

# Iranian foreign minister: John Bolton, Israel, Saudi Arabia, UAE want to 'Lure President Trump into confrontation' with Iran

Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif alleged Sunday that National Security Adviser John Bolton, Israel, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates intend to push President Donald Trump into conflict with Iran.

Zarif appeared for a pre-recorded interview on *Fox News Sunday* with host Chris Wallace to discuss the Trump administration's hardline stance against Iran and the Persian Gulf Nation's continued compliance with the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) - commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal.

The Iranian leader told Wallace that Trump's adviser Bolton, along with the leaders of Saudi Arabia, Israel and the UAE - which he dubbed the "B Team" - want to change the current regime governing his country.



Javad Zarif@JZarif

Appearing this Sunday on @FoxNewsSunday with Chris Wallace, and on @FaceTheNation with @margbrennan.

I explain the #B\_Team 's nefarious #ForeverWar plans for Iran, and why @realDonaldTrump should be aware of the divergence between his and their goals in West Asia.

"They have all shown an interest in dragging the United States into a conflict," he said. "I do not believe that President Trump wants to do that. I believe that President Trump ran on a campaign promise of not bringing the United States into another war." However, Zarif argued that the administration's effort to pressure Iran to change was "doomed to failure."

Later in the interview, Zarif said that he believed the "B Team wants to actually

push the United States, lure President Trump into confrontation that he doesn't want."

The foreign minister also pointed out that many U.S. allies and rivals alike are unhappy with the Trump administration's policies toward Iran, pointing to the JCPOA's other signatories as well as other regional nations.

France, Germany, the United Kingdom, the European Union, China and Russia all signed the 2015 treaty with Iran - as did the U.S., under then-President Barack Obama. The deal's other signatories have strongly criticized Trump's decision to withdraw from the agreement and have worked to circumvent reimposed U.S. sanctions on the Persian Gulf nation. Zarif also argued Sunday that Trump wanted to withdraw from the 2015 deal, because it was made under Obama's administration.

Bolton appeared with Wallace on Sunday to respond to Zarif's accusations. He dismissed the foreign minister's comments as "completely ridiculous," arguing that Zarif's remarks were a "carefully prepared propaganda script."

Following the airing of his interview on *Fox News Sunday*, Zarif tweeted out more criticism of Bolton. He said that Bolton and the "B Team" have "admitted to targeting them [the Iranian people] with #EconomicTerrorism —and even war— in a delusional pursuit of 'regime-change' [sic]." He asked if Trump would "let them realize their dreams of another #ForeverWar?"



President Donald Trump shakes hands with Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman at the White House on March 20, 2018 in Washington, D.C. MANDEL NGAN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

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As Zarif pointed out, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Israel have all been staunch critics of the Iran nuclear deal, which required the Islamic Republic to curb its nuclear program in exchange for relief from international sanctions. Saudi Arabia, which is closely allied with the UAE, and Israel have long viewed Iran as an arch regional rival. Bolton has also long been critical of the Iranian government.

Despite criticism of the 2015 treaty, the United Nations' nuclear watchdog has consistently found that Iran remains in compliance with the agreement, even after the withdrawal of the U.S. Trump's own Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats and CIA Director Gina Haspel acknowledged at the end of January that the Iran deal had effectively curbed the Persian Gulf country's nuclear capabilities. But the president responded by saying the intelligence chiefs should "go back to school."

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