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## US and Iran wrap up 'most serious' nuclear talks in Geneva

Both sides report progress but key differences remain, with technical negotiations set to resume in Vienna next week



Iranian delegation seen after the indirect talks between Iran and the US with Oman acting as mediator in Geneva, Switzerland on February 26, 2026. © Getty Images / 'IRANIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY / HANDOUT'; Anadolu

The US and Iran have concluded their third round of indirect nuclear negotiations in Geneva, with both sides describing the discussions as the most intensive yet. Mediated by Oman, the talks produced an agreement to continue technical-level consultations in Vienna starting Monday, followed by another political round within the week.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi characterized the session as *"one of the most serious and longest rounds of negotiations"* to date, noting that *"good progress was made"* on both the nuclear issue and sanctions relief. However, he acknowledged that *"differences of opinion"* persist on some issues.

Omani Foreign Minister Badr al-Busaidi, who shuttled between the two delegations, stated that discussions had concluded after *"significant progress."* The meetings, which stretched across morning and afternoon sessions totaling roughly six

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hours, also saw the participation of IAEA chief Rafael Grossi as a technical observer.

Here are some of the details of the negotiations.

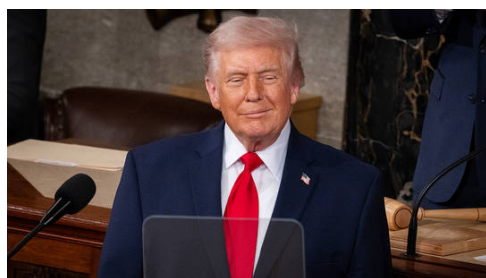
## What is the US position on Iran?

The US delegation was led by special envoy Steve Witkoff and the son-in-law of President Trump, Jared Kushner. According to sources cited by the Wall Street Journal, Washington is pressing Tehran to permanently dismantle its three main nuclear sites at Fordow, Natanz, and Isfahan, and to ship its remaining stockpile of enriched uranium out of the country.

The US is also insisting that any agreement must be permanent, with no so-called sunset clauses that would allow restrictions to expire over time – a direct departure from the 2015 nuclear deal, from which Trump withdrew during his first term.

Trump has given Iran roughly ten to 15 days to reach an agreement, warning that *"bad things"* would follow a diplomatic failure. In his State of the Union address earlier this week, he insisted that his preference remains a negotiated solution, while reiterating that he would *"never allow"* Iran to obtain a nuclear weapon.

Washington has also demanded that Tehran stop supporting regional armed groups and cease alleged repression of domestic protestors.



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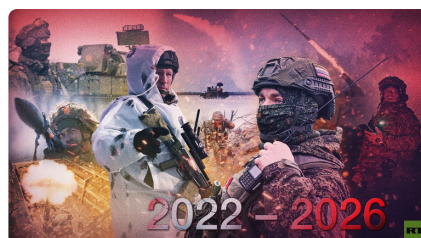
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## What are Iran's red lines at the talks?

Tehran has made clear that any agreement must respect its sovereign right to enrich uranium for peaceful purposes – a position Iranian officials describe as non-negotiable, designating the nuclear industry as a core national strategic asset.



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Iran has also offered to dilute its existing stockpile of highly enriched uranium under IAEA supervision rather than ship it abroad.

Tehran has also insisted that any agreement must include verifiable lifting of economic sanctions, with Deputy Foreign Minister Majid Takht-Ravanchi stating that *"the ball is in America's court"* to demonstrate genuine intent.

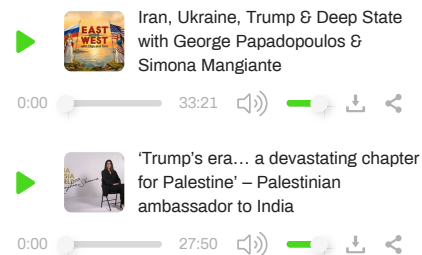
## What is the most divisive issue at US-Iran talks?

The question of Iran's ballistic missile program remains a significant sticking point. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has described Tehran's refusal to discuss its missile capabilities as a *"big, big problem,"* while Iran insists that its defense programs are not up for negotiation.

*"We are not developing long range missiles,"* Araghchi told the media this week, pushing back against Trump's claim that Iran is working on intercontinental ballistic missiles capable of reaching the US mainland. *"We have limited range to below 2,000 kilometers intentionally. Our missiles are defensive in nature."*



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US intelligence assessments also appear to diverge from Trump's public statements on the urgency of the Iranian threat. According to sources familiar with intelligence reports cited by Reuters, Iran is likely years away from developing a *"militarily viable intercontinental ballistic missile"* – a timeline that does not support the president's claim that Tehran could soon target the US mainland.

## What is planned for the US military in the region?

The Geneva talks are unfolding against the backdrop of the largest US military buildup in the Middle East since the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Over recent weeks, the Pentagon has deployed two aircraft carrier strike groups to the region, accompanied by dozens of advanced fighter jets, destroyers, and missile defense systems.

Trump has framed the deployment as a warning to Tehran.



US Vice President J.D. Vance said on Friday that Trump has not yet made a final decision on military action against Iran. However, if such a choice is made, Vance insisted it would be limited and not drag the US into a years-long war in the Middle East.

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Iranian officials have responded by stressing that any attack would trigger a *"devastating war"* and that US bases and assets in the region would be considered legitimate targets. [A defense source in Tehran has told RT](#) that Iran's response would be *"broad and unlimited,"* and that attempts to shift blame onto Israel would not alter the scope of retaliation.

## Is the US preparing for war with Iran?

On Friday, the US State Department authorized the departure of non-emergency government personnel and their family members from Israel, citing *"safety risks"* amid heightened regional tensions.

The travel advisory warns of potential attacks by *"terrorist groups, lone-actor terrorists and other violent extremists"* targeting tourist locations, transportation hubs, and government facilities. It notes that the *"security environment is complex and can change quickly,"* and that *"increased regional tensions can cause airlines to cancel and/or curtail flights."*

US Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee has reportedly urged personnel who wish to depart Israel to do so *"today,"* warning of likely high demand for flights out of the country.



The move echoes similar precautions taken ahead of US strikes on Iranian facilities last June, when Washington pulled non-essential personnel from the region days before joining Israel's 12-day air campaign against Tehran.

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### What is the next step in US-Iran talks?

Technical teams from both sides are scheduled to convene in Vienna on Monday to work through the details of potential compromises, including mechanisms for verification and the sequencing of sanctions relief. A fourth round of political-level talks is expected to follow within days.



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