

US puts regional allies at risk 'for the sake of Israel': *Speaker*

International Desk

Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said on Saturday that Tehran has received "numerous messages" from neighboring countries about shaping new security arrangements and expanding economic cooperation in the region.

"The United States put the security of every single one of its allies at such risk through bullying and pure disregard for their interests for the sake of Israel that they briefly saw their entire existence on the line," Qalibaf said in a post on X. "A homegrown, independent order is what will actually deliver peace and security," he added.

The US and Israel launched wide-ranging strikes on Iran on February 28, sparking conflict across the Middle East region. Iran responded by attacking Israel and US military bases in the Persian Gulf Arab countries, and effectively closing the Strait of Hormuz, through which around 20% of the world's oil



Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf speaks during a meeting with Iranian and Iraqi businessmen at the Iranian Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq, on August 20, 2026.
● ICANA

and liquefied natural gas travels. The move sent oil prices soaring globally. Regional diplomatic efforts led to a peace agreement between Iran and the

US. The two sides signed the memorandum of understanding in Pakistan to end the cycle arising from the latest bout of unprovoked American-Israeli

aggression against Iran.

Under the understanding, Iran agreed to allow fee-free maritime transit through the strait for a period of 60 days.

In compliance with the MoU, the Islamic Republic devised a special maritime route for vessels to cross the chokepoint, warning vessels against using illegal routes.

The US has, however, been trying to escort transit through the strait along an illegal passageway, prompting the Islamic Republic to confront every instance of Washington-instigated transit through the chokepoint and shut the corridor until Washington ended its interference in regional maritime movement.

Tehran says any movement in the strategic chokepoint must be conducted under Iranian arrangements, as per the understanding.

The closure of the strait has affected the economies of the Persian Gulf Arab countries which heavily rely on the wa-

terway to export their crude oil and gas. Iranian parliament speaker, who was on a three-day visit to neighboring Iraq, also pointed to the economic problems caused by the aggression for the Iranian people and the region.

Addressing a group of Iranian and Iraqi businessmen on Thursday, Qalibaf said the US and Israel had concluded they could not defeat Iran and Iraq through direct military confrontation and had therefore shifted towards cognitive and economic warfare.

"The economy needs a foundation of security to take off, and if security is not established, capital will not come, so investment necessarily requires security," he said.

On Wednesday, US President Donald Trump announced what he called the "most crushing economic operation" against Iran, claiming that Tehran would face "economic warfare and isolation on an unprecedented scale". He also threatened sanctions against any country that does business with Iran.

Spox: US sanctions assertion of extraterritorial sovereignty over countries

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry's spokesman Esmail Baqaei said on Friday that declaration of new sanctions by the United States on Iran is far more than continued unlawful "economic warfare" but it is an assertion of extraterritorial sovereignty over every independent country. "The United States' declaration of new economic sanctions on Iran is far more than continued unlawful 'economic warfare' against a single country. It is an assertion of extraterritorial sovereignty over every independent Member State of the United Nations," Baqaei said in a post on X.

"No State may lawfully compel foreign banks, enterprises, or airports - each subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of its own sovereign - to renounce lawful



Esmail Baqaei
● IRNA

commerce with a third State," he added. "Such secondary sanctions find no foundation in international law. They violate the principle of sovereign equality enshrined in Article 2(1) of the UN Charter and breach the customary prohibition on intervention affirmed by the International Court of Justice in the Nicaragua case. Economic

coercion designed to force a sovereign State to alter its lawful policy choices constitutes an outright internationally wrongful act."

The statement followed US President Donald Trump's announcement of new economic measures against Iran on Wednesday, accompanied by a warning that countries maintaining economic engagement with Tehran would face consequences.

Trump said on his Truth Social platform that he was announcing "the most crushing economic operation ever taken against any country!" He added that any country that allows its financial institutions, businesses, airports, or government entities to provide any type of lifeline to Iran will itself face tremendous economic consequences.

Ministry says production of military hardware tripled during US-Israeli aggression

National Desk

Iran's Defense Ministry spokesman said on Friday that production of some strategic defense products and war necessities increased by more than threefold during the 40-day US-Israeli aggression against the country.

Speaking in a televised special news program, Brigadier General Reza Talaei-Nik outlined the missions, position and role of the Defense Ministry and Armed Forces Logistics in shaping Iran's national and defense power.

Talaei-Nik stressed that the only way to confront foreign powers is to strengthen and enhance national power.

"One of the prominent features of our defense industry is the speed and capability to produce defense products. To the extent that weapons and ammunition are used on the battlefield, they are replaced at the same speed.

Talaei-Nik said the country's defense production had increased significantly over the past year, from July last year to July this year, particularly following the 12-day aggression by the US and Israel against Iran.

He further said the increase in defense production during the recent US-Israeli aggression had demonstrated the importance of sustainable production capacity within Iran's national ecosystem.

"Despite claims by US and Israeli officials, including [US President Donald] Trump and the Israeli prime minister [Benjamin Netanyahu], we achieved a twofold



● REUTERS

increase in the production of weapons, equipment and ammunition over the past year."

He added that production of some strategic and priority items required on the war fronts had increased by more than three times compared with production levels during the war.

Iran's Acting Defense Minister said the country has inflicted a "strategic defeat" on the US and Israel, stressing that Iran's defense industry had kept production lines operational during wartime and deployed new offensive and defensive systems on the battlefield.

Speaking on Saturday at a ceremony marking Iran's Defense Industry Day, attended by foreign military attachés based in Tehran, Brigadier General Seyyed Majid Ibn al-Reza said Iran's defense industry had strengthened the country's armed forces despite sanctions and other challenges.

Iranian Army's commander-in-chief also stressed that the country's defense capabilities strengthened its deterrence, forcing its enemies to change their calculations.

Rights official slams double standards in global response to terrorism

The deputy chief of Iran's Judiciary and secretary of the High Council for Human Rights condemned double standards in the international community's response to terrorism, saying the lives and rights of Iranian victims must be treated with the same importance as those of victims elsewhere in the world.

Speaking at a ceremony commemorating victims of terrorism on Saturday,

Nasser Seraj said thousands of Iranian citizens — including children, women, men and the elderly, as well as ordinary people, officials, scientists, military and law enforcement personnel, clerics, workers and students — have been killed in terrorist operations, Press TV reported.

Seraj said Iran has been a victim of terrorism for decades and has paid a heavy price as a result of

numerous attacks.

"If a terrorist attack occurs in a European country, it immediately becomes a global issue. But when the victim is Iranian, reactions are sometimes very limited," he said, adding that this is the double standard that must be addressed openly.

He stressed that human rights must be applied universally if they are genuinely universal, noting that the value of human

life should not depend on a person's nationality.

"An Iranian child, a Palestinian child, a European child, an African child and an Asian child are all children. An Iranian mother who loses her child experiences the same suffering as a mother anywhere else in the world," he added.

Addressing the issue of state terrorism and the responsibility of governments, Seraj said the international fight against terrorism should not focus solely on non-state groups.

Iran warns about captive pilots' health condition in Qatar, demands their release

International Desk

The head of the Missing-in-Action Search Committee of Iran's Armed Forces General Staff warned about the poor physical condition of Iranian pilots held in Qatar, urging the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to send an air ambulance to transfer them to Iran.

"The place where the captive pilots are being held on the water does not provide suitable conditions for maintaining their health," Brigadier General

Mohammad Bagherzadeh warned on Saturday.

Qatar must move the Iranian captives to land and transfer them to a fully equipped hospital as soon as possible, he said.

Bagherzadeh welcomed Qatar's decision to receive a team of Iranian experts and urged Doha to cooperate in speeding up efforts to address the captives' condition.

In a letter to ICRC President Mirjana Spoljaric on March 16, Bagherzadeh had already urged the organization to

investigate the pilots' fate and establish direct contact with them.

He identified the three pilots as Javad Salehi, Abdolmajid Dashtian and Emran Behrouzian, while confirming that Majid Kazemi, one of the four pilots involved, had been martyred and his remains returned to Iran.

According to Bagherzadeh, the three pilots were captured in Qatar during an air strike on an American base in the tiny Persian Gulf country days after the US and Israel launched a war of aggression against Iran in February.

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