



### [Qatar Hosts Indirect Talks Between the United States and Iran in the Latest Attempt to Try and Revive the 2015 Nuclear Deal](#)

This week, Qatar hosted indirect talks between the United States and Iran, in the most recent attempt to try and revive the 2015 nuclear deal – formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The negotiating parties entered the discussions with low expectations and a sense of cautious optimism, and the talks ultimately ended without any breakthroughs. The gathering in Doha marked the newest development since negotiations in Vienna, which also featured European diplomats serving as intermediaries, were put on hold earlier this year back in March. One of the major roadblocks that still exists is Iran’s demand that the United States remove the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) from its list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO). The preceding Trump administration imposed the designation in 2019, and U.S. President Biden has refused to lift it, with officials expressing that it is an additional demand that goes beyond the scope of the JCPOA. As one expert observer put it, inside the Iranian government “those who want the deal restored are trying to extract more concessions from the United States to be able to sell the deal's restoration to skeptics within the leadership...the problem is that the Biden administration is already at the end of its rope.”

The two countries blame each other for this prolonged stall in talks. Iran is claiming that “Washington is seeking to revive the (deal) in order to limit Iran without economic achievement of our country.” The United States, on the other hand, is stating that Iran is raising “issues wholly unrelated to the JCPOA and apparently is not ready to make a fundamental decision on whether it wants to revive the deal or bury it.” Observers suspect that this blame game will likely continue until a deal is made, if that even does end up transpiring.

Though these talks have ended without any progress, there is still a chance of a continuation of negotiations, as Iran has hinted that they will be in contact for the “next stage of the talks.” It is feared that future negotiations seem to be unlikely to yield any results either, however, as the United States under the Biden administration does not appear to be willing to budge on the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps’ designation as a terrorist organization, and their removal still remains a demand that Iran is fixated on in nuclear deal revival talks. Some analysts and experts have suggested that America’s refusal to remove the Revolutionary Guard from the list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations is likely due in part to Israeli demands. The Israeli government has been monitoring the negotiations closely and opposes a potential Iranian return to the JCPOA, let alone concessions to Iran.

Leaving the Revolutionary Guard on the list will also make the deal an easier sell to Americans as a difficult midterm election remains looming for President Biden. Making too many concessions could be seen and interpreted by political opponents as an example of “weak” diplomacy and hurt Biden’s party at the polls. Meanwhile, Iran seems fixated on demanding this concession because they need to work to sell this deal to any hardliners in the government. This ultimately puts each country in a difficult spot, as each of them want to sell it as a victory back home. If the two countries cannot agree on this issue and it remains a point of emphasis, it is unlikely that the JCPOA will be revived.