

Iran's foreign minister urges world to counter U.S. unilateralism



Moscow, January 1 (RHC)-- Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has called for collective cooperation among world countries to counter unilateralism propagated by the U.S. administration across the globe.

Zarif made the remark in a joint press conference with his Russian counterpart, Sergei Lavrov, in the capital Moscow, adding: "The U.S. government attempts to dictate its intentions to other countries, and Russia and Iran have confronted this approach through the JCPOA (the Iran nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) and other fields."

The JCPOA was reached in Vienna in July 2015 between Iran and the P5+1 group of states, the US, Britain, France, Russia, and China plus Germany. It lifted nuclear-related sanctions against Tehran, which, in turn, voluntarily changed some aspects of its nuclear energy program.

The U.S., however, left the accord last May and reinstated its unilateral sanctions against Iran. The European deal partners, meanwhile, have bowed to Washington's pressure, failing to honor their contractual obligations to protect Iran's economy in the face of America's "toughest-ever" bans.

“Although most European countries threw their weight behind the JCPOA politically, they failed to adopt practical measures to counter the US sanctions and fulfill their commitments,” the top Iranian diplomat said at the joint presser.

Zarif said the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has verified in 15 reports that Iran has lived up to all its nuclear obligations with absolute goodwill, which is indicative of the fact that the Iranian nation and government not only embrace interaction but also fully abide by their commitments, however, they would not accede to the unilateral implementation of the 2015 landmark deal.

In response to the renewal of the sanctions after the U.S. withdrawal, Tehran has so far rowed back on its nuclear commitments four times, in compliance with Articles 26 and 36 of the JCPOA, but stressed that its retaliatory measures will be reversible as soon as the European signatories — France, Britain and Germany — find practical ways to shield mutual trade from the US sanctions.

“Iran’s measures over the past nine months have been fully in compliance with the terms of the JCPOA and no individual can act against those measures,” Zarif said. “Iran and Russia are of the opinion that the JCPOA is a major achievement in the international community and the world countries had better meet their obligations under the accord than seek to destroy that,” he added.

Since last month, European members of the deal have begun raising the possibility of triggering the JCPOA’s “dispute resolution mechanism,” which is also known as the trigger mechanism, and whose activation can lead to the return of the UN sanctions on Iran.

The head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) said earlier this month that if the European signatories to the JCPOA activate the ‘trigger mechanism’ to mount pressure on Iran, it will mean the demise of the deal.

“Europe wants the JCPOA to survive. The JCPOA is of security importance to them, but whether this demand is commensurate with their ability [to resist US pressures] is a different issue. The ability of Europe depends on its resistance against the United States, but unfortunately they have proven that the 28 [member] states [of the European Union] are less resistant and independent than a single [US] state like California,” Ali Akbar Salehi said on December 23.

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