

Tehran not interested in talks with Washington after Trump's false accusations



Tehran, September 17 (RHC)-- Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Tuesday that the Islamic Republic has ruled out any talks with the U.S. administration after President Donald Trump accused them of carrying out the attack on the Saudi Aramco oil facilities this past weekend.

"Iranian officials, at any level, will never talk to American officials ... this is part of their policy to put pressure on Iran," Iranian state TV quoted Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as saying.

Ayatollah Khamenei added that Iran would only be willing to hold talks with Washington once they returned to the nuclear accord that was established by the previous administration in 2015.

Trump said on Monday that it looked like Iran was behind the weekend strike at the heart of the Saudi oil industry, which cut 5% of global production, but stressed he did not want to go to war. Iran firmly denied it was to blame.

U.S.-Iran relations deteriorated after Trump quit the accord and reimposed sanctions over Tehran's nuclear and ballistic programs. He also wants Iran to stop supporting regional proxies, including Yemen's

Houthi group, which has claimed responsibility for the attack.

A day after saying the United States was “locked and loaded” to respond to the incident, Trump said on Monday there was “no rush” to do so. “We have a lot of options but I’m not looking at options right now. We want to find definitively who did this.”

Saudi Arabia, which has supported tougher U.S. sanctions on Iran, said on Monday an initial investigation showed the strikes were carried out with Iranian weapons, but provided no evidence. Riyadh said it was capable of “responding forcefully” but did not directly accuse Tehran.

The assault halved Saudi Arabia’s oil output and damaged the world’s biggest crude oil processing plant, triggering the largest jump in oil prices in decades. It was the worst such attack on regional oil facilities since Saddam Hussein torched Kuwait’s oil wells during the 1990-91 Gulf war.

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