

U.S. VOWS TO USE ALL MEANS TO STOP IRAN NUCLEAR BOMB

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Strong bond:U.S. President Joe Biden and Israeli PM Yair Lapid signing a joint declaration in Jerusalem on Thursday.APEvan Vucci

The U.S. and Israel signed a new security pact on Thursday reinforcing their common front against Iran, as President Joe Biden pledged to use “all” American power to stop the Islamic republic from acquiring nuclear weapons.

The Jerusalem Declaration on joint security was inked by Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid and Biden, as the U.S. leader was making his first trip to West Asia as President.

It commits the United States to “never to allow Iran to acquire a nuclear weapon”, stating that it “is prepared to use all elements of its national power to ensure that outcome”.

‘Can’t wait forever’

A landmark deal that imposed curbs on Iran’s suspect nuclear programme in exchange for sanctions relief was torpedoed in 2018 by former U.S. president Donald Trump. Efforts to revive the accord have been stalled since March.

Asked on Thursday how long the U.S. was prepared to give those efforts, Mr. Biden said “we’re not going to wait forever” for a response from the Islamic republic.

Israel, which has West Asia’s sole but undeclared nuclear arsenal, is staunchly opposed to the deal with Iran, which has always denied seeking the bomb.

Mr. Lapid warned “words” and “diplomacy” were not enough to thwart Iran’s alleged nuclear ambitions.

“Diplomacy will not stop them. The only thing that will stop Iran is knowing that if they continue to develop their nuclear programme the free world will use force. The only way to stop them is to put a credible military threat on the table,” Mr. Lapid told reporters alongside Mr. Biden.

Harsh response: Iran

Reacting to the pact, Iran warned the United States and its allies on Thursday against undermining regional security.

“I tell the Americans and their regional allies that the Iranian nation will not accept any crisis or insecurity in the region, and that any mistake made in this region will be met with a harsh and regrettable response,” Iran’s President Ebrahim Raisi said in televised remarks.

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