

Iran's Khamenei: 'No war, no negotiations with the US'



Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei at the shrine of Imam Ridha in Mashhad, Iran. Khamenei.ir

Khamenei said economic woes were result of internal mismanagement by the govt. and not just US pressure.

Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said Monday that there would be neither war nor negotiations with the United States.

"Recently, U.S. officials have been talking blatantly about us. Beside sanctions, they are talking about war and negotiations," he said via his official Twitter account in English.

"In this regard, let me say a few words to the people: THERE WILL BE NO WAR, NOR WILL WE NEGOTIATE WITH THE U.S."

Meanwhile, there was a show of resolve as Defence Minister Amir Hatami

unveiled a next generation short-range ballistic missile on Monday and vowed to further boost the country's missile capabilities.

Last month, US President Donald Trump and his Iranian counterpart Hassan Rouhani engaged in bellicose rhetoric on Twitter.

“NEVER, EVER THREATEN THE UNITED STATES AGAIN OR YOU WILL SUFFER CONSEQUENCES THE LIKES OF WHICH FEW THROUGHOUT HISTORY HAVE EVER SUFFERED BEFORE. WE ARE NO LONGER A COUNTRY THAT WILL STAND FOR YOUR DEMENTED WORDS OF VIOLENCE & DEATH. BE CAUTIOUS!” Trump wrote on Twitter.

Trump's fiery exhort came in response to Rouhani's warning to the US leader not to “play with the lion's tail,” saying that conflict with Iran would be the “mother of all wars”.



US President Donald Trump warned that businesses and individuals that continue to work with Iran risk “severe” consequences
MANDEL NGAN (AFP)

The high-stakes verbal sparring is reminiscent of the exchanges Trump had last year with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, before tensions eased and the two leaders met this year in an historic summit.

But after months of fierce rhetoric, Trump surprised observers when he offered to meet with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani “any time”, without preconditions, as the United States reinstated sanctions against Iran this month.

- ‘Problems are internal ‘ -

There has been widespread speculation over whether Iran would be forced back to the negotiating table following Washington’s withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal and reimposition of sanctions.

But Iran has rejected fresh talks, saying the US can no longer be trusted after violating its commitments under the deal.

“As I have previously said, we cannot trust in the words of the United States and even in their signature, so negotiations with the United States are useless,” Khamenei told a gathering of Iranian diplomats last month.

Iran’s currency hit a record low of 100,000 rials to the dollar at the end of the month, having lost around half its value since April.

Despite renewed US sanctions, many Iranians — including many at the highest levels of the establishment — see US hostility as only a contributing factor to long-standing problems inside the country.

Addressing on Monday the troubling economic situation in Iran, Khamenei said it was the result of internal mismanagement by the government and not just US pressure.



Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei gestures during a rally in the capital Tehran on August 13, 2018 - (KHAMENEI.IR/AFP)

“Economic experts and many officials believe the cause of this issue is not foreign, it’s internal,” he said in a speech in Tehran, according to tweets released on his official account.

“Not that sanctions don’t have an impact, but the main factor is how we handle them. If our performance is better, more prudent, timely and effective, sanctions will not have that much effect and can be resisted,” he explained.

The speech was not immediately televised. They are usually broadcast later in the day.

There have been widespread protests and strikes in recent weeks over high prices, unemployment and the wider management of the economy.

Analysts say US hostility, including its withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal and reimposition of sanctions, helped fuel the run on Iran’s rial. But many say it has only exacerbated long-standing problems within Iran — and pressure has mounted from within the system on President Hassan Rouhani to improve his

management of the economy and tackle corruption.

With the nuclear deal crumbling, Rouhani finds himself with little to show for his five years in power and increasingly under fire from all sides.

Although the other parties to the agreement — Britain, France, Germany, China and Russia — have vowed to resist US sanctions, many foreign companies have already abandoned projects in Iran for fear of US penalties.

A significant cut in oil sales is also expected when the US reimposes a second phase of sanctions in November — with some analysts estimating a drop of 700,000 barrels per day from its current level of 2.3 million.

State news agency IRNA reported on Monday that Iran is offering oil and gas at a discount to Asian customers in a bid to retain sales.

Source: <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/international/middle-east/181663-180813-iran-s-khamenei-no-war-no-negotiations-with-the-us>

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