

# Leader: Weapons that can sink US carriers 'more dangerous' than warships

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution responded to repeated US military threats against Iran, saying that the weapons that can sink the American carriers are "more dangerous" than the warships.

"The American president [Donald Trump] repeatedly says that their military is the strongest in the world. The strongest military in the world, however, can sometimes be struck so hard that it cannot even get back on its feet," Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said on Tuesday while addressing thousands of people from East Azarbaijan Province, Press TV reported.

"They keep saying, 'We have sent an aircraft carrier toward Iran.' Fine—an aircraft carrier is certainly a dangerous piece of equipment. But more dangerous than the carrier is the weapon capable of sending it to the bottom of the sea," he added.

Trump's remarks that Washington has been unable to eliminate the Islamic Republic for the past 47 years is

quite an admission," Ayatollah Khamenei said.

"For 47 years, America has failed to destroy the Islamic Republic," he said, before addressing Trump and adding, "I say this: you will not be able to do so in the future either." The warning comes as US President Donald Trump has deployed military forces to the region, threatening to launch attacks on Iran.

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.

"In case we don't make a deal, we'll need it," Trump said on Friday, referring to USS Gerald R. Ford.

The military buildup comes as Iran and the US are holding indirect talks about the nuclear issue, months after the US-Israeli aggression on Iranian soil and attacks on peaceful nuclear facilities.

On Sunday, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces Major General



*Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei speaks in a meeting with people from East Azarbaijan Province in Tehran on February 17, 2026.*

khameini.ir

Abdolrahim Mousavi warned Trump over his war rhetoric. "Trump should know that he would be entering a confrontation that gives harsh lessons, the outcome of which would ensure that he no longer bellows threats around the world," he said.

Elsewhere in his address, Ayatollah Khamenei referred to the ongoing indirect talks between Tehran and Washington.

"These remarks the US president makes—at times issuing threats, at times saying this must be done or that must not be done—show that they are seeking to dominate the Iranian nation," he said.

"They say, 'Let us negotiate over your nuclear energy,' and the outcome of the negotiation should be that you no longer possess this energy,"



he said, adding, "To predetermine the outcome before talks even begin is wrong and foolish."

"This is precisely the foolish approach being taken by

American presidents, certain senators, the current president, and others," he added.

## Iran, US agree on 'guiding principles' to advance talks: Araghchi

Oman says Geneva meeting concluded with 'tangible progress'



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (2nd R) speaks on the phone as he reviews a text on the sidelines of the second round of the nuclear talks between Iran and the United States in the Swiss city of Geneva on February 17, 2026.

### International Desk

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Tuesday that Iran and the United States agreed on "a set of guiding principles" to move forward in the nuclear negotiations after the two sides wrapped up the second round in Geneva, Switzerland.

"Ultimately, we were able to reach broad agreement on a set of guiding principles, based on which we will move forward and begin working on the text of a potential agreement," Araghchi told Iranian state TV after indirect talks with the US delegation.

He described the second round as "more constructive" than the

previous one, which was held in Oman's capital Muscat on February 6.

"In this round, compared to the previous one, the discussions were completely serious and there was a more constructive atmosphere" the top diplomat said, adding that a third round had yet to be decided.

"It was agreed that both sides would work further on draft texts for a potential agreement, after which the drafts would be exchanged and a date for a third round would be set."

Araghchi also acknowledged that it would "take time to narrow" the gap between the positions of both sides, "but at least we now

have a set of guiding principles and a clearer path to move forward on."

Oman's Foreign Ministry in a statement said the talks concluded with "tangible progress," which paved the way for the continuation of dialogue in the near future.

The ongoing talks are aimed at resolving a decades-long dispute over Iran's nuclear program. The US, which has deployed aircraft carriers and warships to the region, has threatened Iran with military action if no deal is made. Iran has declared its conditions and vowed not to bow to excessive demands including the US push for zero uranium enrichment.

Iran has also said that it will hit back forcefully to any aggression.

### Nuclear right irrevocable

After the conclusion of the second round, Araghchi spoke at a disarmament conference in Geneva where he reiterated that Iran's right to use nuclear energy was "non-negotiable" and "could not be arbitrarily suspended or reinterpreted."

He said under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), to which Iran is a signatory, the country was entitled to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

"This inherent right... is not subject to political considerations," he said, adding that any attempt to suggest such a right is "revocable or optional" fundamentally contradicts both the text and the spirit of the treaty.

The new round of negotiations began 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.

## Naval commander: IRGC ready to close Strait of Hormuz if ordered

### National Desk

Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps' Navy said on Tuesday that the force stood ready to shut the Strait of Hormuz whenever instructed amid simmering tensions between Tehran and Washington.

Navy Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri, who was overseeing the second day of a war game in the Strait of Hormuz, said that the decision to block the waterway rested with the country's top officials, Tasnim reported.

On Tuesday, the IRGC conducted the second day of its naval drills in the Strait of Hormuz, showcasing 24-hour "intelligence dominance" over the vital shipping route that links the Persian Gulf with the Sea of Oman.

The exercise, titled "Smart Control of the Strait of Hormuz," involved rapid reaction units practicing counter-strikes against potential threats.

According to Tangsiri, the IRGC maintained comprehensive surveillance at surface, aerial, and subsurface levels to ensure safe passage for the more than 80 vessels that transit the strait daily.

During the drill, traffic through the strait



A rocket is fired during the second day of IRGC Navy drills in the Strait of Hormuz on February 17, 2026.

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was suspended for several hours on Tuesday.

He also described Iranian islands in the waterway as "impenetrable fortresses" and symbols of national honor.

The first phase of the maneuvers was conducted across Iranian islands in the Persian Gulf on Monday.

The drills come amid heightened regional tensions and repeated US threats to strike Iran if it does not accept nuclear demands, among others.

The United States has dispatched a large fleet of warships to regional waters near Iran, prompting authorities in Tehran to warn that even a single shot fired at the country would be met with a far-reaching and massive response targeting US bases in the region.

**Mohammad Ali Rajabi**  
Cartoonist

### CARTOON

