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Iran against reconciliation package in Afghanistan

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Iran has come out strongly against a reconciliation package for the Taliban in Afghanistan. "We don't believe in good or bad Taliban," Iranian envoy Seyed Mehdi Nabizadeh said.

Saying that Iran did not want extremists to run the country, Nabizadeh stressed that the neighbouring countries "were duty bound to provide peace and stability in Afghanistan".

"From 2001, foreign forces have been in Afghanistan, with three aims: stop growing narcotics, fight terror and establish security in the region. As you know, none of these have been realised," he said.

Nabizadeh also weighed in on India-Pakistan relations, saying they could facilitate if asked but they thought bilateral negotiations were best suited. "We have always welcomed direct negotiations between India and Pakistan. We feel direct negotiations will succeed much faster," Nabizadeh said. "Iran, being a friend of India and Pakistan, can play a role in facilitating the negotiations if there is any need," the envoy added.

He also said that Iran continued to receive refined petroleum from Reliance even though there was a strong possibility that countries supplying refined petroleum to Iran might face US sanctions. "From our point of view, Reliance stopping gasoline exports to Iran is not correct," he said.

On Afghanistan, Nabizadeh said the Moscow and Istanbul conferences had been useful but Iran did not go to the London conference. "Regional countries and neighbouring countries can play a more constructive role in Afghanistan," he said.