

Iran's UN envoy says Iranians will not 'sit on their hands' if they come under attack



New York, July 11 (RHC)-- Iran's ambassador to the United Nations says his country would not hesitate to respond to any military threat from the United States. Majid Takht-e Ravanchi told the BBC in an interview released on Wednesday that Iranians would not "sit on their hands" in case of an attack against the country amid escalating tensions over Iran's nuclear program.

The senior diplomat made the remarks while clarifying a position adopted by an Iranian military commander who said on Wednesday that U.S. military bases and aircraft carriers were within range of the country's missiles, and would be destroyed if the United States made any "mistake."

In his interview, Takht-e Ravanchi also touched upon a major international agreement on Iran's nuclear program which has been put in jeopardy since May 2018 when the U.S. unilaterally withdrew from the agreement.

He criticized the European parties to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), saying Britain, France and Germany have not compensated Iran for the damage it has received as a result of the U.S. withdrawal.

“Apparently, besides the U.S., the Europeans have not been up to the job and have not honored all their commitments up to now,” he said. Iran says it is not after fueling tensions and keeps the door open to diplomacy and talks despite Europe’s failure to uphold its commitments under a 2015 nuclear deal.

The diplomat, who himself was a member of the Iranian team in negotiations that led to the conclusion of the JCPOA in July 2015 in Vienna, said that Iran may move to the “third phase” of its measures to step up uranium enrichment to force the signatories to the JCPOA to offer economic benefits to Iran and save the deal.

“For the time being we are in the deal and we invite others to stay in the deal,” he said, adding, “We have said we are not going to honor the cap of 3.67 percent ... What will happen in the third phase we have not said it yet, but if we reach to that point, definitely we will announce beforehand.”

Tensions over Iran’s nuclear program increased earlier this week after Tehran announced that it would surpass a cap envisaged in the JCPOA for uranium enrichment.

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