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## Iran Sets Conditions for Nuclear Talks with US

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Iran has declared its willingness to re-engage in nuclear negotiations with the United States, but only under strict conditions. Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, as reported by Iranian state media, has demanded a “firm guarantee” from Washington that no further attacks will be launched against the Islamic Republic before talks can resume. This stance comes after US strikes targeted Iranian nuclear facilities at Natanz, Fordow, and Isfahan in June, significantly heightening tensions and complicating diplomatic efforts.

Araghchi, addressing the issue, stated, “Assurance should be provided that in case of a resumption of talks, the trend will not lead to war.” He further emphasised that the US must

commit to refraining from repeating such aggressive actions, noting that the attacks have made a negotiated resolution “more difficult and complicated.” The minister’s remarks reflect Iran’s deep mistrust of US intentions, particularly following the recent military escalation.

Last month, Iran’s Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, in an interview with the BBC, echoed similar concerns, stating, “We have not agreed to any date. We have not agreed to the modality. Right now, we are seeking an answer to this question: Are we going to see the repetition of an act of aggression while we are engaging in talks?” The minister highlighted that the US has yet to provide clarity on its commitment to non-aggression, leaving Tehran wary of re-entering negotiations.

On the US side, President Donald Trump has taken a hardline stance. Speaking to reporters on 4 July, he asserted that the US would not permit Iran to enrich uranium, signalling a continuation of Washington’s uncompromising approach to Iran’s nuclear ambitions. This rhetoric aligns with the broader US strategy of applying maximum pressure on Tehran, a policy that has drawn criticism for undermining diplomatic progress.

Following the US strikes, Iran limited its cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the UN’s nuclear watchdog. However, Tehran has indicated it will address the agency’s requests for assessments on a “case-by-case” basis, a move that suggests a cautious approach to international oversight.

Tensions in the region have been further inflamed by Israel’s warnings of potential further strikes. Israeli officials have claimed readiness to hit Iran with “much greater force,” a sentiment echoed by President Trump following the earlier attacks on Iranian nuclear sites. In response, Iran’s Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has warned that Tehran is prepared to defend itself against what he described as the “Zionist regime.” State media reported that Iran has developed contingency plans for retaliation against Israel, claiming that the US would be unable to prevent such a response if hostilities escalate.

The prospect of renewed nuclear talks remains fraught with challenges. Iran’s insistence on guarantees against further attacks reflects its strategic calculus in a region marked by volatility. Meanwhile, the US and its allies continue to prioritise the containment of Iran’s nuclear programme, creating a delicate balancing act between diplomacy and deterrence. As both sides navigate this standoff, the risk of miscalculation looms large, with implications for regional stability and global security.

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