

Araghchi: Fair deal attainable if Iran, US show 'creativity, flexibility'

'US has not asked for zero enrichment in talks'

Iranian FM, counterparts confer about latest negotiations

International Desk

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Iran and the United States could strike a nuclear deal if the pair demonstrated "creativity and flexibility."

"A fair and equitable deal, I believe, is achievable, but we need some creativity and flexibility by both sides, so a deal is at our reach, and there is no any other solution for this question", Araghchi said in an interview with US TV network MSNBC published on Friday.

His remarks came days after Iran and the US concluded a second round of the Oman-mediated talks in the Swiss city of Geneva, during which both sides agreed on "a set of guiding principles" to move forward in the nuclear negotiations.

During the interview, the top diplomat noted that the US side had not asked for zero enrichment – an issue that has been a major demand by Washington and a sticking point in previous talks.

"We have not offered any suspension, and the US side has not asked for zero enrichment," Araghchi said.

"What we are now talking about is how to make sure that Iran's nuclear program, including enrichment, is peaceful and would remain peaceful forever," the minister added.

His comments stand in contrast to information relayed by high-ranking US officials including President Donald Trump, who has repeatedly said Iran must not be allowed to enrich uranium at any level.

Trump, who has ordered the deployment of aircraft carriers and warships to the region, suggested on Thursday that the US would attack Iran again if Tehran does not make a deal within 10 days, which he later extended to 15.

Iran has repeatedly said that any aggression against the country would be met with a decisive response.

No military solution

Araghchi said that Iran's nuclear issue should be resolved through peaceful means, reiterating that there was no military solution to the issue.

"That has been tested last year, and there was a huge attack on our facilities. They killed and assassinated our scientists, but they couldn't kill our nuclear program. Why? Because it is developed by ourselves, by our scientists. This is a tech-



nology developed by us, belongs to us, and it cannot be destroyed by bombings, militarily'.

Araghchi said that if the US wanted to ensure that Iran's nuclear program was peaceful and would remain peaceful forever, the only solution would be a diplomatic one.

"There are both technical commitments and political commitments and technical measures to be taken in order to make sure that this program is only for peaceful purposes. We are now working on those technical questions. This is why Rafael Grossi, the director general of the IAEA, was in the recent negotiations [in Geneva]," he said.

Preparing draft of deal

The top Iranian diplomat further said the next step in talks is for him to present a draft of a possible deal to Washington "in the next two, three days."

Iran ups diplomacy

Araghchi, who has times and again contacted his counterparts from regional countries in recent weeks over tensions between Iran and the US, also made new phone calls with his Egyptian, Saudi and Russian foreign ministers to discuss the latest negotiations.

In his phone conversation with Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelaty, Araghchi underscored efforts to prepare a draft negotiating text with the US based on mutual respect.

Tehran-Cairo ties have on regional balances, and could this affect Cairo's interaction with Tel Aviv or Middle Eastern security dynamics?

Regarding relations between Egypt and Israel, it should be noted that the ties established in the 1970s under Anwar Sadat do involve political and security dimensions, but they do not mean full alignment or complete compliance with Israel in these areas. Egypt has always prioritized its own interests at different junctures. Even during the recent Gaza war, despite strong pressure from the United States to accept displaced residents from the Strip, Egypt resisted and was not willing to accept a systematic relocation of Palestinians onto its territory. Cairo has consistently placed its national and security interests first. The same equation applies to relations between Tehran and Cairo. Egypt will naturally prioritize its own national and security interests in any relationship with Iran and will push back wherever it feels its security is threatened. Egypt views Iran as a friendly and stabilizing country in the region. Given the insecurity along Egypt's borders, which undermines regional security and national interests, it is highly important for Cairo to develop ties with Tehran in order to tilt the regional security balance in its favor. Therefore, Israel is unlikely to exert a systematic or fundamental influence on the advancement of Tehran-Cairo relations, considering Egypt's security priorities.



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi is seen during an online interview with US TV network MSNBC, which was published on February 20, 2026.

IRAN'S FOREIGN MINISTRY

He also conferred the issue with his Saudi counterpart, highlighting the ongoing diplomatic efforts to address longstanding issues surrounding Iran's nuclear program. Saudi Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud expressed hope for constructive negotiations leading to a mutually acceptable outcome.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov also expressed support for a fair diplomatic solution that respects Tehran's legitimate rights enshrined in the principles of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

EU offers help

Meanwhile, EU Commission spokesman Anouar El Anouni said on Friday the European Union was willing to contribute to a "meaningful" process to help break the nuclear standoff.

"We are prepared to contribute to any meaningful diplomatic process. Because, I reiterate, diplomacy must be given a chance," Anouni said at a press briefing in Brussels on Friday.

He stressed that a sustainable solution to the Iranian nuclear issue could "only be achieved through negotiations."

What political, economic, and security advantages would the full restoration of diplomatic relations between Tehran and Cairo bring for Iran?

Beyond the longstanding historical ties between the two countries, under current conditions Iran and Egypt can stand together politically and in terms of security. Given their historical importance and geopolitical weight, alongside other regional powers such as Turkey and Saudi Arabia, they could help provide regional stability and curb the aggressions and excessive demands of Israel. Such actions are detrimental to all regional countries, as economic interests and development can only be achieved in a secure environment. With the development visions that countries across the region have set for themselves, they are seeking to restore stability and security to secure greater economic gains. In addition to key political and security dimensions, economic cooperation is also important. Given Egypt's historical attractions, tourism would certainly be one of the channels connecting the two countries. At one point, a tourism agreement was even signed to facilitate the exchange of tourists, although it was not fully implemented. Nevertheless, the potential and capacities exist for Iran to become a tourism destination for Egyptians and, reciprocally, for Egypt to become a major destination for Iranian travelers. Therefore, the development and full restoration of diplomatic ties could encompass all these areas.

Iran not to wage war but vows 'decisive' response to aggression: UN envoy

International Desk

The Iranian ambassador and permanent representative to the United Nations stressed that the Islamic Republic will not initiate any war but will deliver a "decisive" response to an act of aggression against the country.

Amir Saeid Irvani made the remarks in a letter sent on Thursday to the UN chief and the Security Council president, one day after US President Donald Trump threatened that Washington may need to use the Indian Ocean's Diego Garcia Island, home to a joint UK-US military base, to attack Iran, Press TV reported.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has repeatedly stated at the highest level that it neither seeks tension nor war, and will not initiate any war," he said. "However, in the event that it is subjected to military aggression, Iran will respond decisively and proportionately in the exercise of its inherent right of self-defense under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations."

He also noted that in case of any military aggression against Iran, all regional bases, facilities, and assets belonging to the "hostile force" would constitute "legitimate targets" for Iran's retaliatory operations.



Amir Saeid Irvani
AFP

The United States, Irvani warned, would bear responsibility for any "unpredictable and uncontrolled" consequences. He further denounced Trump's threats to use force against Iran as a flagrant violation of the UN Charter and international law that risks plunging the entire region into a new cycle of crisis and instability.

"Given the volatile situation in the region and the persistent movement and build-up of military equipment and assets by the United States, such a belligerent statement by the President of the United States must not be treated as mere rhetoric, it signals a real risk of military aggression, the consequences of which would be catastrophic for the region and would constitute a grave threat to international peace and security," he added.

Meanwhile, the Iranian envoy emphasized that the country remains fully committed to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and to diplo-

matic solutions. He highlighted Tehran's engagement in recent indirect nuclear talks with Washington in Geneva aimed at lifting unlawful US sanctions and addressing ambiguities regarding Iran's peaceful nuclear program.

Irvani also said that a durable and balanced solution can be achieved if the United States, like Iran, approaches nuclear talks with "seriousness and sincerity and demonstrate genuine respect for the UN Charter and international law."

Trump began to threaten military action against Iran after recent economic protests in the country, which were quickly hijacked by foreign-backed rioters.

Since then, the United States has dispatched a number 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.

Iran elected vice-chair of UN Special Committee on Charter

Iran has been elected as vice-chair of the United Nations Special Committee on the Charter and a member of the bureau of the committee.

The decision was made during a meeting held at the headquarters of the United Nations in New York. The Islamic Republic of Iran will serve as Vice-Chair of the United Nations Special Committee on the Charter, in addition to holding a seat on its bureau.

Established in 1974 within the framework of the United Nations, the Special Committee on the Charter plays a direct and significant role in matters related to the UN Charter.

Its mandate includes examining proposals aimed at enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations in accordance with the principles and provi-

sions of the Charter. Among the committee's key responsibilities are addressing issues related to the maintenance of international peace and security, promoting the peaceful settlement of disputes, and strengthening the development and application of international law.

At a time when the international order based on the UN Charter faces serious challenges and unprecedented violations of its principles, the Special Committee serves as a legal platform to uphold the sovereign equality of states, the prohibition of the use of force, and the peaceful resolution of disputes.

The committee is regarded as playing a vital role in reinforcing the rule of law and preserving the credibility of the international legal system.

Egypt open to ...

What domestic or regional obstacles could challenge the normalization process, and how can the two countries manage them?

Challenges have always existed in the region across various issues, and several files are currently under discussion between the two sides. The most important one is Gaza and Palestine. In addition, other regional and international matters play a role, including evolving regional developments, particularly the aggressions carried out by the United States and Israel against Iranian territory, as well as other dynamics taking shape, as in Syria and Sudan. Nevertheless, shared interests do exist between the two countries. Despite these obstacles, the positions adopted by both sides have been constructive and forward-looking. The talks taking place between the two foreign ministries have been positive, and contacts continue on a regular basis. Araghchi has even held consultations with his Egyptian counterpart regarding the negotiations currently taking shape between Iran and the United States. Furthermore, discussions also took place with officials from the International Atomic Energy Agency in Egypt. This demonstrates that despite regional issues, Egypt has also stood alongside Iran on broader international matters and has adopted positive positions.

Given Egypt's peace agreement with Israel, what impact would closer

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON

