

Direct talks with US 'pointless' under pressure: Araghchi

'Iran ready to try path of indirect negotiations'

International Desk

Iran's foreign minister once again dismissed direct negotiations with the United States on Iran's nuclear program, describing it as pointless due to the Washington's threats and pressure.

Since taking office in January, the US President Donald Trump has repeatedly called for talks with Iran to reach an agreement on its nuclear issue.

At the same time, he has threatened Iran with bombing if an agreement is not finalized between the two sides.

Trump sent a letter to the Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei last month calling for negotiations.

On Thursday, the US president said he favored "direct talks," and argued that they were "faster" and offered a better understanding than going through intermediaries.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Saturday that direct talks made no sense with a country "that constantly threatens to resort to force in violation of the UN Charter and that expresses contradictory positions from its various officials."

"We remain committed to diplomacy and are ready to try the path of indirect negotiations," he underlined during a ceremony on the occasion of Iran's new year, in which ambassadors and envoys from foreign countries attended.

On Saturday, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said his country was willing to engage in dialogue with the United States on an "equal footing."

He also questioned Washington's sincerity in calling for negotiations, saying, "If you want negotiations, then what is the point of threatening?"

Iran and the United States have had no diplomatic relations short-

ly after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, with some regional countries like Oman playing a mediating role between the two sides.

In 2015, the country reached a landmark deal with the permanent members of the UN Security Council, namely the United States, France, China, Russia, and the United Kingdom, as well as Germany, on its nuclear activities.

The agreement provided sanctions relief in exchange for curbs on Iranian nuclear activities.

In 2018, during Trump's first term in office, the US withdrew from the agreement and reinstated sanctions on Iran. In response, Iran rolled back on its commitments under the agreement and accelerated its nuclear program.

Western countries including the US have long accused Iran of pursuing a nuclear weapon, which Tehran has denied, insisting its enrichment activities were solely for peaceful purposes.



Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi speaks during a ceremony on the occasion of the Iranian New Year at the country's Foreign Ministry in Tehran on April 5, 2025. mfa.gov.ir

Top general: Iran not seeking war, nor will stand bullying

International Desk

Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Bagheri said the Islamic Republic is not seeking war, but will not tolerate bullying and coercion and will stand up to it.

Bagheri made the remarks in a meeting with commanders, managers, and the personnel of the Armed Forces' general staff and the Khatam Al-Anbiya Central Headquarters on Sunday.

He said that Iran's strategy is to defend its own interests and to move towards its outlined plans. His remarks came as the US President Donald Trump has repeatedly threatened Iran with bombing if an agreement is not reached between the two sides over Iran's nuclear program.

Pointing to the content of Iran's response to a recent letter from Trump to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution over talks on Iran's nuclear program, Bagheri said Iran's response stressed that, "We seek peace in the region."

"We are not the ones who start wars, but we will respond to any threat with all our might," Bagheri



Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Bagheri speaks in a meeting with commanders and the personnel of the Armed Forces' general staff in Tehran, Iran, on April 6, 2025. IRNA

eri said of the content of Iran's response.

Iran knows 'formulas for defeating enemy': Salami

The chief commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) also said on Saturday that Iran has learnt formulas for defeating the enemy and will never back down even "one step" if threatened.

"We are absolutely not concerned about a war. We will not initiate a war but are ready for any war," Major General Hossein Salami said in a meeting with senior IRGC commanders and managers on Saturday.

"We are prepared for both sce-

narios of the enemy's psychological operation or military action. However, we will not take a single step back in the face of the enemy," he added.

Based on its false assumptions about Iran's deterrent power, the enemy seeks to force Tehran to choose between the two options of confrontation and acceptance of the enemy's conditions, he noted.

The IRGC chief emphasized that the Israeli regime is vulnerable because its interests are sprawling and within Iran's reach everywhere.

"We have acquired the know-how and formulas to overcome this enemy and have incorpo-

rated them into all elements of our weaponry and equipment," he said.

He stressed that Iran has the necessary hardware and software at its disposal to defeat the Israeli regime despite the United States' absolute support.

He warned adversaries to avoid miscalculations, as Iran's expanding influence and enduring capabilities remain a formidable force.

"We have accumulated capabilities and can reach and target the enemy, and we are ready to demonstrate our true capabilities," he emphasized.

He said Iran's "successful" retaliatory operations against Israel, dubbed Operation True Promise I and II, last year served as just one example of Iran's military capabilities.

Salami emphasized that despite Israel's multi-layered missile systems, 581 of the Iranian missiles landed in the occupied territories.

The two operations, carried out using hundreds of ballistic missiles and drones, showcased Iran's ability to strike sensitive Israeli military and intelligence targets with surgical accuracy.

IAEA chief says plans to visit Iran to prevent escalation with US

International Desk

Chief of the UN nuclear agency said his visit to Tehran in the coming weeks is to reduce the possibility of a confrontation between Iran and the United States over Iran's nuclear program.

In an interview with Argentinian TV channel La Nacion, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Grossi warned that the military confrontation between Iran and the US could have catastrophic and dangerous consequences that must be prevented.

"To avoid any misunderstanding, I emphasize: Iran does not have nuclear weapons," he said.

Grossi, who had previously announced his possible plan to visit Iran in April, stressed that Iran does not have nuclear weapons, claiming, however, that Tehran has obtained many of the items and pieces of the puzzle to build a nuclear weapon.

"Iran has produced the necessary amount of nuclear mate-

rial to make a nuclear bomb. To build a bomb or a nuclear warhead, you need many components. But the most important element, the one that gives the bomb its destructive power, is enriched uranium," he said.

Referring to Iran's enriched uranium stockpile, the IAEA chief said, "I don't want to get too technical, but Iran has enough enriched uranium to make six or seven nuclear weapons. But once again, I emphasize: Iran does not currently have nuclear weapons." "In my view, we are at a moment where we need to move forward. Yesterday, upon arriving in Buenos Aires, I spoke with Iran's foreign minister and we agreed that I will travel to Iran in the coming weeks," Grossi said.

"In my conversation with the Iranian foreign minister, we also agreed that Iran should clarify as soon as possible the matters that have remained ambiguous, so that we can reduce the possibility of any confrontation. Any confrontation would be devastating."

Iran-US talks ...

In any negotiations, Iran must stand its ground and ensure the enemy does not trample over its rights. Such a stance would itself keep the adversary from daring to suggest military conflict.

Extreme caution must be exercised regarding Trump's proposals. Those on Iran's negotiation team must take care not to give away too much in indirect talks with Washington.

Saving face and building trust

By Sina Azodi
GWU professor

There are several reasons why Iran insists on keeping talks indirect. One key argument, especially after the US pulled out of the JCPOA, is that

formal talks should remain indirect. However, the more compelling reason is likely concern over appearances. Iran does not want to come off as having been strong-armed into negotiations under threat.

One benefit of indirect talks is that it allows Iran to signal that it is entering discussions of its own volition—not because it was backed into a corner.

Another issue that looms large is the deep distrust between Iran and the United States. Employing a neutral go-between like Oman—long respected for its role as a mediator between the two—could help bridge the trust gap.

As for whether the US will go along with indirect talks, that remains uncertain. One thing is clear about

Trump: he is obsessed with media coverage and soaking up the spotlight. He likes to present himself as the man who struck a deal. If indirect talks succeed and Trump claims credit, then the door may open for direct talks—which would suit him just fine.

But will Trump walk back his demands? It is hard to say whether his team will shift gears. Right now, there is a clear split inside the White House: on one side is Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff, focusing on oversight of Iran's nuclear program; on the other is his national security adviser Mike Waltz, demanding a total dismantling of Iran's missile and nuclear activities.

It seems Trump himself would rather zero in on Iran's nuclear work.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

