

# Iran's Negotiating Strategy Between Changes and Steadfastness

(Translated)

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On May 2, 2026, the Fars News Agency announced that Iran, through Pakistan, had submitted a 14-point proposal in response to a 9-point American proposal. The Iranian proposal included its red lines and outlined a specific roadmap for ending the war. On May 3, 2026, the Iranian Tasnim News Agency reported that the American proposal included a two-month ceasefire, while the Iranian proposal emphasized resolving all outstanding issues within 30 days. It focused on a comprehensive and final end to the war, guarantees against future military aggression, the withdrawal of American forces from the vicinity of Iran, the lifting of the naval blockade, the release of frozen Iranian assets, the payment of compensation, the cessation of hostilities on all fronts, including Lebanon, and the establishment of a new mechanism for the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran had previously presented a 10-point proposal, reported by Tasnim News Agency on April 8, 2026. The proposal included: a preliminary US commitment to provide non-aggression guarantees; continued Iranian control of the Strait of Hormuz; acceptance of Iran's right to uranium enrichment; the lifting of all primary sanctions; the lifting of all secondary sanctions; the termination of relevant UN Security Council resolutions; the termination of resolutions issued by the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency; compensation for Iran for war damages; the withdrawal of US combat forces from the region; and a ceasefire on all fronts, including in Lebanon. The agency stated that "Trump accepted the Iranian conditions as a basis for future negotiations."

There are changes in the clauses of the two proposals: Iran's demand was initially for "continued Iranian control over the Strait of Hormuz," but this has been changed to "establishing a new mechanism for the Strait of Hormuz." This is seen as a concession.

The first proposal stipulated "acceptance of Iran's right to uranium enrichment," but the second proposal makes no mention of this clause. It appears that a change has occurred, and its omission is intentional. This is the core issue under negotiation, and it is crucial to understand the extent of the concessions involved.

The earlier proposal included "the withdrawal of US combat forces from the region," while the latter only calls for "the withdrawal of US forces from the vicinity of Iran." This means the withdrawal of US forces only from the vicinity of Iran, not from the entire region. A concession is evident here also.

The fate of the two items is also unknown "termination of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions" and "termination of the resolutions of the IAEA Board of Governors." It must be noted that achieving these two points is not easy, as it involves other parties such as Britain and France, which have differing stances on Iran and on the United States. The US does not want to involve them in the Iranian issue and expects them, and other European countries, to be subservient, as it demanded they act against Iran to forcibly reopen the Strait of Hormuz. America's goal is to isolate the other parties involved in the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement and to deal unilaterally with Iran, forging a bilateral agreement. This has been its objective since withdrawing from the agreement under President Trump in his first term in 2018.

It appears that Iran has conceded on these two demands or that they have been modified. The US will maintain the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as a tool to monitor Iran's nuclear activities, as it accepted the IAEA in the 2015 agreement, which was humiliating for Iran and restricted its nuclear program, limiting the enrichment level to

approximately 3.67% and placing it under international supervision. This is what caused all these problems, leading to inspection teams entering nuclear reactors unexpectedly, observing what was happening, and sending reports that reached America indirectly through this agency, which has influence over it. It was also observed that Iran was working to develop its nuclear program by increasing the number of centrifuges and raising the enrichment level.

It is worth noting that during the first meeting between the American and Iranian delegations in Pakistan on April 11, 2026, a framework agreement was nearly reached, extending for approximately 45 days as a prelude to comprehensive negotiations lasting four to six months. However, Iran accused the United States of reneging on these understandings and presenting what it described as excessive demands. This led to the cancellation of the second round of talks, which was scheduled to be held in Pakistan on April 21, 2026, as well as the cancellation of the meeting between the two delegations on April 25, 2026.

On April 27, 2026, the American news website Axios quoted a US official and informed sources as saying that “Iran, through Pakistani intermediaries, presented a new proposal aimed at reaching an agreement to reopen the Strait of Hormuz and end the war, while postponing negotiations related to the nuclear program to a later stage. This proposal was discussed during Foreign Minister Araqchi’s visit to Pakistan and focuses on addressing the Strait of Hormuz crisis and the American naval blockade of Iranian ports as priorities.” Some considered this a shift in Iran’s negotiating strategy, spearheaded by its highest authorities, prioritizing an end to the state of war with the United States before addressing other issues. Among its key demands is a complete cessation of hostilities and guarantees against their recurrence. This was considered a central point in the new Iranian approach.

Iran seeks to separate the issues and begin with the Strait of Hormuz crisis, while the United States insists on linking all matters to the nuclear issue, and considers the surrender of uranium the prerequisite for any agreement.

It appears that Iran understands its size, capabilities, and reality in relation to the immense American military power and its global economic and political influence. Therefore, it does not want the war to continue. Instead, it seeks to end it and preserve its existence, as it is a nation-state belonging to its own land and people.

A nation-state prioritizes its territorial integrity and the survival of its people. If it harbors greater ambitions, it strives to become an influential regional power. If it believes that achieving these ambitions requires aligning itself with a major power, it will not hesitate to do so, embarking on this perilous path, as Iran did when it aligned itself with the United States for decades to gain regional influence. When Iran overstepped its bounds and the US sought to curtail its power and reduce it to a subordinate state, it launched this aggression, forcing Iran to make concessions.

This contrasts sharply with an ideological state that refuses to compromise and stands firm. Compromise will cost it far more than steadfastness, which, while potentially damaging, ultimately leads to victory. Compromise is tantamount to gambling with the fate of the state; it will either destroy it or render it weak and incapable of achieving anything.

The ideological state rejects subservience to a major state, just as it rejects following in the orbit of any major state. Instead, it carves its path through the rock until it reaches the position that befits it and is able to carry its ideology to the world. This matter cannot be conceived except within the Second Khilafah Rashidah (Rightly Guided Khilafah) on the Method of the Prophethood, which will be established soon, InshaAllah.