

TEHRAN -- The commander of the Islamic Republic of Iran Navy said Wednesday enemies should reconsider their policy toward West Asia, since the regional states are capable of ensuring their own security.

In an interview with Qatar's Al Jazeera TV network, Rear Admiral Shahram Irani, said the region is no longer what it used to be, adding the regional countries are equipped enough to ensure their safety. Irani said insecurity and instability in the region will have negative repercussions on the global economy.

MOSCOW (Reuters) -- The Kremlin said on Wednesday it was awaiting details from Washington about a proposal for a 30-day ceasefire in Ukraine, while senior Moscow sources said a deal would have to take account of Russia's advances and address its concerns.

The Kremlin said it was carefully studying the results of the meeting in Saudi Arabia and would await details from U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and White House National Security Adviser Mike Waltz.

Viewpoint

US, Israeli Hands in Pakistan Terrorist Attack Not Ruled Out

Nizami Remarkable Treasure of Persian Literature



Iranian Volleyballers Learn Fate at Champion League



Ex-War Minister: 15,000 Zionist Troops Killed, Wounded in Gaza



UAE Official Visits Tehran to Deliver Trump's Letter

Iran, China, Russia to Hold Talks in Beijing Friday

TEHRAN -- Deputy foreign ministers of Iran, China and Russia will meet in Beijing on Friday to discuss developments surrounding Tehran's nuclear program and the removal of sanctions, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei said Wednesday.

The negotiations have been arranged within the framework of Iran's constant consultations with various parties, the spokesman added.

The talks will also include issues of mutual concern for the three countries, regional and international developments, as well as co-operation through BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Baghaei said.

Ties between Iran and Russia have deepened, with a strategic cooperation treaty signed in January. Both have good relations with China.

China's Vice Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu will chair the meeting, Mao Ning, a spokesperson of its foreign ministry, told a regular press conference on Wednesday.

The meeting will follow a closed-door gathering of the United Nations Security Council in New York the same day regarding Iran's uranium enrichment.

Last week, Russia said Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov discussed Iran's nuclear program and the removal of sanctions with its ambassador, Kazem Jalali, after reports that Russia agreed to help U.S. President Donald Trump's administration in communicating with Iran.

Iran reached a deal, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, with Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States in 2015, that lifted sanctions on Tehran in return for curbs on its nuclear program.

But Washington quit the plan in 2018 during Trump's first term, and Iran began moving away from its nuclear-related commitments.

China has said it supports Iran in safeguarding its legitimate rights and calling for an early resumption of the Iranian nuclear talks.

A letter from Trump to Iran has been delivered by Anwar Gargash, diplomatic adviser to the president of the United Arab Emirates, Iran's foreign ministry spokesperson said on Wednesday.

Trump, who said last week he had sent a letter to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei proposing talks. The Leader promptly responded that Tehran would not be bullied into talks with "excessive demands" and threats.

On Tuesday, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said Tehran would not negotiate with threats hanging over its head, telling Trump in an outburst to "do what-

ever the hell you want".

Gargash met Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Wednesday, media reports said.

The UAE, one of Washington's key security partners and host to U.S. troops, also maintains warm ties with Tehran. Despite past tensions, business and trade links between the two countries have remained strong, with Dubai serving as a key commercial hub for Iran for more than a century.

In 2018, Trump exited Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers and reimposed sanctions that have harmed its economy.

Separately, Araghchi denounced a closed-door UN Security Council meeting on Wednesday about Iran's nuclear work as a new process that puts into question the goodwill of states requesting it.

Six of the council's 15 members - France, Greece, Panama, South Korea, Britain and the U.S. - requested the meeting over Iran's stock of uranium.

Araghchi said that Iran would soon have a fifth round of talks with France, Britain and Germany - parties to Iran's 2015 nuclear pact.

"Our talks with Europeans have been ongoing and will continue ... however, any decision by the UN Security Council or board of governors of the UN nuclear agency to pressure us will put under question the legitimacy of these talks," Araghchi said.

Leader: Trump's Offer of Talks a 'Deception'



This combo shows Ayatollah Khamenei addressing students during a meeting in Tehran Wednesday.

TEHRAN -- Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on Wednesday said U.S. President Trump's withdrawal from a nuclear deal in his first term renders diplomacy with him pointless, dismissing fresh overtures by Washington for a new agreement.

"The U.S. president saying 'we are ready to negotiate with Iran' and calling for negotiations is a deception aimed at misleading global public opinion," he told a group of students

visiting him here.

What this means is that the U.S. wants to portray itself as open to negotiations and making peace and Iran as not willing to accept it, the Leader added.

"What's the point of negotiating when we know he won't stick with it," Ayatollah Khamenei said, referring to a 2015 international nuclear deal from which Trump withdrew.

"We sat down and negotiated for several years, and this very person took the completed, fi-

nalized and signed agreement off the table and tore it up."

Ayatollah Khamenei said negotiations with the current U.S. administration will not lead to the lifting of sanctions, but "will make the knot of sanctions even tighter".

The Leader said while sanctions are not without impact, the bad state of the economy is not solely due to sanctions. "The cause of economic problems is more our own negligence than sanctions," he added.

Referring to Trump's threats, Ayatollah Khamenei said, "They say 'we will not let Iran obtain nuclear weapons'. If we wanted to make nuclear weapons, the U.S. could not stop us. But we do not seek nuclear weapons, and we have explained our reasons for this before."

He also touched on the U.S. leader's military threats, saying "Iran is not looking for war, but if the Americans and their agents take the wrong action, Iran's retaliation will be decisive and certain, and the one who will lose the most is the U.S."

Ayatollah Khamenei said Iran is the sole holdout in resisting the demands of the world's bullies.

"Today, the world's bullies say everyone must obey us and must put our interests ahead of their own, but Iran is the only country that has categorically rejected this."

The Leader also said the Islamic Republic has not been weakened by the loss of key political and military resistance figures in recent years, citing Iran's late president Ebrahim Raisi, Hezbollah chief Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah and Hamas leaders Ismail Haniyeh and Yahya Sinwar.

"The absence of these dear ones is a loss. The events that occurred (Continued on Page 7)

Warships Return to Chabahar at End of Trilateral Drill

TEHRAN -- China, Iran and Russia wrapped up a maritime drill after practicing night live-fire shooting and rescue operation of simulated hijacked commercial ships near Iran.

A Chinese expert said the exercise has boosted the three countries' naval capabilities in dealing with non-traditional security threats.

The return of the participating warships from the three countries to the Iranian port of Chabahar on Tuesday afternoon local time marked the successful completion of the maritime drill phase of the Security Belt-2025 joint exercise, China Bugle, an official media account affiliated with the Chinese People's Liberation Army's (PLA) news media center, reported on Wednesday.

The maritime drill phase was held in a region near Chabahar Port from Monday to Tuesday, featuring training courses such as maritime target strikes, VBSS (visit, board, search and seizure), damage control, as well as joint search and rescue operations, China Bugle reported.

According to a video released by the military channel of China Central Television (CCTV) on Wednesday, the exercise featured live-fire shooting of heavy machine guns against maritime targets, night live-fire shooting practices, light communication practices, rescuing simulated hijacked commercial ships and a fleet review.

Zhang Junshe, a Chinese military affairs expert, told the Global Times that the exercise has boosted the three navies' maritime combat capabilities through maritime strike and damage control trainings. The drill focused on non-traditional security threats, such as countering maritime terrorism and anti-piracy.

Routine joint exercises among the three sides continuously enhance their navies' interoperability, and the three sides' joint command and control as well as joint strike capabilities were displayed through the drill courses, Zhang said.

The Security Belt-2025 joint exercise kicked off on Sunday and is expected to conclude on Thurs-

day, according to a previous statement released by the PLA Navy on its official WeChat account. The exercise as a whole features three phases, an assembly and preparation phase, a maritime drill phase and a harbor summary phase.

The guided missile destroyer Baotou and the comprehensive replenishment ship Gaoyouhu from the PLA Navy's 47th escort task group took part in the exercise.

Iran sent more than 10 vessels of various types, including the Jamaran and Alvand destroyers, while Russia deployed ships including the Hero of the Russian Federation Aldar Tsydenzhapov and Rezky corvettes, according to the PLA Navy release. In addition, South Africa, Pakistan, Oman and other countries sent observers to participate in the exercise.

The aim of the exercise is to deepen mutual military trust and pragmatic cooperation among the participating countries' militaries, the PLA Navy said.

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (Continued on Page 7)

Yemen Reimposes Naval Blockade on Israeli Ships

SANA'A (Dispatches) -- The Yemeni Armed Forces (YAF) has reimposed a naval blockade on Israeli-linked ships in the Red Sea, Arab Sea, Bab al-Mandab Strait, and the Gulf of Aden.

In a statement released late Tuesday, the YAF said the move comes "after the expiry of the specified period of the deadline issued by Sayyid Abdul-Malik Badr al-Din al-Houthi, may God protect him, to the mediators to push and pressure the Israeli enemy to reopen the crossings and bring aid into the Gaza Strip."

"In view of the inability of the mediators to achieve this, the [YAF] confirms" the resumption of "the ban on the passage of all Israeli ships in the designated operational area of the Red and Arabian Seas, as well as Bab al-Mandab and the Gulf of Aden," the Yemeni army statement said.

"This ban shall take effect from the time of announcing this statement. Any Israeli ship attempting to violate this ban will be targeted in the declared area of operations. This ban will continue until the

crossings to the Gaza Strip are reopened and aid and food and medicine supplies are allowed to enter," it added.

At the start of Israel's genocidal campaign against the Gaza Strip in October 2023, the YAF - which is merged with Yemen's Ansarallah resistance movement - began maritime operations against Israeli-linked shipping in the Red Sea, over time expanding its attacks to the Mediterranean and other bodies of water.

As Israel's war dragged on, the Yemeni army coupled its maritime campaign with direct drone and missile attacks on Israel.

This prompted a violent campaign of U.S., UK, and later Israeli airstrikes on Yemen - which failed to deter the YAF from continuing its operations.

The announcement comes as Israel has been obstructing the Gaza ceasefire deal from moving forward by demanding an extension of its first phase and refusing to engage in talks for the agreement's second phase. It has also

(Continued on Page 7)