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Iran U.S. Nuclear talks show progress, but comprehensive deal still elusive



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Indirect talks between Iran and the United States over Tehran's nuclear program and U.S. sanctions are showing signs of cautious progress, though a lasting, comprehensive agreement remains distant, according to regional analysts.

Mediated by Oman, the second round of indirect discussions took place in Rome on Saturday, with Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi and U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff participating. Omani Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr bin Hamad bin Hamood Albusaidi facilitated the four-hour meeting, which Araghchi described as "constructive" and "forward-moving."

Both sides reportedly reached a better understanding of key principles and objectives. Technical-level talks are set to begin in Oman by Wednesday, with a follow-up meeting scheduled for next Saturday.

Despite the diplomatic tone, analysts remain cautious. Steven Wright, associate professor at Hamad Bin Khalifa University, noted, "While talks are moving forward, a full agreement is still far off. Shifting global dynamics and Iran's strategic calculus mean Tehran is unlikely to make deep concessions."

Political analyst Ahmed Al-Shezawi highlighted the risks of military escalation, stressing Iran's regional leverage, especially through the Strait of Hormuz. "U.S. forces in the Gulf are within range

of Iranian missiles. Given Washington's limited success in Yemen, a direct conflict with Iran appears increasingly unlikely."

Khalid Ahmed of Qatar University echoed this, saying the U.S. is unlikely to pursue war due to economic constraints. "Both sides are signaling a preference for diplomacy over confrontation."

The 2015 nuclear deal (JCPOA) unraveled after the U.S. withdrawal in 2018, and efforts to revive it have so far failed. However, Omani Foreign Minister Albusaidi expressed optimism, stating the talks are "gaining momentum, and now even the unlikely is possible."

Despite forward motion, observers agree that the path to a durable agreement remains steep and uncertain.