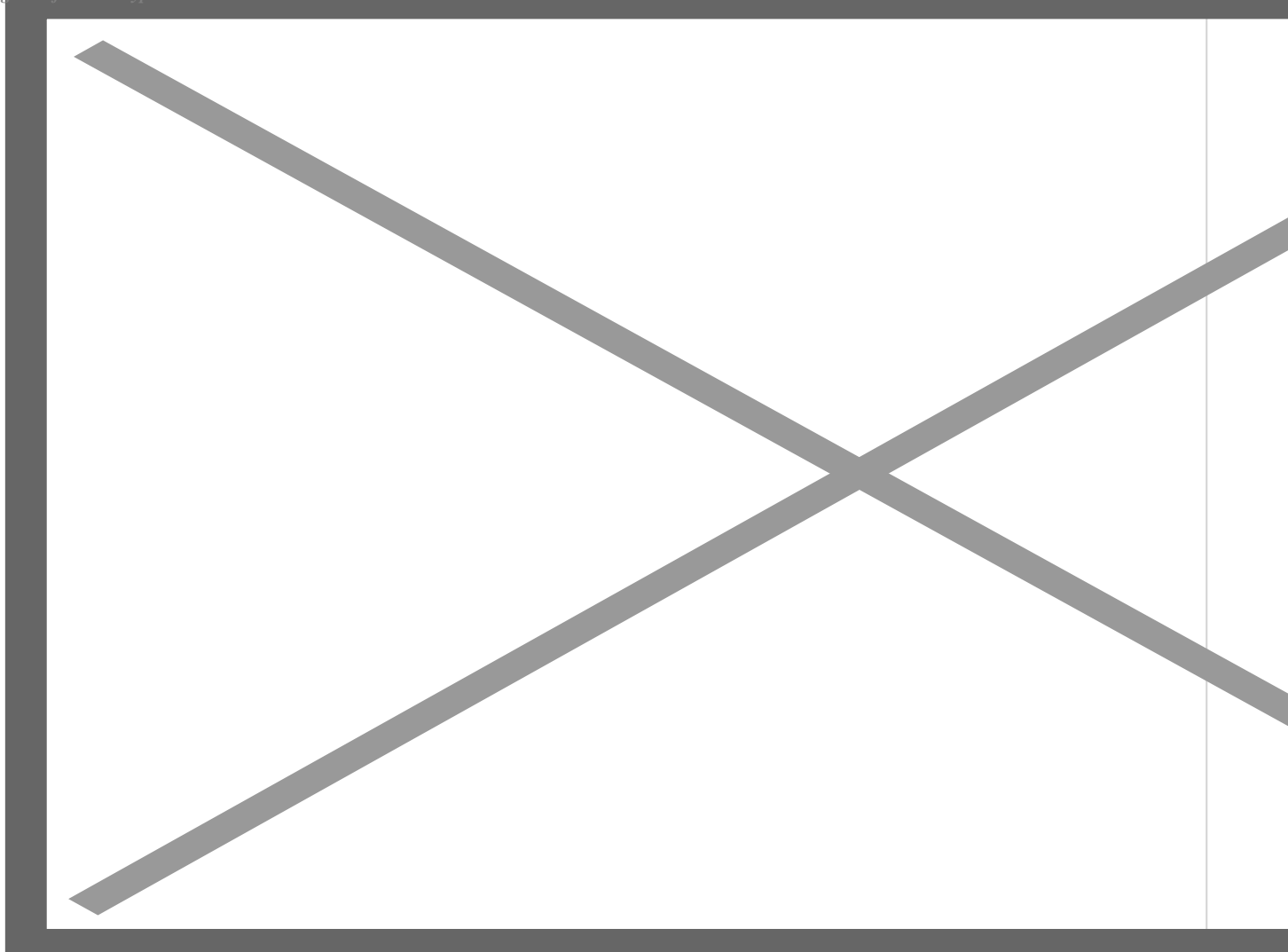


Iran warns attack on its nuclear sites will lead to widespread regional war

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File photo shows projectiles belonging to Iran's state-of-the-art laser-powered Seraj (Light) air defense system that has been developed to guard the country's nuclear facilities.

Tehran, February 1 (RHC)-- Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has strongly cautioned about the dire consequences of a potential act of aggression, potentially involving the Israeli regime and the United States, against Iran's nuclear facilities.

"My assumption is that in this case (a likely attack against the Islamic Republic's nuclear facilities), we will enter into a widespread war in the region, a catastrophe that no one, neither in the region nor outside the region, wants," the top diplomat said on Friday.

"I doubt that the Americans will make such a major miscalculation," added Araghchi in remarks to Qatar's Al Jazeera Arabic television network during a short stay in the Persian Gulf country, addressing the likelihood of Washington's aiding Tel Aviv in such an act of aggression. "Unlike previous times, if Iran's nuclear facilities are attacked, Iran's reaction will be immediate and decisive," he noted.

Iran has so far retaliated twice, namely during Operations True Promise I and II, against Israeli aggression against its soil by successfully targeting sensitive and strategic Israeli targets deep inside the occupied Palestinian territories with hundreds of ballistic and cruise missiles.

The Islamic Republic, however, took its time before resorting to legitimate reprisal, apparently taking various domestic and regional conditions into account. "The Americans and Israelis know what targets we can target," Araghchi stated concerning the aspects of Iran's response to potential aggression against its nuclear facilities.

He, meanwhile, reiterated that "Iran will definitely be able to respond" to such aggression, and strongly advised the US against making "one of the biggest historical mistakes" by contributing to such an attack.

Undermining likely Israeli-American attack

Still addressing the potential of such an attack, the foreign minister declined to consider such a likely act of aggression to be capable of causing much damage to Iran's nuclear sites. He noted that, far from just being present on the ground, Iran's nuclear might and capabilities lay "in the minds and thoughts of Iranian scientists." "This capability and program will not be destroyed by bombing or airstrikes."

Secondly, Iran's nuclear facilities were not situated in one or two locations, he went on, adding that the facilities were scattered across many locations and were being guarded by very good and strong defenses.

Iran's Army unveils a state-of-the-art laser-powered air defense system during its Air Defense Forces' military maneuvers in the country's western and northern areas.

"These facilities are in places that are very difficult, even impossible, to access even by airstrikes."

And thirdly, he underlined the certitude of the Islamic Republic's "immediate and decisive" reaction to a likely attack.

'Nuclear weapons have no place in Iran's military doctrine'

Elsewhere in his remarks, Araghchi reiterated that "nuclear weapons are not part of Iran's military doctrine," asserting, "Our security is provided through other methods, and nuclear weapons are haram (forbidden) in our view."

He cited the relevant fatwa (religious decree) that was issued by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei forbidding either achievement, storage or deployment of such weapons as per religious and moral concerns. The official, however, said the country was capable of making the weapons, but repeated that there was no such will on the part of the Islamic Republic towards their production.

'Not easy for America to regain Iran's trust'

Araghchi also responded to a question concerning the potential resumption of negotiations between Iran and the US.

"Unfortunately, the history of our relationship with the US is full of very bad and negative events and positions," he said.

The foreign minister noted how since the victory of Iran's Islamic Revolution in 1979 and the subsequent establishment of the Islamic Republic, Tehran had constantly faced hostility and adversarial actions on the part of Washington.

He cited the cases of the US's 2018 withdrawal from a nuclear agreement between Iran and others and Washington's assassination of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, Iran's former top anti-terror commander, in 2020. "All these events have created a history full of hostility and, most importantly, a history full of distrust between Iran and America. Of course, all of this cannot be compensated for with a single word."

Araghchi noted that even the United States former administration of President Joe Biden -- who had expressed a willingness to return to the nuclear deal -- "had very hostile positions. The policy of pressure on Iran and severe sanctions against Iran intensified under the previous U.S. administration."

Tehran, however, was closely following the positions of the new US administration of Donald Trump and what policy it could adopt regarding Iran, the nuclear deal, or Iran's nuclear energy program, he said.

"And we are examining them. We will make our decisions based on their positions and coordinate our own positions accordingly."

Under the current circumstances, though, "There is no basis for opening a new chapter in relations with America," he said, referring to the hostile environment governing the ties that has been brought about by America's hostile measures.

Araghchi cited the potential unblocking of Iran's frozen assets across the world as a likely step that Washington could take towards beginning to regain Tehran's trust.

Resumption of negotiations between the two sides, "requires perseverance and a change of position on the part of the US government, and it requires the American side to take positive steps. I think they themselves know better than anyone what steps they can take," he stated.

'Resistance can always rebuild itself'

Separately, Araghchi addressed the issue of the Israeli regime's deadly aggression against the regional peoples, including the Palestinians and the Lebanese nations, which had led to the martyrdom of some of their high-ranking resistance figures.

"The martyrdom of [the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah's former secretary-general] Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah was not a small loss; the martyrdom of other commanders and forces of Hezbollah and [the Palestinian resistance movement] Hamas incurred heavy costs," he said.

"But all of this does not mean the disappearance of the resistance or even, in my opinion, its weakening. All of these were very important experiences that the resistance learned, and I am sure they will be useful in the future."



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