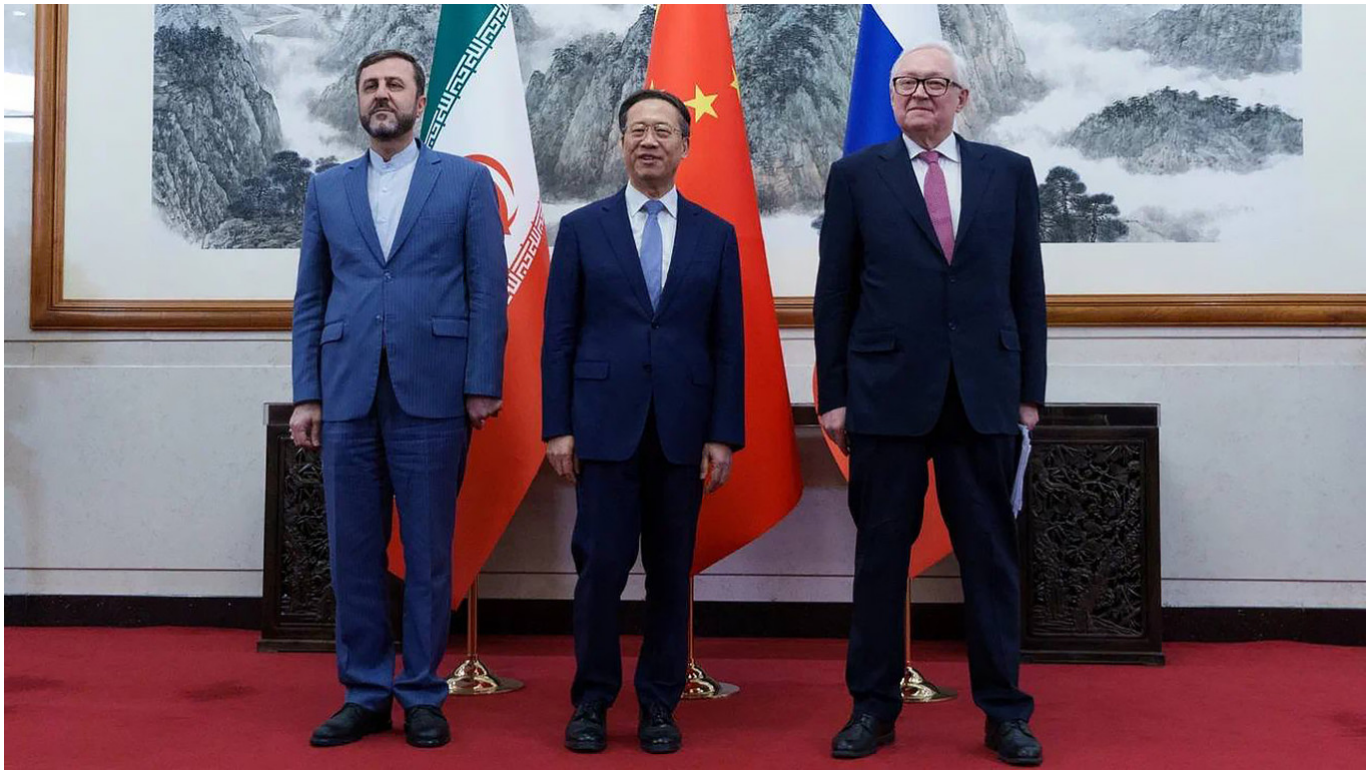
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Russia and China Urge Lifting Sanctions From Iran After Nuclear Talks in Beijing

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Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi, China's Deputy Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov. **t.me/MID_Russia**

Russia and China called for lifting sanctions from Iran and reiterated support for Tehran's claim that its nuclear program is meant for peaceful uses, the three countries said in a joint statement following high-level talks in Beijing on Friday.

China's Deputy Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu met with Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov amid tensions over Iran's uranium enrichment.

The UN's nuclear watchdog recently reported that Iran had significantly increased its stockpile of uranium enriched to 60% purity, just below the 90% needed for a nuclear weapon.

"The three countries... stressed the need to fully respect Iran's right to peaceful uses of

nuclear energy," the joint statement read, while also condemning "unlawful unilateral sanctions."

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Iran's ambassador to China later called the meeting a "complete success" and said the countries had agreed to "cooperate in confronting" U.S. sanctions.

The talks came days after Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian rejected what he described as U.S. President Donald Trump's "orders" to negotiate a new nuclear deal or face military action.

Since returning to office in January, Trump has revived his "maximum pressure" campaign against Tehran, tightening sanctions while urging new negotiations. Iran maintains that no agreement is possible without sanctions relief.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Friday that "it is necessary to further continue diplomatic efforts" on Iran's nuclear program and condemned sanctions against Tehran as "illegal."

Russia and Iran have expanded military cooperation in recent years, with Tehran supplying drones used against Ukraine as both countries face Western sanctions.

AFP contributed reporting.

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