

Tehran, Washington hold high-stakes peace talks in Islamabad

International Desk

Senior Iranian and American officials held a "face-to-face" meeting on Saturday in Islamabad for the highest-level talks between Tehran and Washington in half a century as they sought to bring an end to their six-week conflict.

The talks followed a Pakistan-brokered ceasefire agreement which temporarily ended an unprovoked aggression by the US and the Israeli regime against Iran, which began on February 28.

Strikes by the US and Israel have targeted Iran's military sites, medical centers, schools, universities and many other civilian structures.

The aggression has claimed the lives of thousands of Iranians and inflicted severe damage to the country's infrastructure. Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei as well as many military officials have been martyred in the attacks.

The negotiations in Islamabad were held between US Vice President JD Vance, special

envoy Steve Witkoff and President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, and Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi after they met separately with Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Iran's 10-point proposal

The talks followed a morning of mediation by Pakistani prime minister as Tehran laid down its red lines that it said Washington must accept before the face-to-face talks could take place.

On Friday, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Majid Takht-Ravanchi said the negotiations will be based on a 10-point ceasefire plan proposed by Iran.

According to the statement issued by Iran's top security body on Wednesday, the US has agreed to the 10-point proposal that fundamentally commits Washington to no new aggression against Iran, continued Iranian control over the Strait of Hormuz, acceptance of uranium enrichment, removal of all primary sanctions, removal of all



Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf (4th L) holds talks with Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif (3rd R) in Islamabad, Pakistan, on April 11, 2026.

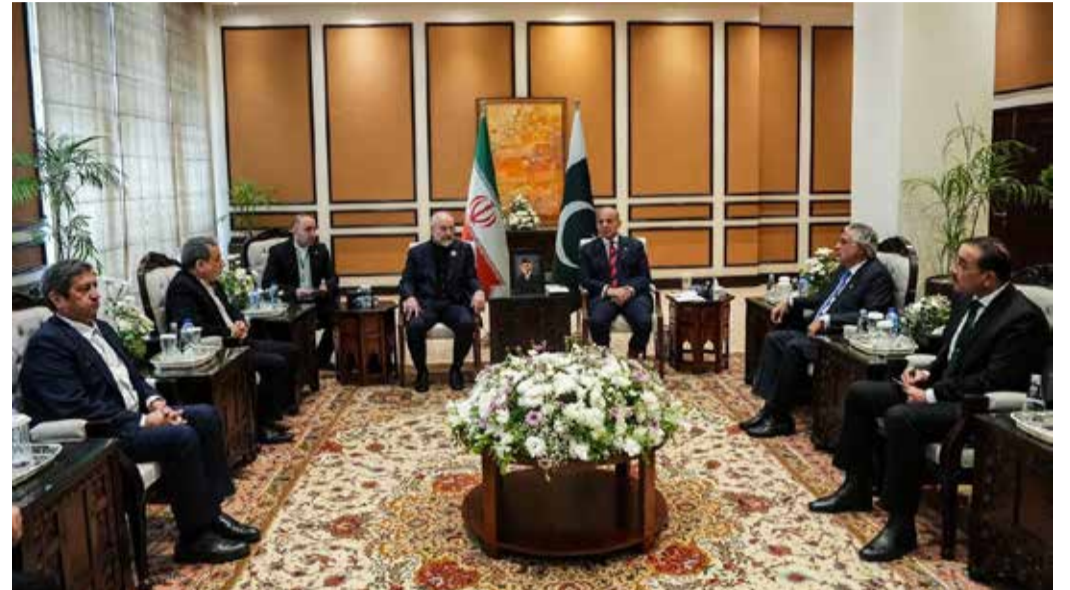
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secondary sanctions, termination of all anti-Iran UN Security Council resolutions, termination of all anti-Iran IAEA Board of Governors resolutions, payment of compensation to Iran, withdrawal of US forces from the region and cessation of war on all fronts, including against the Islamic Resistance of Lebanon.

However, Israel and the US have said the Lebanon campaign is not part of the Iran-US ceasefire.

Authority over Strait of Hormuz

Tehran's agenda includes the acknowledgment of its authority over the narrow Strait of Hormuz, where it aims to collect transit fees and control access. The strait is a chokepoint for about 20% of global oil and liquefied natural gas shipments.



Disruption to energy supplies has fed inflation and slowed the global economy, with an impact expected to last for months even if negotiators succeed in reopening the strait.

US President Donald Trump ahead of the meeting engaged in provocative social media posts, suggesting that the US energy sector will benefit from

Iran effectively closing the Strait of Hormuz to oil and natural gas tankers.

The Iranian delegation arrived on Friday dressed in black in mourning for Ayatollah Khamenei and other Iranians martyred in the war. They carried shoes and bags of some of the students killed during a US bombing of a school in the southern

city of Minab.

The face-to-face negotiations were the highest-level US-Iran talks since the Islamic Revolution of 1979 and the first direct talks since 2015, when they reached a deal on Iran's nuclear program.

Trump scrapped the nuclear deal in 2018 during his first term in office.

Pakistan emerges as ...

IRAN DAILY: Given Pakistan's record of relations with Iran and the United States, what is Pakistan's most significant advantage in assuming the role of mediator?

REZAEINEJAD: Pakistan's mediation efforts hinge on its track record in diplomacy rather than solely on its relationship with Iran and the United States. Pakistan has previously stepped in as a mediator between the United States and China. Consequently, it is regarded favorably by Washington, having once pulled off a successful mediation for that country, while also sharing a border with Iran, whose leadership holds Pakistan in particular regard. Also, from the standpoint of modern issues and contemporary matters, the unsuccessful experience with Oman's mediation made it necessary to change mediators. Pakistan represents Iran in the United States and the Iranian Interests Section in Washington being under Pakistani oversight, while the country's army, which is playing a role in this mediation, maintains strong ties with the United States. These are altogether factors that make Pakistan a viable option for mediation both from a historical and contemporary standpoint.

What is the most significant obstacle Pakistan will face along this path: Israeli pressure on Washington, domestic opposition within Iran, or Pakistan's limited tools for enforcing commitments?

A mediator is generally expected to share tangible common inter-

ests with both parties, such that if those shared interests were to be compromised, the relationship between the mediating country and the conflicting parties could be disrupted. Pakistan is not seen as having such geopolitical and interest-based entanglement with Iran and the United States. Consequently, in terms of political weight, it is not regarded as a highly reliable country for successful mediation. For instance, Pakistan could not effectively persuade Washington to lean on its ally, the Israeli regime, to halt attacks on Lebanon in order for negotiations to commence. Pakistan's initial experience has shown that, due to its lack of intertwined and complex interests with both sides, it may not be able to carry through successfully in this mediation. It is considered a good option for mediation given that no alternative is available for this matter. However, whether it can succeed depends on that entanglement of interests, which it lacks.

From a geopolitical standpoint, what advantages does Pakistan hold over Oman? Could Pakistan's closeness to China (in the form of CPEC) serve as leverage to pressure the United States or as a guarantee for Iran?

No, the issue of CPEC and the relationship between Pakistan and China is not closely tied to this mediation. From a geopolitical perspective, Pakistan does not hold an advantage over Oman, nor can this be cited as a strength. Generally speaking, because no other mediator is avail-

able and Oman's experience has fallen short, Pakistan is considered a suitable option. Otherwise, it holds no particular advantage over other alternatives.

How do you see the outlook for Iran-US talks with Pakistan's mediation, and what is the likelihood of conflict resuming?

Given the history of negotiations with the United States in recent years, it appears that Washington is primarily seeking to buy time in order to extricate itself from the Iran deadlock without conceding ground, and that these two weeks could potentially kick off an extension of the ceasefire period and provide additional time to reconfigure and adjust its defensive posture in the region in preparation for potential action. A clear outlook for the negotiations does not appear to be on the horizon, based on signals coming out of the United States, unless Iran chooses to back down again, as it did with the JCPOA, in which case it would once again face the fate and consequences of that agreement. Yet, it is unlikely that conflict will erupt in the near term as the United States, under current circumstances, is not in a position to sustain further escalation and efforts are being directed toward dragging out negotiations and prolonging the ceasefire process. A quick resumption of hostilities is unlikely unless the Israeli regime seeks it, given that Netanyahu has limited time and is once again approaching legal proceedings, for whom wartime conditions represent a favorable scenario.

Gov't spox says Iran negotiates with 'finger on the trigger'

VP urges US to put 'America First' over 'Israel First'

International Desk

Government spokeswoman Fatemeh Mohajerani in remarks before Iran-US talks in Islamabad said, "We will negotiate with our finger on the trigger" as Tehran does not trust Washington.

Mohajerani said that dispatching a diplomatic team led by the Parliament speaker demonstrates Iran's resolve for dialogue. However, she said, "As the president has said, we will negotiate with our finger on the trigger. While we are open to talks, we do not trust the other side."

Mohajerani underlined that the Islamic Republic will not retreat from its rights in the negotiations which followed 40 days of aggression by the US and the Israeli regime against Iran. First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref in a message on X said that, "If we negotiate in Islamabad with representatives of 'America First', reaching a deal beneficial to the world is possible. But if we face representatives of 'Israel First', no agreement will be reached. In that case, the Islamic Republic will be forced to continue its defense even more strongly than before, and the world will face "greater costs", he said.



Ali Akbar Velayati, former foreign minister, also commented on the negotiations in Islamabad, saying that, "Today's powerful diplomacy is testament to safeguarding regional stability under the umbrella of Iran's national authority"

Former foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zarif also took to X, saying that Iran demonstrated its seriousness by dispatching its most authoritative and capable team to Islamabad. "Iran showed seriousness by sending its most authoritative & capable team to Islamabad despite repeated US betrayals. Let's hope that beyond the bluster, Trump sees the only way out of his self-made quagmire: Stop heading THE WANTED & accomplices. Strike a deal while he still can," Zarif said.



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