



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on January 29, 2019

Iran to Change Military Status to “Offensive,” Says Chief of Staff

Speaking to reporters on January 27, Major General Mohammad Bagheri (who is chief of staff of the Iranian Armed Forces) announced that Iran would change its defense strategy to “offensive” to defend its national interests. And the following day, Brigadier General Hossein Salami, the deputy head of Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, told Iranian news outlets, “Our strategy is to erase Israel from the global political map.”



Bagheri emphasized that Iran has no intention of launching an offensive attack on any other country, explaining that “our defense strategy is to protect the independence, territorial integrity and national interests of our country.”

However, said Bagheri, should Iran’s policymakers detect any sign or evidence of any imminent attack against its territory, it would adopt an offensive approach in confronting it. He hinted at the possibility of preemptive strikes against any foreign forces that Iran considers to be a threat.

“If there is any intention of attack against our interests, and we see evidence of it, we will not remain passive and allow the country’s security and peace to be threatened,” Bagheri warned.

Bagheri stressed that Iran’s military posture is “defensive, not impulsive,” and stated that switching to an offensive approach does not mean violating, attacking, or having an interest in the territory of any other country.

Britain’s *Express* newspaper reported that, following Bagheri’s statement, another Iranian official, foreign ministry spokesman Bahram Qasemi, warned France that Iran would not be compromising its missile policy. Qasemi said:

Our missile program is a defensive program that we only discuss ... inside the country. I cannot confirm holding any secret talks with France over our missile program. We talk about regional and political issues with France but our missile capability is not negotiable.... We have repeatedly said that during our political talks with France.

The *Express* noted that a UN Security Council resolution that enforced Iran’s 2015 nuclear deal with the major powers “called upon” Tehran to refrain for eight years from work on ballistic missiles designed to deliver nuclear weapons.

Iran has said its missile tests are not in violation of the resolution and denies its missiles are capable of carrying nuclear warheads.

President Trump exited that deal in May and reimposed sanctions on Iran that had been lifted under the pact in return for Tehran curbing its nuclear program.

The *Times of Israel* reported on January 28 that General Salami, when asked by a reporter in Tehran



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about Israeli threats to strike Iranian forces deployed in Syria, said, “Our strategy is to erase Israel from the global political map. And it seems that, considering the evil that Israel is doing, it is bringing itself closer to that.”

Salami added: “We announce that if Israel does anything to start a new war, it will obviously be the war that will end with its elimination, and the occupied territories will be returned. The Israelis will not have even a cemetery in Palestine to bury their own corpses.”

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