

Amid Trump threats, senior Iran general says his forces ‘ready to confront’ U.S.



A handout picture provided by the Iranian presidency on July 22, 2018 shows President Hassan Rouhani attending a meeting with foreign ministry officials in Tehran. (Photo: -, AFP/Getty Images)

Trump was responding to Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, who had said earlier that day that “American(s) must understand well that peace with Iran is the mother of all peace and war with Iran is the mother of all wars.”

Rouhani had cautioned Trump to stop “playing with the lion’s tail or else you will regret it.” His comments came as Washington prepares to reimpose economic sanctions on Iran on August 6 after its withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear accord. Thursday’s reaction from Soleimani comes after Rouhani said Wednesday that there was no need for him to “respond to any nonsensical” remarks from Trump.

Soleimani said it was his duty as a soldier to reply to Trump’s rhetoric. “We are near you, where you can’t even imagine. We are ready,” Soleimani said in his

speech.

Since taking office, Trump has developed a reputation for firing off heated tweets that seem to escalate disputes with world leaders at odds with the U.S. However, following Sunday's warning, Trump suggested talks were an option.

"We're ready to make a real deal," he said.

In the wake of Trump's comments on Iran, foreign policy analysts said they were not sure if the president was deliberately seeking a confrontation with Iran or just trying to change the subject politically following fallout from last week's meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Trump was widely criticized at home and abroad for failing to stand up to Russia's leader over allegation of his country's meddling in the U.S. election.

USA TODAY's Kim Hjelmgaard recently returned from a trip to Iran. A special report on the country will be published in August. Follow him on Twitter.

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