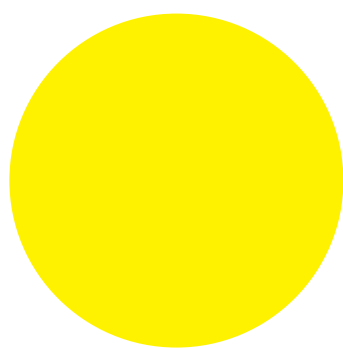


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Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref (c) speaks at meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Council of Heads of Government in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on October 20, 2026. fypresident.ir

US may return to talks, but accepting Iran's terms unlikely

By Delaram Ahmadi
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has recently said that Iran's seven-point plan for resolving the conflict with the United States remains on the table, with the waterway set to reopen on the sixth day and



negotiations to begin on the seventh if Iran's conditions are accepted. However, given that Washington had previously rejected the proposal, whether it would accept it at this stage remains an open question. Mani Mehrabi, an international affairs analyst, told Iran Daily that the possibility of the US returning to negotiations should be taken seriously, but that full acceptance of Iran's

seven-point plan cannot currently be regarded as a foregone conclusion.

IRAN DAILY: What factors could prompt Washington to reconsider its position regarding Iran's proposal? How do you assess the prospects for its acceptance under current circumstances?

MEHRABI: In my view, the most important factor in Washington's calculations is the shifting balance between the costs and benefits of allowing the crisis to continue. Disruption in the Strait of Hormuz is not merely a bilateral issue between Iran and the United States. It affects global energy markets and shipping costs, while its economic repercussions spill over into other countries. The longer the crisis persists, the greater the pressure on the US government to find a way to contain it. This pressure also has a significant domestic dimension. The

United States is heading into midterm elections, and rising energy costs, coupled with concerns about a prolonged war, could carry a political price for Donald Trump's administration. Containing the crisis may therefore become an important consideration in Washington's decision-making. However, rising costs do not automatically translate into acceptance of Iran's conditions. Rather than fully accepting Tehran's proposal, Washington may seek a more limited agreement that restores maritime traffic while offering fewer concessions on issues such as the naval blockade, oil sanctions and Iran's nuclear program. The US administration must also consider domestic political concerns and the implications of any agreement for its deterrence credibility. Therefore, the possibility of the United States returning to negotiations should be taken seriously, but full acceptance of

Iran's seven-point plan cannot currently be regarded as a foregone conclusion. If diplomacy makes progress, the more likely scenario is that the two sides will haggle over the sequencing of steps, guarantees for the implementation of commitments and the design of a phased framework. The main obstacle is disagreement over the order in which commitments should be implemented. Tehran insists on easing pressure before reopening the Strait, while Washington also prioritizes resolving nuclear issues.

To what extent could visits to Tehran by Pakistani Army Chief Asim Munir and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov be seen as part of diplomatic efforts to relay messages between Tehran and Washington? Can they be regarded as a sign of renewed momentum toward negotiations?

These developments should be assessed by distinguishing between active diplomatic channels and tangible progress in negotiations. Given its relations with Iran and its ties to the United States, Pakistan has the capacity to relay messages, reduce misunderstandings and facilitate indirect contacts. Russia, too, can play a role in consultations related to the crisis and efforts to bring the two sides' positions closer, owing to its strategic relations with Tehran and its diplomatic standing. However, the roles of the two countries are not identical. Pakistan's importance stems primarily from its mediation capacity and its links with both sides. Russia, by contrast, has independent interests and positions in regional security dynamics and Iran's nuclear file, in addition to its diplomatic capabilities. Moscow can therefore help facilitate an agreement, but its approach will be shaped by its own strategic cal-

culations and priorities. Neither country, on its own, can resolve the fundamental differences between Tehran and Washington. Pakistan's diplomatic engagement should be understood in the context of Islamabad's efforts to preserve strategic flexibility and prevent its national interests and foreign policy future from becoming tied to the outcome of the confrontation between Tehran and Washington. On the one hand, Pakistan is seeking to keep the mediation channel open. On the other, it does not want the continuation of the crisis to further jeopardize its energy security, regional relations and economic interests. From this perspective, mediation is not simply an effort to bring the two sides' positions closer together. It is also a means of managing the costs of the crisis, reducing vulnerability and preserving Islamabad's room for maneuver under different future scenarios.

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