

Ukraine's attack against an Iranian commercial vessel in the Caspian Sea and the martyrdom of an Iranian sailor immediately elicited a vehement reaction from Tehran. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs emphatically condemned the action, and Ukraine's Chargé d'Affaires was summoned to the ministry.

On the evening of July 26, Abbas Araghchi, the foreign minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, published a message on the social media platform X, in which he described Ukraine's president under the title of the "opportunist based in Kyiv" and emphasized that, in his conversations with Russia's foreign minister and the European Union's high representative for foreign affairs, he had declared that Ukraine's action "cannot go unanswered".

On July 27, Esmail Baqaei, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, during the ministry's weekly press conference, emphasized that Iran has "no involvement whatsoever in the Ukraine-Russia conflict," and stated: "All parties that, in one manner or another, consider themselves patrons and supporters of the Ukrainian regime must be held accountable in this regard." Baqaei, while stating that "Ukraine's action is an absolutely unlawful, unjustifiable act, contrary to the Charter of the United Nations, and a perilous adventurism," stressed that this action "most certainly will not go unanswered by us". The Foreign Ministry spokesperson stated: "Zelensky's elders must both restrain him and exercise vigilance over him in this matter because the actions of the Ukrainian regime may generate consequences for various parts of the world."

To examine the objectives and motivations underlying the Ukrainian government's military aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran, an interview was conducted with Mohsen Baharvand, the former Deputy Foreign Minister and former Iranian ambassador to London. Below, you may read the translated text of the interview.

Mohsen Baharvand



Ukraine's military action against an Iranian commercial vessel in the Caspian Sea is regarded as a significant escalation of tensions between Iran and Ukraine. Since the outset of the war, Ukraine has pursued a belligerent course toward Tehran, yet it had not undertaken direct aggression against Iran before. Under the present circumstances, why do you believe Ukraine has made such a decision?

BAHARVAND: Ukraine most likely intends, through this action, to attract attention and obtain greater financial resources and additional weaponry from the United States and Europe. Simultaneously, it may, by provoking certain adversaries of Iran, undertake actions designed to draw the United States into direct military intervention in the Ukraine war or embroil Iran in a confrontation with NATO. Nevertheless, Ukraine is intensifying its hostile actions against Iran, and Iran has thus far demonstrated restraint toward that country.

Throughout recent months, Ukraine's conduct in the war has become markedly more aggressive, and actions such as targeting Russian energy infrastructure and oil tankers have become part of Ukraine's agenda. Do you believe this expansion of objectives may also encompass additional military action against Iran?

Unfortunately, because of the adventurism of its president, Ukraine became embroiled in conflict with Russia, which resulted in immense losses and the forfeiture of a considerable portion of its territory, and it has now reached a condition in which it has nothing left to lose. As a consequence of the war, Ukraine has forfeited its independence, and its decisions and activities are executed under the instructions of third countries. If we accept this premise, additional actions by Ukraine remain possible, and, in my opinion, Kyiv must receive a serious warning to desist from new adventurism.

Although Russia possesses diverse resources for procuring its own military equipment and capabilities, the government in Kyiv demonstrates an extraordinary obsession with accusing Iran. What accounts for this obsession with publicizing military and defense cooperation between Iran and Russia?

Indeed, Russia possesses extensive military capabilities and



The illustration shows US President Donald Trump (above), Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (L), and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.
● KLAWE RZECZY/FOREIGN POLICY

retains the logistical capacity to sustain the war against Ukraine and even wars of greater magnitude. Ukraine's alleged military assistance, in comparison with Russia's capabilities, can never alter the strategic landscape or produce any substantial effect.

Furthermore, while Iran itself is engaged in defending itself against the largest military force in the world, how could it simultaneously provide military assistance to Russia? This assertion appears to be nothing more than a falsehood and a pretext. By every available means, Ukraine seeks either to attract the attention of Western countries through the expansion of the conflict or to serve as part of a new scheme against Iran in the northern region of our country, with the objective of

damaging the northern corridors.

To what extent has the propaganda of the government in Kyiv contributed to the deterioration of Europe's relations with Iran?

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky (C), flanked by European Council President Antonio Costa (L) and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, attends a European Union leaders special summit to discuss Ukraine and European defense, in Brussels, Belgium, on March 6, 2025.
● REUTERS



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At the outset of the Ukraine war, Europe sought to isolate Russia to the greatest extent possible. Iran supported Russia and, in addition to opening routes, also prevented, within the limits of its capabilities, the formation of a consensus against Russia in international organizations. Europe regarded these actions as contrary to its own security and policy. In this matter, Europe, without opening a diplomatic avenue with Iran, irrationally and from an arrogant perspective, selected confrontational methods against Iran.

It is not Ukraine's propaganda that incites Europe to confront Iran; rather, it is possible that Ukraine's actions have been undertaken with Europe's knowledge or even under Europe's instructions.

The Israeli regime maintains close relations with Volodymyr Zelensky, and claims have been advanced that the targeting of the Iranian vessel was conducted with Israeli intelligence. To what extent do you believe Israeli influence in Kyiv has contributed to escalating tensions and undermining relations between Iran and Ukraine?

The present situation is highly intricate, and its analysis requires more information and greater detail. In any event, Ukraine's actions are not executed in isolation or independently, and it is highly probable that a larger conspiracy underlies these actions. Nor can the possibility of Zionist influence upon Ukraine's actions be dismissed.

To what extent do you consider it probable that Ukraine seeks to open a new front in the Russia war and extend the conflict into Iran? In your view, is the possibility that Israel or the United States is encouraging the expansion of war against Iran through the northern front a plausible assertion?

Yes, I believe that a desperate puppet such as the president of Ukraine may participate, on behalf of the West, in any conspiracy directed against Iran or any other country. Ukraine's direct military confrontation against Iran possesses no political or military rationale whatsoever. The most probable explanation is that Ukraine is one component of a new machination against Iran.

The interview first appeared in Persian on IRNA.