

# Iran's economy could be opened up to American firms: *Araghchi*

'Iranian market large enough to breathe new life into struggling US nuclear industry'



Abbas Araghchi  
● AFP

## International Desk

Iran's top diplomat reiterated that the country's trillion-dollar economic opportunity could be opened up to Amer-

ican companies as the two sides have begun negotiations to settle a dispute over Iran's nuclear program. The remarks are part of the text of a speech that Foreign Minister Abbas

Araghchi was to deliver at the Carnegie International Nuclear Policy Conference. His scheduled address was canceled on Monday.

Araghchi said that Iran has never stood in the way of economic and scientific cooperation with the US, stressing that the main obstacle has been previous US administrations, which often acted under the influence of certain special interest groups.

"As I recently explained in an article published by The Washington Post, the trillion-dollar economic opportunity that our country offers could be opened up to American companies. This includes firms that could help us generate clean power from non-hydrocarbon sources. Iran currently has only one operational reactor at the Bushehr nuclear power plant. Our long-term plan involves building at least 19 more reactors—meaning tens of billions of dollars in potential contracts are up for grabs. Iran's market alone is large enough to breathe new life into America's struggling nuclear industry," he

said.

## Safeguarding economic interests

He underlined that any possible nuclear agreement between Tehran and Washington must be based on safeguarding Iran's economic interests alongside a robust monitoring and verification mechanism to ensure the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program.

The Iranian foreign minister said that only such an approach can bring about long-term trust between the two sides. Araghchi added that the subject of negotiations should focus solely on lifting sanctions and the nuclear issue.

## Iran's security non-negotiable

The foreign minister said that in the turbulent West Asia region, "Iran will never put its security on the table."

Iran and the US have engaged in talks to reach an agreement on Iran's nuclear program which has been the source of a decades-old dispute between Tehran

and some Western countries.

Since April 12, the two sides have held two rounds of talks in Oman and Italy. Araghchi and the US special envoy in the Middle East, Steve Witkoff are leading the negotiations which are set to resume in Oman on Saturday.

So far, both sides have described the talks as "positive and constructive."

Two days after the second round of negotiations, the US President Donald Trump said on Monday that the US had very good talks with Iran.

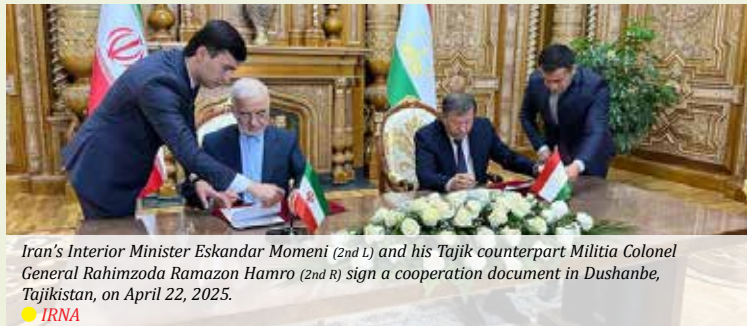
The ongoing talks represent a historic moment, given the decades of enmity between the two countries since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Trump, in his first term, unilaterally withdrew from Iran's nuclear deal with world powers in 2018, setting off years of negotiations that failed to restore the accord. Western countries including the US have long accused Iran of seeking to acquire nuclear weapons – an allegation Tehran has consistently denied, insisting that its program is for peaceful civilian purposes.

## Iran, Tajikistan sign security agreement

### International Desk

Iran and Tajikistan signed a memorandum of understanding on Tuesday to broaden security ties in the fields of fighting terrorism, combating organized crimes and human trafficking. Iran's Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni and his Tajik counterpart Militia Colonel General Rahimzoda Ramazon Hamro signed the agreement in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan.

It came after the two countries inked dozens of agreements during a visit by the Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian to Tajikistan in January. The Iranian interior minister said that with the implementation of the cooperation document, Tehran and Dushanbe will witness greater security.



Iran's Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni (2nd L) and his Tajik counterpart Militia Colonel General Rahimzoda Ramazon Hamro (2nd R) sign a cooperation document in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on April 22, 2025.  
● IRNA

Referring to the age-old cultural and historical relations between the two Persian-speaking countries, the Iranian official said, "In addition to the economic and security fields, the expansion of cultural cooperation can bring the two countries closer in terms of culture and tourism."

On January 16, Pezeshkian paid an of-

ficial visit to Tajikistan, during which the two countries signed 23 documents on cooperation in the fields of politics, economy, culture, society, education, transportation, customs services, trade, health, veterinary, electronic systems, technology, as well as ties between the two countries' police forces.

## China says expects 'in-depth' talks during Iran FM visit

### International Desk

China on Tuesday said it expected "in-depth" talks with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi during his visit to China this week, adding the two countries would work on "deepening political mutual trust."

"Both sides will have in-depth exchanges on China-Iran bilateral relations and international and regional hotspot issues of mutual concern," foreign ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun said.

The visit to China by Tehran's top diplomat comes ahead of a third round of nuclear talks between Iran and the United States.

Araghchi previously visited China, which was a signatory to a since-abandoned 2015 agreement, in December. China is Iran's largest commercial partner and the main buyer of its oil, with Tehran still under crushing US sanctions.

Around 92 percent of Iranian oil heads towards China, according to Iranian media.

In 2021, Tehran and Beijing signed a comprehensive 25-year strategic agreement covering energy, security, infrastructure and communications among other areas.

China on Tuesday hailed its "traditional friendship" with Iran.



Guo Jiakun

"The two countries have maintained mutual respect, trust, and support, promoting the healthy and stable development of bilateral relations and contributing to regional and global peace and stability," Guo said.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry said earlier this week that Araghchi's visit would start on Tuesday, though China said it would be on Wednesday.

The visit to China comes after a trip to Russia last week, where Araghchi discussed the latest developments in talks between Tehran and Washington.

After the visit to Russia, Araghchi told state TV that Tehran always consults closely with its friends, Russia and China, over the nuclear issue.

"It is natural that we will consult and brief China over the latest developments in Iran-US indirect talks," Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said, adding that Beijing can play a constructive role in this process.

## China, Russia could ...

**What about Russia? How much can this country play a role in a potential agreement between Iran and the US and in advancing that deal?**

Naturally, all major powers are important, including the JCPOA parties namely Russia, China, and Europe. The main player remains the US. But in the process of executing a possible new agreement, cooperation and consultations with all major players are crucial for Iran's benefit and are in line with Iran's national interests. And Moscow and Beijing can play a central role.

**How about Arab countries? How much do you think they can play a role in advancing a potential agreement between Iran and the US? Considering this, the Saudi defense minister visited Iran last week after Tehran and Washington held a first round of their negotiations. What is the role of the Persian Gulf Arab countries?**

Fortunately, the collective attitude of our neighbors toward a possible Iran-US agreement is positive. Arab countries are playing an important mediating role. Oman is acting as a supporter of an agreement, while countries like Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE have also expressed their support. The support is significant because it

can facilitate both the negotiation process and the implementation of a possible agreement. Unlike in the past, when Arab countries often obstructed the JCPOA, they are now becoming part of the solution. Of course, their influence is not comparable to that of major powers, but the consensus of regional neighbors are a crucial factor for the successful and sustainable implementation of a possible nuclear deal.

**You mentioned that the roles played by Arab countries differ from those of major powers. Could you please elaborate a bit more on this?**

What I mean is that we have a group of neighboring countries with varying interests and different perspectives regarding Iran. However, currently, from Central Asia and the Caucasus to Turkey, Arab countries, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, all these nations fortunately hold a positive outlook toward Iran-US indirect negotiations and a potential agreement. If this positive attitude persists, it could facilitate the implementation of an ensuing deal.

Iran can work on expanding its relations with its neighbors as well after a deal is clinched. In the past, regarding the JCPOA, there was a kind of division among neighboring countries' stance on the 2015 deal. Some countries supported the agreement,

some were indifferent, and others obstructed it. But now, it seems that the environment has become more unified, with all countries supporting Tehran-Washington negotiations and a potential agreement. This is an advantage for Iran, which it should use to reach a common understanding with its neighbors to cooperate effectively.

**Why do you think this difference in perspectives has emerged? Why we see a convergence of viewpoints among countries, especially those with strategic influence, who are all expressing support? What could be the reason for this change?**

Well, the regional circumstances back then, at the time of the JCPOA, were quite different. Geopolitically, the region was extremely tense. Iran was involved in significant issues with Saudi Arabia, which impacted its relationships with neighboring countries. However, Iran has now made some progress in building trust. The neighboring countries have also realized that a stable Iran with a peaceful nuclear program can actually contribute to regional stability. As a result, both Iran's view of the region and the neighbors' perceptions have become more aligned compared to the time of the original JCPOA negotiations.



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Cartoonist

