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Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (10th R - Front Row) and his counterparts pose for a family photo during a Non-Aligned Movement ministerial meeting in Kampala, Uganda on October 15, 2025.
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Trump's 'peace talk' masks push to weaken Iran

INTERVIEW
EXCLUSIVE



US President Donald Trump is known for his hostile stance toward Iran. During his previous term, he withdrew from the 2015 nuclear deal, imposed "toughest ever" sanctions, and ordered the assassination of General Qassem Soleimani. Back in the White House for a second term, Trump resumed talks with Tehran, yet revived his "maximum pressure" policy. In the June war waged by Israel against Iran, just before the fifth round of nuclear negotiations with the US, he rushed to aid the aggressor, striking Iranian nuclear facilities. Now, while Trump talks up peace with Iran, he keeps the pressure on and lays out demands that the Islamic Republic considers its red lines. Against this backdrop, his sudden show of goodwill raises serious questions about his hidden agenda. Middle East analyst Qadir Nasri believes Trump's aims to extract major concessions from Iran, warning Tehran should stick to smart, calculated policy to safeguard its interests in face of his approach. In this interview with

Iran Daily, Nasri unpacks the layers of Trump's strategy toward Iran.

IRAN DAILY: Do Trump's recent remarks about peace with Iran contain signs of a hidden strategy or undeclared objectives? If so, what policy lies behind them?

NASRI: Trump's speeches in the Israeli Knesset and in Sharm el-Sheikh carry a key message: until now, Washington's Iran policy was everything without Iran, but under Trump, it has turned into everything against Iran. In his recent statements, Trump sent at least six signals suggesting that the US does not seek war and that Iran should seize his offer of friendship. Yet, true to the logic he outlined decades ago in his book 'The Art of the Deal,' as well as his record during his previous presidency, Trump's main tactic is to gain "victory without conflict and war". His aim is to apply the rules of the market to the realm of power politics. In the first step, he tries to strip his rival of legitimacy, while repeatedly inviting them to friendship, so that if he later mount pressure, be it economic or military, he can shield himself from backlash in global opinion and international law. Trump's pursuit of strategic gains from Iran rests on at least four drivers. First, he has about 1,000 days left in his term. Trump is racing to

secure a game-changing concession from Iran—one that can boost his domestic standing and strengthen his hand in global politics. Second, Trump believes Iran is facing shortages at home, diminished regional reach, dependence on China and Russia, and low foreign investment which make it ripe for pressure. He assumes that a weakened Iran will have no choice but to give in. Third is Israel, which is the heart of the Iran-US rift. "Zero enrichment" is Trump's red line; "unconditional enrichment" is Iran's. The clash is existential and symbolic. By hammering on uranium enrichment, Trump wants to send a message to the region defiance does not work and all must comply with US-led liberalism. Fourth, Trump views China as his chief global rival and aims either to bring Iran to his side or to make sure that any Tehran leaning toward Beijing is stripped of strategic depth. He does not want a strong, innovative Iran with advanced industries, exports, and infrastructure standing beside China. Rather, he seeks to weaken Iran. All this shows that Washington, under Trump, is trying to address global issues one after the other. Iran should beware of his agenda that is to force the country into surrender after undermining it.

How can Iran stay out of this trap while protecting its national inter-

ests? Should it pursue engagement with the US, or keep up the course with an independent policy? Iran has three crucial tasks ahead. First, it should not walk away from the negotiating table. Whether with regional actors, the IAEA, the EU, or other independent players, Iran should stick to an active and creative diplomacy. Second, Tehran should address the public's genuine concerns—both symbolic and economic. The government can roll out small but meaningful reforms. For instance, designing targeted support programs such as modest stipends for university students like those for conscripts is not a heavy lift. The same approach could extend to struggling groups, like the proposed cash allowance for mothers. Some may call them generous cash handouts but they are not. Maintaining social cohesion is vital. Iran's enemies seek to use inflation, falling investment, and public hardship to stir unrest. The government should take such measures to prevent turmoil. Third, Iran should prepare creative policy proposals for 2026. During Israel's election in October 2026, room for maneuver will be limited, but afterward, Tehran could advance fresh nuclear initiatives including joint enrichment in the region and economic engagement with Washington.

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