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Pakistan Defends Iran's Envoy as Respected Diplomat After FBI's Most Wanted Listing

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Pakistan has staunchly defended Iran's ambassador to Islamabad, Reza Amiri Moghadam, after the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) placed him on its Most Wanted list for his alleged role in the 2007 disappearance of a retired FBI agent. This article examines Pakistan's stance, the diplomatic implications, and the broader geopolitical tensions surrounding the case.

On July 16, 2025, the FBI named Moghadam, along with two other Iranian officials, in connection with the abduction of Robert A. “Bob” Levinson, who vanished on Iran’s Kish Island in 2007. The FBI alleges that Moghadam, then a senior official in Iran’s Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS), orchestrated the operation and subsequent cover-up. Pakistan’s Foreign Office (FO) spokesperson Shafqat Ali Khan responded by emphasizing that “the ambassador of Iran is widely respected for his role in promoting Pakistan-Iran relations,” underscoring his diplomatic immunity. Levinson, a retired FBI agent, was reportedly on an unauthorized Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) mission at the time of his disappearance, adding complexity to the case.

Pakistan’s defense of Moghadam highlights its commitment to maintaining strong ties with Iran, a key regional neighbor. The FO dismissed the FBI’s accusations as unrelated to Moghadam’s current diplomatic role. However, the FBI’s announcement, which includes a reward of up to \$25 million for information, has escalated tensions between the U.S. and Iran, especially following the recent 12-day Iran-Israel conflict in 2025. Senator Jim Risch, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, vowed to hold those responsible for Levinson’s abduction accountable, framing the issue as a matter of justice.

The timing of the FBI’s listing raises questions amid faltering U.S.-Iran nuclear negotiations and an approaching August 2025 deadline for a new agreement. Observers suggest the move may serve as a pressure tactic rather than purely a legal pursuit. Pakistan finds itself in a delicate position, needing to balance its alliance with Iran while maintaining important relations with the United States. The government’s priority

should be transparency and regional stability, ensuring that diplomatic ties are not sacrificed amid superpower rivalries.