
EUROPE, RUSSIA WEIGH IN ON IRANIAN MISSILES AS UNSC TO MEET

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European and Russian officials weighed in on the legality of Irans missile tests, after the U.S. called for an emergency United Nations Security Council meeting to discuss a reported launch.

Nabila Massrali, spokeswoman for EU foreign-policy chief Federica Mogherini, told reporters in Brussels that the Iranian ballistic-missile program was not part of the 2015 nuclear pact with world powers and hence the tests are not a violation of it. She said it was up to the top UN body to determine if they contravened its resolution 2231 on ballistic technology.

Russias deputy foreign minister, Sergei Ryabkov, ruled that out, saying the resolution calls on Iran only to abstain from launching missiles able to carry nuclear warheads, Interfax reported. Russia is confident Iran has no nuclear weapons program, he said.

The comments come amid concerns over the threat posed by U.S. President Donald Trump to hard-won, multi-party diplomatic agreements with Iran. During the election campaign, Trump vowed to scrap or renegotiate the 2015 nuclear accord that lifted global economic sanctions on the Islamic Republic in return for curbs and safeguards on its nuclear program. He hasnt repeated those pledges since entering the White House but included Iran in the list of seven majority Muslim nations whose citizens are banned from entering the U.S.

Vocal Opponent

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu -- another of the nuclear accords most vocal opponents -- said Monday he will bring up renewed sanctions on Iran when he meets with Trump at the White House next month, citing the reported ballistic missile testing.

In my coming meeting with President Trump, I plan to raise the resumption of sanctions against Iran in this context and in other contexts, Netanyahu said on Twitter. Iranian aggression will not go unanswered. Netanyahu will visit the U.S. on Feb. 15, White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer said at his daily briefing Monday, when he also said the U.S. was aware of an Iranian missile launch.

In Tehran on Tuesday, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif didnt confirm a test and said Iran was fully complying with its obligations under the 2015 accord struck with the U.S., three European nations, Russia and China.

Irans missile program has nothing to do with the nuclear agreement, Zarif said at a joint press conference with his French counterpart, Jean-Marc Ayrault. We will not use our weapons against anyone unless its in our own defense.

Germanys Foreign Ministry said the reports of a missile test give reason for serious concern and

are in the nations view incompatible with resolution 2231. What we need are de-escalation, confidence-building and a constructive Iranian role in in the resolution of regional conflicts.

Kaynak/Source: