

# Deputy FM says deal within reach if US 'sincere' about talks

Zero enrichment not on agenda anymore: *Takht-Ravanchi*



The photo grab shows Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Majid Takht-Ravanchi, who speaks during an interview with the BBC in Tehran.

## International Desk

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Majid Takht-Ravanchi said that US sincerity in the ongoing nuclear talks would help clinch a deal. "If they are sincere, I'm sure we will be on the road to an agreement," Takht-Ravanchi told the BBC in an interview aired on Sunday ahead of the

second round of negotiations between Iran and the US, which are scheduled to be held in Geneva on Tuesday. The senior diplomat stressed that the ball was in the US court to prove that it wanted to do a deal. The first round of the talks was held in Oman on February 6, which was described as positive by both sides. Takht-Ravanchi pointed to Tehran's

offer to dilute its 60%-enriched uranium as evidence of its willingness to compromise.

"We are ready to discuss this and other issues related to our program if they are ready to talk about sanctions," he said.

As to whether Iran would agree to ship its stockpile of more than 400kg of highly enriched uranium out of Iran, as it did in the 2015 nuclear deal, Takht-Ravanchi said "it is too early to say what will happen in the course of negotiations."

Russia, which accepted 11,000kg of uranium enriched to a low level as part of the 2015 multilateral accord that Trump pulled out of three years later, has offered to accept this material again.

### Maximalist demands

One of Iran's main demands has been that talks should focus only on the nuclear file, and Takht-Ravanchi said: "Our understanding is that they have come to the conclusion that if you want to have a deal you have to focus on the nuclear issue."

Tehran views Washington's maximalist demands for zero enrichment as

an obstacle to any deal and regards that as a red line and a violation of its rights under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

"Zero enrichment is not an issue anymore and as far as Iran is concerned, it is not on the table anymore," Takht-Ravanchi said. This contradicts comments made by the US President Donald Trump to reporters as recently as Friday that "we don't want any enrichment."

The US has also called for talks on Iran's missile program, which Tehran says is non-negotiable.

"When we were attacked by Israelis and Americans [in June], our missiles came to our rescue so how can we accept depriving ourselves of our defensive capabilities," Takht-Ravanchi said.

The senior diplomat, who is playing a key role in the current talks as he did in the negotiations more than a decade ago, also expressed concern about the American president's conflicting messages.

"We are hearing that they are interested in negotiations," he said. "They have said it publicly; they have said it in private conversations through

Oman that they are interested to have these matters resolved peacefully."

But in his latest remarks, Trump focused again on regime change, musing: "It seems that would be the best thing that would happen."

"We are not hearing that in the private messages," Takht-Ravanchi observed, referring to the notes being passed through Oman's Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al-Busaidi.

### US military buildup

Takht-Ravanchi also questioned the US military buildup in the region, warning another war would be "traumatic, bad for everybody... everybody will suffer, particularly those who have initiated this aggression."

He added; "If we feel this is an existential threat, we will respond accordingly."

As to whether Iran would regard an American campaign as a battle for survival, he replied: "It is not wise to even think about such a very dangerous scenario because the whole region will be in a mess."

Iran has repeatedly made it clear that US military bases in the region would be regarded as legitimate targets.

## Tehran denounces Pelosi's call for US to exact 'pain' on ordinary Iranians



Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei sharply criticized comments by former US House speaker Nancy Pelosi calling for intensified economic pressure on Iran.

In remarks posted on X on Saturday, Baqaei wrote, "Nancy Pelosi calls on the US administration to 'cripple' Iran's economy so ordinary Iranians—even in rural areas—'feel the pain.'"

"Deliberately inflicting pain & suffering on civilians for political leverage is the textbook definition of terrorism," he added, noting, "Only an evil & arrogant mindset can feel entitled to prescribe policies built on civilians' suffering in another country."

"Legally speaking, this is further

evidence of a deliberate & systematic US policy of exacting pain and cruelty on populations it disfavors. Such conduct amounts to 'crime against humanity.'"

Pelosi had made the remarks while speaking at the Munich Security Conference on Friday.

She identified further hardened American economic coercion towards Iran as a means of bringing

about "regime fall" in the Islamic Republic.

Iranian officials have long denounced US sanctions as collective punishment targeting civilians.

Last month, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent acknowledged the impact of sanctions during remarks at the World Economic Forum in Davos.

In November 2018, former US secretary of state Mike Pompeo also spoke about sanctions after Washington withdrew from a 2015 nuclear agreement with Iran and other countries and reinstated sanctions.

Iranian officials must listen to the US "if they want their people to eat," he said at the time.

## Strategic containment still ...

The experience of the JCPOA showed that even when major European and Asian companies entered the Iranian market, Washington withdrew from the deal without paying a decisive economic cost. This suggests that in the hierarchy of decision-making in Washington, "strategic containment of Iran" takes priority over "economic gain." Therefore, even if specific economic benefits are defined for American actors, there is no guarantee that at critical political moments these interests will outweigh security considerations, pressure from regional lobbies, or partisan rivalries.

Could including such economic issues ultimately pave the way for a comprehensive, durable and reliable agreement that leads to the effective and full lifting of sanctions on Iran, or will structural constraints in US policy continue to stand in the way?

Broad economic arrangements could, in theory, lead to a more sustainable deal. In the US case, however, the main obstacle is not the absence of economic design, but the multilayered sanctions structure and the instrumental use of the dollar and the global financial system. For Washington, sanctions are not merely a pressure tool; they are part of its financial and political

architecture in the international system. For this reason, the "full and effective lifting of sanctions" is likely to face pushback from institutional actors, as sanctions provide a permanent source of leverage. Even if the sitting administration has the political will, Congress, security agencies and lobbying networks can prevent a deal from being fully institutionalized. As a result, the likelihood that a comprehensive agreement will lead to the durable and irreversible removal of sanctions remains limited within the current framework of US policy.

If an agreement is reached and sanctions are lifted, would American companies and economic actors realistically be able to benefit from these areas, or would political and legal barriers remain the main obstacle?

Even in the event of a deal, meaningful participation by American companies would be held back by deep political and legal constraints. US primary sanctions, which prohibit American citizens and firms from engaging with Iran, are largely rooted in congressional legislation, and their removal would require a complex and politically costly process. In addition, the risk of sanctions' reimposition would discourage long-term investment. The period after the JCPOA showed that even

non-US firms pulled back out of fear of secondary penalties. Structural barriers are therefore such that even if an agreement is reached, US economic engagement would remain fragile, limited and dependent on the country's domestic political climate.

**How should Takht-Ravanchi's remarks be interpreted? Do they primarily reflect the Islamic Republic's red lines and principled positions, or do they signal a more realistic understanding by the US of Iran's nuclear program?**

Takht-Ravanchi's statement that "zero enrichment" is off the table should primarily be seen as the consolidation of a sovereign red line. The position is a response to a years-long US strategy aimed at steering negotiations toward the maximum restriction of Iran's technical capabilities. From an analytical standpoint, it does not signal a change in Washington's approach, but rather reflects the reality that the maximum pressure policy has failed to roll back Iran's nuclear program to zero. In other words, the remarks mirror the assessment that the balance of technical and political power has shifted, and the United States is now compelled to confront the reality of Iran's existing capacity rather than expect a complete rollback.

## Top general warns Iran to give 'lesson' to Trump if war breaks out

### International Desk

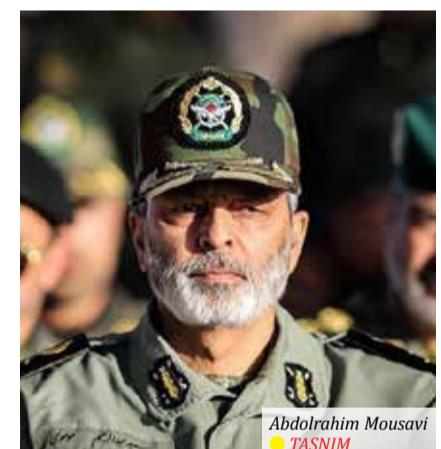
Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi warned on Sunday that any military aggression against the country would be a "lesson" for US President Donald Trump. Mousavi made the remarks in reaction to Trump's rhetoric about possible strikes on Iran if no deal is reached during nuclear talks between Tehran and Washington.

The general said remarks of the US president, who claims to lead a superpower, were not befitting of a person in such a capacity, ISNA reported.

"If Trump truly intends to wage war, why is he speaking of negotiations?" Mousavi asked.

"Trump should know that he is walking into a battle, the outcome of which will prevent him from saber-rattling in the world ever again."

On February 6, Iran and the US held a



Abdolrahim Mousavi  
TASNIM

fresh round of negotiations to resolve a longstanding dispute over Iran's nuclear program. A second meeting is due for Tuesday in Geneva, Switzerland.

The US has deployed several aircraft carriers and warships to the Persian Gulf to force Iran into making big concessions for a deal.

Iranian officials have reiterated that they will not give in to excessive demands but are ready to strike a fair deal with the US.

Iran's military officials have also warned that the country is fully prepared to decisively respond to any hostile action.



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### CARTOON

