

Iran, US attenuate disparities, agree on sanctions removal: *Araghchi*

International Desk

Iran and the United States wrapped up the fourth round of nuclear talks in Oman on Sunday with the Iranian top diplomat saying both sides managed to narrow their differences.

Shortly after the end of the negotiations, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said in an interview with state TV that Tehran and Washington have narrowed their differences and at the very least, the two sides reached a better understanding of each other's positions. Araghchi described the latest round of negotiations as "more serious" and "more detailed" than previous meetings, adding that "more detailed issues" were discussed and that the negotiations were "moving forward."

Before the Sunday talks, the US officials, including Washington's chief negotiator Steve Witkoff have called Iran's uranium enrichment a red line for the US.

Witkoff said in a Friday interview that Iran's "enrichment facilities have to be dismantled."

"That's our red line. No enrichment," he

told US right-wing outlet Breitbart News, after initially suggesting flexibility on Tehran maintaining low-level enrichment of uranium for civilian purposes. The top Iranian diplomat on Sunday reaffirmed that the issue of uranium enrichment is absolutely non-negotiable. But he said that Iran may be open to limit the extent, level, or capacity of enrichment for the purpose of confidence-building over a specified period, similar to what has been experienced in the past.

Araghchi, who leads the Iranian delegation in the negotiations with the US, added that the primary objective of the negotiations is to get the sanctions lifted, and the issue has always been – and remains – one of the fundamental pillars of the talks.

"Fortunately, this matter has also been agreed upon by both sides," he said.

Araghchi stressed that Iran's positions are completely transparent and have been made clear to the other side.

"I hope that as we move forward, we will witness further progress in the negotiation process."

This was the fourth round of talks that began nearly a month ago, marking the highest-level contact between the two countries since Washington withdrew in 2018 from a landmark nuclear deal, during President Donald Trump's first term.

Both sides had reported progress in the previous three rounds, and on Sunday Iran's Foreign Ministry's spokesman Esmail Baqaei said the meeting was "difficult but useful" while a senior US official said Washington was "encouraged." In a post on X, Baqaei said the talks could help "better understand each other's positions and to find reasonable and realistic ways to address the differences."

The US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Washington was "encouraged by today's outcome and look forward to our next meeting, which will happen in the near future," without specifying when.

"Agreement was reached to move forward" and "continue working through technical elements," the US official added.

Oman's top diplomat said talks included



Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (L) arrives in Oman's capital Muscat for the fourth round of nuclear talks with the United States on May 11, 2025.
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"useful and original ideas" that reflected a shared desire to reach a deal between the two countries.

"We completed another round of talks between Iran and the United States in Muscat today. The discussions included useful and original ideas reflecting a shared wish to reach an honorable

agreement. The 5th round of talks will take place once both parties... consult their leaderships," Omani Foreign Minister Badr Albusaidi said in a post on X. The fourth round that took place on Sunday was initially scheduled for May 3 but has been delayed, with mediator Oman citing "logistical reasons."

Iran's FM: Tehran ready to turn page in ties with Europe

International Desk

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Tehran is ready to turn the page in its relations with Europe despite political tensions between the two sides.

"Despite tensions, the history between Iran and Europe remains rich. Cultural, academic, and economic ties – spanning energy, technology, the automotive sector, and environmental cooperation—have long proven fruitful," Araghchi said in comments published by French weekly Le Point.

Following the US withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal in 2018, relations between Iran and Europe began to deteriorate due to the European failure to fulfill its commitments under the agreement and opted to follow in the footsteps of the US. The relations have also worsened over numerous issues including Iran's relations with Russia. "When former US President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) – a nuclear agreement signed by Iran and six world powers including Britain, France, and Germany – the moment called

for European resolve. Then-French finance minister Bruno Le Maire declared that Europe would not be a "vassal" of Washington. Yet in practice, the E3 (Britain, France, and Germany) failed to deliver. Promised economic benefits under the JCPOA never materialized, as European firms opted to comply with US sanctions rather than uphold their governments' commitment," Araghchi said.

Referring to Europe's recent threat of triggering the JCPOA snapback mechanism which he said had designed as a last-resort dispute tool and now wielded as diplomatic leverage, Araghchi said, "This strategy of confrontation risks provoking a global nuclear proliferation crisis that would primarily affect Europeans themselves."

Back in April, French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said that France, along with Germany and Britain, "will not hesitate for a single second to reapply all the sanctions" scrapped a decade ago if European security is threatened by Iran's nuclear activities.

The Iranian foreign minister said despite the E3's confrontational posture toward Iran, he has extend-

ed multiple invitations to restart meaningful dialogue with Europe not just on the nuclear issue, but across all areas of mutual concern. But he said "the overtures were met with silence. Still, I remain committed to diplomacy."

"This approach has not only damaged state-level relations but also had real humanitarian consequences. For example, last year's EU ban on Iran's national airline – based on missile export allegations later denied by senior Ukrainian officials – severely limited access to life-saving medicines, including cancer treatments," the top diplomat said. Araghchi said he has expressed his readiness to visit Paris, Berlin, and London to begin a new chapter. "This initiative has led to preliminary discussions at the deputy foreign minister level—a fragile but promising beginning. But time is running out," the Iranian foreign minister added.

"How we respond at this pivotal moment will define the future of Iran-Europe relations far more profoundly than many may anticipate. Iran stands ready to turn the page. We hope our European partners are, too."

Putin offers direct talks with Ukraine 'without preconditions'



Russian President Vladimir Putin proposed restarting direct talks with Ukraine in Istanbul on May 15, "without preconditions," an offer that came in response to Ukraine and its allies urging Moscow to commit to an unconditional 30-day cease-fire or face additional sanctions. Putin referenced the unsuccessful 2022 peace talks that took place in Istanbul in March, shortly after Moscow's full-scale invasion, and proposed "restarting" them without preconditions in remarks to reporters in the early hours of Sunday. "We are committed to serious negotiations with Ukraine," Putin said, adding that he doesn't rule out agreeing to a cease-fire later, in the course of direct talks with Ukraine.

Putin's proposal came after leaders from four major European countries threatened to ratchet up pressure on Moscow if it does not accept an unconditional 30-day cease-fire in Ukraine that they offered on Saturday in a strong show of unity with Kiev.

The leaders of France, the United Kingdom, Germany and Poland said their pro-

posal for a cease-fire to start on Monday was supported by US President Donald Trump, whom they had briefed over the phone earlier in the day.

Trump has called for Ukraine and Russia to meet for "very high-level talks," saying they are "very close to a deal" on ending the bloody three-year war.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has previously said he was ready for peace talks, but only after a cease-fire is in place.

Putin said that Russia proposed several cease-fires in recent months — a halt on strikes on energy infrastructure, which Ukraine had agreed to, a unilateral 30-hour Easter truce and another unilateral cease-fire on May 8-10 that has since expired.

Ukrainian officials said Russia repeatedly violated all of those.

Putin on Sunday accused Ukraine of sabotaging "these initiatives time and time again" and launching multiple attacks on Russia.

In March, the United States proposed an immediate, limited 30-day truce, which Ukraine accepted, but the Kremlin has held out for terms more to its liking.

Putin on Sunday once again said the Kremlin needs a truce that would lead to a "lasting peace" instead of one that would allow Ukraine to rearm and mobilize more men into its armed forces.

He said he would speak to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and ask him to facilitate the peace talks on May 15.

'Utterly absurd': Iran rejects report of sending missile launchers to Russia



International Desk

Iran's permanent mission to the United Nations categorically rejected accusations that the Islamic Republic is preparing to supply launchers for short-range ballistic missiles to Russia. Citing two supply launchers for short-range ballistic missiles to Russia, Reuters reported that Iran was pre-

paring to deliver Fath-360 launchers to Russia, which would give Moscow additional firepower in the war with Ukraine, Press TV reported.

The missiles have a range of 75 miles (120 km) and could be used to target Ukrainian frontline positions, nearby military facilities, and population centers close to Russia's border, Reuters said. Iran's mission said the allegation was "utterly absurd."

"We regret that Reuters persists in its habit of circulating baseless allegations against the Islamic Republic of Iran," it said in a statement.

"So long as conflict persists between the parties, Iran will abstain from rendering any form of military assistance to either side," it added.

The United States previously accused Iran of sending Fath-360 missiles to Russia last September on nine Rus-

sian-flagged ships. But reports at the time suggested the missile launchers had not been included in the shipment.

The Western security officials and the regional source, speaking anonymously to Reuters, alleged that the delivery of the launchers was imminent but declined to provide further details, including reasons for the apparent delay in their initial transfer.

Faced with similar accusations in the past, Iran's mission to the UN clarified in September that the Islamic Republic regarded as inhumane any military assistance to parties of the Ukraine conflict that would increase damage to lives and infrastructure.

Iran has said that the United States and its European allies have prolonged the war by sending advanced weapons to Ukraine.

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Cartoonist

