

Leader rules out talks with US as 'not smart, wise, or honorable'



Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei speaks in a meeting with Iran's Air Force personnel held on the occasion of the 46th anniversary of Iran's Islamic Revolution in Tehran on February 3, 2025.
● khamenei.ir

International Desk
Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali

Khamenei said that talks with the United States would not solve the country's problems, stressing that such negotiations

are "not smart, wise, or honorable." Over the past months, there have been speculations over the

resumption of talks between Iran and the US on Tehran's nuclear program after the new Iranian government took office last July and US President Donald Trump started a second term in the White House last month. Ayatollah Khamenei made the statement in a meeting with Iran's Air Force personnel on Friday, which was held on the occasion of the 46th anniversary of Iran's Islamic Revolution. His remarks came after Trump said this week that he would "love to make a deal" with Iran over its nuclear program while he reimposed his maximum pressure policy against Tehran. Trump said he would like to start working on a "verified nuclear peace agreement" with the Islamic Republic. During his first term in office in 2018, the US president pulled his country out of Tehran's 2015 nuclear pact with world powers and illegally reimposed

crippling sanctions on Iran. "Negotiating with America is neither smart, wise, or honorable. It will not solve any of our problems. The reason? Experience!" Ayatollah Khamenei said. Iran reached an agreement with the US and other countries after two years of talks, he said, but the Americans did not adhere to it despite Iran's many concessions. "The person in charge tore it up," said Khamenei, referring to Trump. Before Trump, even the US administration which had accepted the agreement, did not comply with it, the Leader said, referring to the government of president Barack Obama which had signed it. Ayatollah Khamenei also warned that the country would reciprocate if the US threatened or carried out actions against Iran. "If they threaten us, we will threaten them. If they carry out

this threat, we will carry out our threat. If they attack the security of our nation, we will attack their security without hesitation," the Leader said. In 2015, Iran and world powers inked the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) that saw the easing of international sanctions on Tehran in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program. But the US unilaterally withdrew from the landmark accord in 2018 and reimposed economic sanctions. Tehran adhered to the deal until Washington's withdrawal, and then began rolling back on its commitments after the parties to the deal failed to fulfil their commitments under the agreement. However, Iran's new administration has repeatedly said that the government is ready for negotiations on an equal footing to resolve tensions over Iran's nuclear program.

Iran chastises new US sanctions as 'unjustified'

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry's spokesman Esmail Baqaei strongly condemned the US new sanctions against Iran, calling them "unjustified" and "contrary to international rules."

Baqaei made the remarks after the US Department of the Treasury on Thursday announced financial bans on an international network "facilitating the shipment of millions of barrels of Iranian crude oil worth hundreds of millions of dollars" to China.

The department's Office of Foreign Assets Control sanctioned more than a dozen people and companies in China, India and the United Arab Emirates. The targets include Iranian and Indian citizens, crew management firms and a collection of ships.

They were the first US sanctions on Iran's oil after US President Donald Trump this week vowed to bring Iran's crude exports to zero.

Treasury said it imposed blocking sanctions on the Panama-flagged CH Billion tanker and the Hong Kong-flagged Star Forest tanker for their role in shipping Iranian oil to China.

The US said the tankers "onboarded" Iranian crude from storage in China as part of a scheme involving Iran's military, which stands to profit from the sale of the oil.



Esmail Baqaei
● IRNA

The sanctions block access of the individuals and entities to any of their assets in the United States and prohibit US foreign assistance.

"The decision of the new US government to exert pressure on the Iranian nation by preventing Iran's legal trade with its economic partners is an illegitimate, illegal and violative measure," Iran's Foreign Ministry's spokesman said in a statement.

The sanctions came after Trump reinstated his "maximum pressure" policy against Iran over allegations the country is seeking to develop nuclear weapons.

Iran insists its nuclear program is solely for peaceful purposes and denies any intention to develop atomic weapons.

Iran has slammed the reinstatement of the policy – similar to one Trump levied against Tehran during his first term as president – saying pursuing it would end in "failure." Oil prices rose in early trading after the new US sanctions against Iran. Brent crude was up 0.9% at \$75 a barrel, while WTI added 0.8% to \$71.18 a barrel. The sanctions target entities and individuals in China, India and the UAE, as well as several vessels, according to the Treasury Department.

Still, crude prices are headed for weekly losses after days of volatile trading, with demand concerns in focus amid a bigger-than-expected rise in US crude stockpiles, Trump's tariffs on China and push for increased domestic production.

First indigenous drone-carrier warship launched

International Desk

Iran inaugurated its first homemade drone-carrier warship in a ceremony on Thursday, saying the vessel is capable of operating in oceans far from its mainland. The vessel, which joined the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) naval fleet in the Persian Gulf, can carry several squadrons of drones as well as helicopters and cruise missiles.

Named after Bahman Bagheri, an IRGC commander martyred in the 1980s war with Iraq, the warship is capable of deploying multiple drone squadrons, launching and recovering unmanned combat aircraft, and operating various reconnaissance and strike drones.

With a 180-meter-long runway for drones, the vessel can travel up to 22,000 nautical miles without needing to refuel in ports. The vessel has been converted from a commercial ship and would increase Iran's power of deterrence.

IRGC Commander Hossein Salami said at the ceremony that the warship can travel "independently" in seas for up to one year.

Iran needs to increase its deterrence capacity to prevent war, he said, stressing that Iran does not wish to wage war with any country.

"Iran is not considered a threat to any



The photo shows the first Iranian drone carrier called Shahid Bagheri during a launch ceremony in the Persian Gulf, Iran, on February 2, 2025.
● SEPAH NEWS

country, but we do not bow before threat by any power," Salami said.

Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri, the commander of the IRGC Navy, said in addition to its military capabilities, the Shahid Baqeri warship is equipped with specialized medical facilities, including an operating room, a coronary care unit, radiology and dental services. It also enjoys sports facilities, including a multi-purpose sports hall and a gym.

He emphasized that the addition of this warship to the IRGC Navy fleet is a significant step in increasing Iran's defense and deterrent capabilities in distant waters and securing the country's national interests.

Iran has long vowed to boost its presence on seas worldwide.

Pezeshkian says verifying ...

Iran should find a way to step forward and break the deadlock instead of shying away from talks. It should take the initiative and see where Trump really stands. While he may start off with a hardline stance, it is unlikely he will stick to his maximum demands. At the end of the day, he wants to walk away saying, "I stopped Iran from going nuclear." Diplomacy is all about dialogue, not playing the middleman game—passing messages through third parties will not cut it with Trump. If Iran wants to hammer out a deal with the US, it should engage directly. The higher the level

of negotiations, the better Iran's national interests will be served. There are other players eager to throw a wrench in any potential US-Iran deal. If Tehran opens direct talks with the US, it could weaken the positions of its regional rivals, including Turkey, Russia, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. These countries have no interest in seeing Iran grow stronger and are deeply uneasy about the prospect of US-Iran talks. Even some of Iran's neighbors—such as Azerbaijan and Taliban-controlled Afghanistan—might try to stir up trouble. Issues like the UAE's territorial claims over Iran's

three islands in the Persian Gulf tend to surface whenever Iran finds itself in a vulnerable position. Stepping into direct negotiations with the US would significantly boost Iran's geopolitical clout. If Iran can secure a favorable deal, its strategic standing will rise, strengthening its economy and improving people's livelihoods. The more public satisfaction grows and economic pressure eases, the stronger Iran's position in the region will become. In short, if Iran manages to reach a deal and stabilize its economy, its geopolitical weight in the region will undoubtedly soar.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

