



[Iran-U.S. Conversations Within the Greater Scheme of Regional Power Dynamics](#)

The Biden Administration and Iranian Officials are conducting undisclosed bilateral discussions regarding regional de-escalation and limitations on nuclear programs, with these conversations believed to have been occurring throughout the past few months. With all aspirations for reinstating the 2015 nuclear deal, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), between the two states extinguished late last year, these talks aim to create immediate solutions to curtail security risks and weapon development. As the U.S.'s central goals remain to limit nuclear program expansion, inhibit proxy wars, and release American prisoners in return for sanction lifts for Iran, the nature of keeping talks secret yields an opportunity for the resumption of relations without criticism from the global community. The Biden Administration has denied any occurrence of these negotiations, with State Department spokesperson Matt Miller citing any conversation as merely an attempt at "understanding" between the United States and Iran. Yet, with multiple accounts of various American and Iranian officials meeting in Oman over the past months, including U.S. National Security Council official Brett McGurk and Iran's chief nuclear negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani, the true extent of the status of potential deals remains to be discovered by the public. A significant reason for keeping the nature of the discussions ambiguous is for the Biden Administration to stay neutral with Israel, as fears of upsetting their ally motivate the continuation of closed-door talks.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has gone on record to state that the potential of "mini-agreements" between the U.S. and Iran do not favor U.S.-Israeli relations and spoke out staunchly against them. As the U.S. and Israel share intelligence sources within the region, Israeli officials reported that these understandings have already made progress to some extent, including a deal in which Iran's uranium enrichment would reduce to 60% in exchange for sanctions relief from the U.S. As there was opposition from Netanyahu regarding the initial 2015 JCPOA nuclear deal, the prospect of relations rekindling between Iran and the United States leaves the potential for counter-reaction from Israel. With the chance of releasing American prisoners in Iran rumored to be part of the agreements, the Biden Administration is backed into a corner with a decision to ensure the safety of Americans abroad or appease foreign allies. The families of these prisoners have requested multiple meetings with President Biden to no avail, and there is no telling if these discussions will finally broker the agreement to bring the Americans home. Yet, how these discussions also factor into the U.S.'s self-interest regarding ties with Saudi Arabia and rapprochement within the region remains ambiguous.

As the Biden Administration has attempted to facilitate the normalization of relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel, this, compared to Saudi Arabia and Iran's recent deal brokered by China, leaves the region in an unforeseen era of diplomacy. In light of Blinken's recent visit to Riyadh and China's growing presence within the area, the validity of these "understanding" discussions may once more shift the way foreign affairs are conducted within the Middle East. Attempts of rekindling between Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Israel have occurred over the past few years. Recent bilateral agreements and discussions have

reopened similar opportunities. With Saudi Arabia and Israel being positioned as allies against Iran, the warming of relations towards Iran by Saudi Arabia and the United States calls into question whether a path exists where all four states can agree or if shifting alliances will continue to reshape the Middle East. These desires by the Biden Administration come at a period in which the United States' stake within the region is threatened as new power players such as China and Saudi Arabia grow closer and more robust. As a unique opportunity between Iran and the United States arises, the impact of these rumored "mini-agreements" will determine the new era of global security, nuclear production, and diplomacy.