

**Iran****Iran says it will not negotiate with US on ballistic missiles**

Foreign minister says Tehran is ready for nuclear talks after Trump sent ‘armada’ to region



Abbas Araghchi: ‘Iran’s defence capabilities and missile programme will never be a subject of negotiation’ © Burak Kara/Getty Images

**John Paul Rathbone** in Istanbul, **Najmeh Bozorgmehr** in London, **Abigail Hauslohner** in Washington and **George Parker** in Shanghai

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Tehran is ready to resume nuclear talks with Washington but discussions about its ballistic missile programme — a key US demand — are off the table, Iran’s chief diplomat has said.

His comments came as the US continued to move firepower into the region for a potential attack. President [Donald Trump](#) has sent what he calls an “armada” to the Middle East and the head of the Pentagon has said the US military is ready to carry out whatever plan of action Trump chooses, should a deal not be reached with Iran.

“Negotiations are different from diktats,” Iran’s foreign minister Abbas Araghchi said on Friday at a press conference in Istanbul. “The outcomes of negotiations are determined at the negotiating table, not in advance.”

Araghchi, who was on an official visit to Turkey, added: “Iran’s defence capabilities and missile programme will never be a subject of negotiation.”

Regional allies — including Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia — have sought to push the two sides into talks to head off potential conflict, but both countries appear to have dug into their respective positions.

Iran has so far continued to stick to its long-standing red lines for any negotiations, while the US wants Iran to cease nuclear enrichment and disband its ballistic missile programme.

Araghchi said that Iran was “ready for war” should the US attack, and that there had been no contact yet between Tehran and Washington about “plans or a programme for talks”. But he added: “We are ready for a just, fair and equitable negotiation.”

Trump on Thursday said he was planning to talk with Iran and that there were some “very powerful ships sailing to Iran right now and it would be great if we didn’t have to use them”.

Turkey has sought to position itself as key mediator, and foreign minister Hakan Fidan — who is in regular contact with his US and Iranian counterparts — said at Friday’s press conference that he had had “a long conversation” with US envoy Steve Witkoff the day before Araghchi’s visit.

Earlier this week, Fidan claimed Iran was “ready to renegotiate on the nuclear file”. He said his consistent advice to the US was to approach each topic one by one, rather than trying to reach a comprehensive deal at once.

“Start with nuclear, close that, then move on to the others,” Fidan said in an interview on Wednesday with Al Jazeera. “If you present them all as a whole, it will be very difficult for our Iranian friends to digest and process.”

US allies such as the UK have said they support initiatives that would stop Iran from developing nuclear weapons, even if that might mean using force.

Asked if he would support possible US strikes on Iran, British Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer said on Friday: “The goal, or the aim, here is that Iran shouldn’t be able to develop nuclear weapons and that is hugely important.”

Asked if that meant he supported military action, Starmer told BBC News: “I am saying we support the goal and we are talking to allies about how we get to that goal.”

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian also spoke on Friday with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and UAE President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed al-Nahyan (MBZ).

In his conversation with MBZ, Pezeshkian said Iran prefers diplomatic channels but is fully prepared to respond to any aggression.

“The policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is engagement and negotiations within international frameworks, based on mutual respect,” Pezeshkian said. “However, in the event of any aggression against the Iranian nation or country, there will be an immediate and firm response,” he added.

In his conversation with Pezeshkian, the Turkish president emphasised the need to pursue diplomatic solutions through negotiations and to avoid war in the region, Erdogan’s office said.

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