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Success of Japan's initiative depends on seven factors: Ex-nuclear negotiator

Tehran, June 9, IRNA -- Former Iranian nuclear negotiator Hossein Mousavian said on Sunday that success of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's diplomatic initiative is interdependent on seven factors.

We should call this week “Iranian diplomacy week”. It seems that Iran’s strategic patience after the US withdrawal from the international treaty on Iran nuclear programme, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and Washington’s “maximum pressure” is bearing fruit.

On the one hand, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif’s recent moves, negotiations and international visits has breathed life into Iran’s diplomatic apparatus. On the other hand, Tehran's partial cutback of some of its voluntary commitments within the deal, has made the US, that believed Iran hasn’t got many options on the table, to acknowledge the truth.

And now, US President Donald Trump has been hard at work to get the message of negotiations across from each tribune and to form a coalition of mediating countries in this regard. Also, the Europeans are sending German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas to come up with a late solution.

However, the most important diplomatic manoeuvre this week is Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s three-day (June 12-14) visit to Iran. IRNA has talked to former diplomat and Princeton University visiting research scholar Seyyed Hossein Mousavian, who was once part of the Iranian nuclear negotiating team, about Japanese PM’s visit, its possible success and results.

The Japanese PM will visit Iran for the first time during the last 40 years. What do you make of this trip?

The nature of a visit by head of the Japanese government to Iran is positive and demonstrates how effective the Iranian diplomacy is. Japan, which is among the five world big economic powers, has been and continues to be Iran’s important trade partner.

One of the items on the agenda of Shinzo Abe’s visit is to reduce tensions between Tehran and Washington with diplomatic initiative. What has made the Japanese accept such a mediatory role? What do they want to achieve by playing this role?

Japan follows has a good-faith agenda in line with global community interests to mediate between the US and Iran. Among world powers, Japan has closest relations with the US. The country’s relations with Iran are also based on mutual respect, common interests, non-interference and constructive cooperation, so Japan enjoys a good status in taking such an initiative.

Apart from Japan, other countries have also been seeking mediation during their recent visits to Iran but they haven't had much success seemingly. Can Tokyo play this role between Iran and the US?

The fact that some countries haven't been successful in their mediation missions isn't a good sign as it means an escalation of tensions. There isn't any guarantee that the Japanese PM can also succeed as the Iranian condition is that the US return to the JCPOA. Also, Trump's mere return to the nuclear agreement without any other concessions will be a big international and internal political suicide for the US, that is why, there is no chance.

What has made Trump to ask the Japanese PM to mediate?

It's clear that the Japanese PM wouldn't visit to Iran without Trump's green light. Trump hadn't asked him to do so. It was Shinzo Abe's own proposal with which Trump agreed.

Can we consider Trump's request for talks with Tehran as a sign that Trump has backtracked from pursuing his "maximum pressure" campaign?

It would be naive to come to such a conclusion that Trump has backtracked. From day one, he had proposed direct talks without preconditions with Iran and as Tehran rejected that, the US president has increased its pressures and sanctions in a way that his "maximum pressure" campaign has had the biggest effects and pressures on the current Iranian government that have been unprecedented during the past 40 years. "Increasing the pressures" and "repeating the offer of talks" is a calculated and planned strategy against Iran.

What would be the Japanese PM's initiatives in his mediating mission to keep both Iran and the US content?

Shinzo Abe's success would depend on seven factors:

Iran has always been insisting on mutual respect, non-interference, respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity. These are the same concepts of the UN Charter that member states need to respect in their mutual ties. The international community accepts such principals as well, that is, the US has to abide by them in its relations with Iran.

Multi-dimensional solutions have a higher chance of success. For example, security in the Persian Gulf as well as secure passage of energy from there is very vital for Japan. The Japanese PM can propose a long list of cooperation between the Persian Gulf states to the US, Iran, regional countries, world powers and the United Nations Security Council. This initiative will be within the framework of article 8 of the UNSC Resolution 598 that can

help ease tensions between Iran and the US, stop the Saudi-Iranian animosity, alleviate concerns about an imminent conflict, and pave the way for regional cooperation that would be aimed at resolving current crises in the Middle East. Also, such an initiative will be welcomed by world powers such as China, EU, Russia and India.

Trump should be able to leave out US radical war-mongering forces that are influential on his policies on Iran. Otherwise they will block his efforts.

Trump should bar the interference by Israel and the Arab front, led by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in its relations with the Iran and prohibit them from making the White House policies.

The US should first stop the growing trend of sanctions and making problems for countries economically, especially exporting petroleum, financial and banking ties as well as get prepared for come-back to the JCPOA as progress is made.

In case these five elements are successfully implemented, Tehran should also be prepared for the containing the animosity with the US and enter a conciliatory path.

The final solution should bring about a win-win situation both for Trump and Tehran because it's impossible that either of the sides give up to the other.

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