

Future of Dialogue Process Between Iran and the US - An Analytical Study

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Abstract: *The US and Iran dialogue is in a stalemate, causing great insecurity in Gulf region and badly hurting economic situation world over. There is urgent need that the dialogue between the two must succeed. This study tries to find out the via media for settlement of agreement between the two warring nations for the safety and security and peace in the entire world.*

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Dialogue process between the US and Iran has continued before and after April 28 attacks but has not succeeded till now. Four years after the diplomatic efforts of 2021 and navigating through periods of heightened tension, both sides have returned to the negotiating table with different approaches.[1] The earlier talks The United States and Iran have now sat three rounds of Omani-mediated negotiations, through which Washington seeks to restrict Iran's nuclear program, while Tehran hopes to lift economic sanctions. The negotiations began on 12 April 2025, in Muscat, Oman, followed by a second round in Rome, Italy, and a third round in Muscat, again on 19 and 26 April respectively.[2] The later one is Pakistan brokered where the high-level delegates from both sides met face to face but could not reach a much-desired deal. The second round of talks is expected though much hype has been given to statements by the leaders from both sides and points exchanged through Pakistan. The ongoing U.S.-Iran negotiations are crucial in determining the future of both countries and the broader Middle East. While the talks face significant obstacles, including internal divisions within both the U.S. and Iran, they offer the potential to avert a nuclear arms race or military confrontation.[3] The US has sent nine-point proposal while the Iran has given a 14-point proposal. Here the discussion is on 'What a successful US-Iran deal would need in May 2026.' Iran has formally responded to a US-backed 9-point proposal with a detailed 14-point plan, outlining its conditions for ending ongoing hostilities, according to Tasnim News Agency. Iran said it wants to focus on ending the war instead of extending the truce and wants all issues resolved within 30 days. The new proposal calls for guarantees against future attacks, a withdrawal of US forces from around Iran, the release of frozen Iranian assets worth billions of dollars and the lifting of sanctions, war reparations, ending all hostilities, including in Lebanon, and "a new mechanism for the Strait of Hormuz". Iran, which was also attacked by the US and Israel last June, wants a guarantee against future aggression. Israel has previously targeted Iranian nuclear scientists and run campaigns to sabotage its nuclear sites. Tehran also wants its right to uranium enrichment guaranteed as a signatory to the Non-Proliferation of nuclear weapons (NPT), but Trump has made the nuclear issue a "red line". Iran wants decades of sanctions, which have devastated its economy, to be lifted as part of any deal. The navigation through the strait and demands for war reparations are other sticking points in the talks. "The news

reports on it indicate that there is a slight softening in the proposal, or rather a run-up to discussing the proposal, namely that the Iranian side may have given up its precondition that the US cease its distant blockade of Iranian traffic [in the Strait of Hormuz]," he told Al Jazeera.[4]

Based on the 9-point US proposal and the 14-point Iranian counterproposal, both sides are far apart but there is a narrow path. [5]

- 1) The biggest hurdles are the sequence and timeline. US position is to get Iran to reopen Strait of Hormuz first, then negotiate nuclear program. 2-month ceasefire to build trust. While on the other Hand Iran's position is to resolve all issues in 30 days; end war but not just not just extend truce. The Iran 's nuclear program should be deferred to "Stage 2". The possible middle ground is the 30-day phased agreement in which the phase 1 shall include Hormuz reopening and limited sanctions relief to Iran by the US and phase 2 should include negotiations on Iran's Nuclear program and the regional security talks.
- 2) Strait of Hormuz mechanism also needs to be settled gracefully. US demands full, unconditional reopening and forming "Maritime Freedom Construct" coalition to enforce it while Iran demands "New mechanism" with Iranian-favorable framework, fees on ships with no precondition The possible middle ground is the international oversight of Hormuz transit, with Iran collecting fees but guaranteeing free passage. US must lift naval blockade in return.
- 3) US demands Iran to dismantle Natanz, Fordow nuclear programs and handover enriched uranium to the US. Thereafter there should be no uranium enrichment by Iran. Iran demands recognition of its right to enrichment and there should be no changes in the existing state now. Possible middle ground is to freeze enrichment above civilian levels, allow IAEA monitoring and delay dismantling to later phase. Iran softened procedural demands in latest proposal.
- 4) Iran has been facing US sanctions for three decades now and its billions of dollars are stuck up in various banks due to these sanctions which it wants to be removed. The US is ready for conditional relief only if Iran complies while Iran wants full lift of US, secondary, UN and IAEA sanctions on frozen assets and reparations. Possible middle ground is a step-by-step sanctions relief tied to

verifiable steps on Hormuz and nuclear and to unfreeze assets early as confidence measure.

- 5) Another linked point is of regional proxies Hezbollah, Houthis, Palestine and Hamas continuous conflict with Israel supported by the US and requirements of security and guarantees to these proxies. The US wants Iran to end support for Hezbollah, Houthis and Hamas before the withdrawal of the US forces from Iran's periphery. Iran wants the end of war on all fronts including Lebanon, but protect proxies. It also wants guarantees against future military aggression. The possible middle ground is that Iran commits to no new attacks from proxies and the US commits to no regime change and help uninterred settlement in Lebanon, Gaza and Palestine. There is a need for both to agree to regional security dialogue.
- 6) Lebanon and Israel front is also the burning point. The US and Israel want Hezbollah to be disarmed. Iran and Hezbollah do not agree to disarm until Israeli troops withdraw from southern Lebanon. Possible middle ground is to link to Israel-Lebanon ceasefire. Israel withdraws from border positions; while Hezbollah pulls back north.

Though settlement on middle path appears to be hard due to trust deficit. UAE says "Iran cannot be trusted over Hormuz". US says Iran's proposal "unlikely to be acceptable". Considering domestic politics of the US, Trump says "do we want to blast the hell out of them or make a deal". IRGC tells US as "media-driven" and cannot be believed since it changes statement every other minute.

Military posture of the US with 3 carriers in region and blockade of Iran ports is also challenging. Iran says renewed conflict "likely" if talks fail.

Under these conditions, how can the agreement be made to work?

1. Pakistan continues as mediator as it got the April 8 ceasefire. Russia too has agreed to assist and held discussions with Trump to end this war.
2. Both Russia and China has created a balance by giving open support to Iran.
3. Both sides should accept Hormuz as first step, not last and by giving right to Iran the US forces should vacate encirclement of Iran's ports.
3. US should agree to partial sanctions relief upfront to give Iran political cover.
4. Iran should agree to nuclear freeze for a decade at least now, not just defer.

If none of these moves are considered, there may be a frozen conflict with periodic strikes, not peace.

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