



### [The Importance of Iran Nuclear Talks and What the Collapse of Them Could Lead To](#)

The ongoing high-stakes nuclear talks between Iran and the United States, which have been mediated by Oman, saw the completion of a fifth round of negotiations this past week in Rome. Participants outlined that the talks had yielded some progress, but without a conclusive breakthrough yet as they move into an expected sixth round of talks soon. As observers convey hopes for the possibility of a deal, the importance of the Iran nuclear talks cannot be overstated. For starters, the threat of a bellicose Israeli attack on Iranian nuclear sites continues to loom over the situation. In fact, it was revealed this week that U.S. President Trump had cautioned Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu not to attack Iran as the talks continue – in the latest evidence of tension between the two. While there is concern that Israel might launch an attack on Iran irrespective of Trump’s warnings and a potential Iran nuclear deal being reached, a collapse of talks between the United States and Iran would increase the likelihood of this even further. In recent weeks, Trump has repeatedly suggested that there will either be a diplomatic deal or military action, and therefore this combined with Israel’s clear desire and eagerness to attack Iran has heightened the significance of the current nuclear talks and sparked unease regarding what the collapse of them could mean.

In addition to this fear of widening regional escalations and hostilities, there are other factors propelling the gravity of the ongoing Iran nuclear talks. The government in Iran is keen on a possible deal that would provide much-needed economic relief, and there is also the prospect of United Nations (UN) sanctions against Iran being reimposed if a new nuclear deal is not reached over the coming months. The dubbed “snapback mechanism” which allows for the automatic reinstatement of previous UN sanctions expires in October of this year, and there is a chance that the E3 countries of the United Kingdom, France, and Germany could invoke this in the absence of a new agreement. Iran has a vested interest in seeking to obtain substantial sanctions relief, as the U.S. measures have hurt its economy and limited its ability to trade or bank internationally – while also undermining its key industries and infrastructure. With respect to the state of nuclear talks, there is a sense of some optimism coming out of the most recent fifth round of negotiations last week in Rome. Iranian officials expressed that the talks had been “one of the most professional rounds of negotiations” so far, and that while an agreement had not been reached, the Iranian side was “not discouraged.”

During the ongoing nuclear talks, the enrichment of uranium remains one of the core sticking points, with the United States raising concerns about Iran’s enrichment levels while Iran maintains that this is for civilian purposes and is a matter of national sovereignty. Iran has reportedly proposed that the United States publicly recognize its right to enrich uranium for civilian use under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and approve the release of Iranian oil revenues frozen under American sanctions. At one point, there were hopes of a potential compromise whereby Iran may pause uranium enrichment in an interim deal that could lead to a broader nuclear accord. However, at least publicly, Iranian officials have shot down the prospect of an enrichment freeze for several years while talks continue. Another idea that has been floated is the notion of a possible consortium in the Middle East that would be backed by regional countries and the United States which would allow for limited uranium enrichment by Iran under international oversight. For Iran, there is also apprehension regarding the durability of any U.S. deal given that Trump unilaterally pulled out of the last one and as a result, it is seeking guarantees from the United States that it will not withdraw from a future nuclear deal.

Analysts and experts highlight that ultimately reaching a deal will require concessions from both sides, but in the bigger picture, an agreement that grants oversight over Iran's nuclear sites in exchange for some sanctions relief would prove greatly beneficial – especially if it prevents expanded regional conflict that risks entangling and drawing in the United States. For now, it is at least a positive sign that nuclear talks are expected to continue, although the sixth round has yet to be set.