

Grossi lauds 'in-depth technical discussions' with Araghchi ahead of US talks

Top security chief says IAEA allowed to have daily, monthly inspections

International Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Grossi met in the Swiss city of Geneva Monday, with the head of the UN nuclear watchdog praising the talks as "in-depth technical discussions."

"Just completed in-depth technical discussions with Iran's Foreign Minister Araghchi in preparation for important negotiations scheduled for tomorrow in Geneva," Grossi wrote on his X account following the meeting. Araghchi, for his part, said they discussed certain technical issues related to Tehran's cooperation with the IAEA in the framework of safeguards cooperation and the Iranian Parliament's law regarding the issue.

Iran's technical viewpoints regarding its indirect negotiations with the United States were also discussed, he added.

The Monday meeting came as Iran and the United States are to hold a

second round of indirect talks on the Islamic Republic's peaceful nuclear program on Tuesday, with Oman continuing its intermediary role.

In a separate development, Secretary of Supreme National Security Council Ali Larijani said in an interview with Al Jazeera on Sunday that the IAEA is allowed to perform inspections on Iranian sites on a daily or monthly basis to make sure the Islamic Republic has never been after nuclear bombs. "To address this concern, a framework must be established, meaning the other side must also address our concern. We accepted the IAEA framework, and they come and can inspect monthly and daily; a bomb cannot be built in a backroom, but rather in a place with specific technology, and we accept the agency's oversight, there is no problem," Larijani said.

The top security chief also stressed that while Tehran pursues negotiations, it keeps deterrence in place in the face of any act of aggression against the country.

"Iran is not seeking war, but will not



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (R) and Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency Rafael Grossi meet and confer in the Swiss city of Geneva on February 16, 2026.

IRNA

surrender in the face of threats, and it relies on a combination of negotiations and deterrence," Larijani noted. He added that the Islamic Republic has increased its level of preparedness and is currently ready to engage in "fair" negotiations about its peaceful nuclear program to remove concerns without harming national security.

Underlining that Iran's missile program has not been raised in the recent negotiations, Larijani said the issue is part of the country's national security and defensive deterrence architecture and is not negotiable.

The latest talks resumed after a seven-month hiatus since June, when Israel attacked Iran during exchanges between Tehran and Washington.

The strikes resulted in the deaths of



more than 1,000 military personnel and civilians, including senior commanders of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps and nuclear scientists.

A few days after the Israeli aggression, which lasted 12 days, the United States bombed three Iranian nuclear sites.

FM asserts submission before threats 'not on the table'

Spox: Tehran attending US talks with 'result-oriented approach'

International Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Monday that his trip to Geneva to hold indirect talks with the United States is aimed at reaching a just and equitable deal, while dismissing any pressure-driven concessions as well as threats against the Islamic Republic.

"I am in Geneva with real ideas to achieve a fair and equitable deal. What is not on the table: submission before threats," Araghchi wrote in a post on his X account after arrival in the Swiss city on Monday.

He also outlined other diplomatic agenda in Geneva, saying he will meet "Rafael Grossi (Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency) for deep technical discussions, as well as Badr Al-Busaid (Foreign Minister of Oman) ahead of diplomacy with (the) US on Tuesday."

Araghchi, at the head of a high-ranking diplomatic and specialized delegation, landed in Geneva on Sunday night. The Iranian delegation is scheduled to hold talks with



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the US on February 17 with the mediation of the Omani foreign minister. The first round of talks was held in Muscat last week, which was described by the two sides as a "good start." Iran's main demand during the Muscat talks was the effective and verifiable lifting of economic sanctions. Iranian officials have repeatedly emphasized that any agreement lacking tangible economic benefits would be meaningless in practice.

The negotiations are taking place as the US has resorted to a significant military buildup across West Asia, starting with sending its USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier to the region.

Baqaei also said that Iran's problem is the

shifting positions and contradictory statements, not only from the negotiators, but also from other American officials.

"They are sending completely inconsistent signals and messages, none of which indicate seriousness," he said, adding that Iran is negotiating "in an atmosphere of full mistrust and skepticism" and cannot afford to ignore its past experiences "even for a single moment."

Pointing to the Iranian delegation participating in this round of negotiations, Baqaei said the talks naturally include technical as well as economic, political, and legal dimensions, but emphasized that the technical aspect plays an important role.

"In this round of negotiations, we will be present with a complete team — political, legal, economic and technical," Baghaei said. "All experts and representatives necessary to express views and make decisions on the various aspects of a potential understanding are in attendance."

Deal could open ...

Under President Joe Biden, Iran held productive talks, and by early 2021 everything was set to sign off on reviving the tattered nuclear deal. But some inside Iran threw a wrench into the process. Then-president Hassan Rouhani had hoped the next Iranian government would see the agreement over the finish line, yet what is often described as the "hidden government" blocked it. The same faction is now trying to trip up President Masoud Pezeshkian's gov-

ernment to fail.

The ongoing talks between Iran and the United States are, in essence, a continuation of the negotiations to resuscitate the 2015 nuclear deal. Diplomacy and dialogue are meant to prevent mass bloodshed, destruction and conflict. In war, no one truly comes out as winner. Europe would bear the brunt of the fallout, as a conflict with Iran would trigger an oil price shock.

If the US is now eyeing war, it may have its sights set on Iran's oil and

gas reserves and its lithium deposits. The US is pursuing oil and gas and, more importantly, lithium resources. If it spends on war, it will seek to recoup the cost from Iran's oil, gas and lithium.

Negotiation and diplomacy are essential, but they should not pave the way for monopoly control by either the United States or the Eastern bloc.

This article first appeared in Persian on ILNA.

IRGC Navy launches drills in Hormuz Strait amid US escalation

National Desk

The Naval forces of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) kicked off on Monday military drills under the name of "Smart Control of the Strait of Hormuz" in the strategic waterway as the US ramps up its illegal military presence in the West Asia region.

The combined, live, and targeted exercise is being conducted with the central role of the IRGC Navy and under the supervision, control, and field monitoring of IRGC Commander Major General Mohammad Pakpour.

The main objectives of the war game include assessing the operational readiness of the IRGC Navy's units, reviewing support plans and scenarios for reciprocal military action by the IRGC in the face of potential security and military threats in the Strait of Hormuz region, and making intelligent use of the geopolitical advantages of Iran in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman.

The rapid, decisive, and comprehensive response of the IRGC's operational forces to anti-security plots in the maritime domain is at the core of the intelligence and operational drills of the units participating in the war game.

Iran is conducting naval exercises in the



Strait of Hormuz as the administration of US President Donald Trump has deployed military forces to the region, including F-35 fighter jets, large fuel tankers, and additional naval assets, heightening concerns about possible new military action. At least 163 C-17 and C-5 cargo flights have traveled from bases in the United States and Japan to the Middle East via Europe, according to Drop Site News. US officials said on February 12 that the Pentagon was sending an additional aircraft carrier to the region, adding thousands more troops along with fighter aircraft and guided-missile destroyers.

Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi warned the US president on Sunday against any confrontation with the Islamic Republic, saying such action would serve as a harsh lesson for Washington.



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