

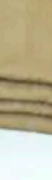
What to Know About the U.S.-Iran Cease-Fire Talks

Vice President JD Vance said 21 hours of peace talks between the United States and Iran had failed to produce a deal to end the war.

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Vice President JD Vance speaking during a news conference in Islamabad, Pakistan, on Sunday. Pool photo by Jacquelyn Martin

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After 21 hours of peace talks between the United States and Iran, Vice President JD Vance said Sunday that the two sides had not reached a deal to end the war, casting further uncertainty over the fate of a fragile two-week cease-fire.

The negotiating session in Islamabad, mediated by Pakistan, was the highest-level face-to-face meeting between U.S. and Iranian officials since the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran.

“We leave here with a very simple proposal: a method of understanding that is our final and best offer,” Mr. Vance said at a news conference in Pakistan’s capital. “We’ll see if the Iranians accept it.” Later Sunday, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Iran’s top negotiator, suggested further talks may be possible.

Reopening the Strait of Hormuz, a key oil route that Iran has choked during the war, remained [one of three main sticking points](#), according to two Iranian officials familiar with the talks. The United States had demanded that Iran immediately reopen the strait, but Iran refused to give up its leverage over the critical waterway, saying it would do so only after a final peace deal, the officials said.

President Trump said after the talks that the U.S. Navy would enforce a blockade of the strait, adding that it would “seek and interdict” any vessel that had paid a toll to Iran and would attack any Iranians who fired at American or other “peaceful vessels.”

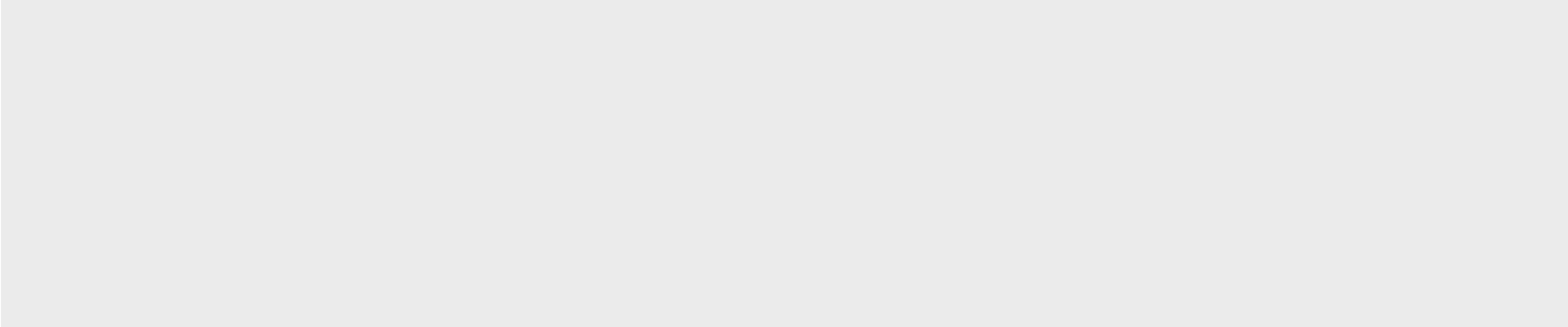
The other two key issues were the fate of nearly 900 pounds of highly enriched uranium and Iran’s demand that about \$27 billion in frozen revenues held abroad be released, the officials said.

A [strained diplomatic history](#) cast a shadow over the talks. Twice in the past year, Iran was deep in indirect negotiations with the United States when talks fell apart and were followed by attacks from the United States and Israel.

Why are the talks in Pakistan?

Pakistan helped negotiate a two-week cease-fire last week, scoring a major diplomatic victory. That cease-fire is set to expire on April 21.

Pakistan shares deep bonds and a 565-mile border with Iran. It has also spent the last year wooing President Trump — lavishing him with praise, [nominating](#) him for the Nobel Peace Prize and striking a [series of business deals](#) with his administration.

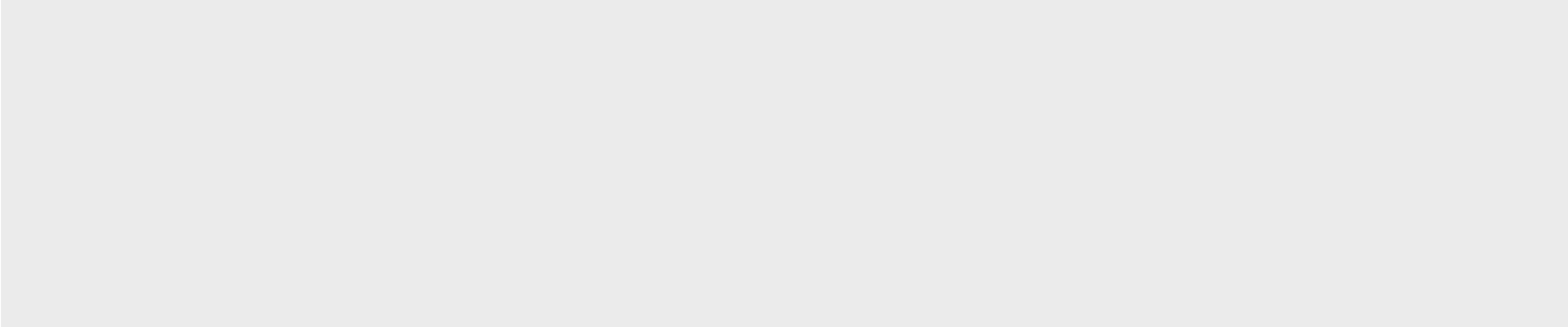


Vice President JD Vance, center, in Islamabad on Saturday. Pool photo by Jacquelyn Martin

Who attended the talks?

Mr. Vance led the U.S. delegation, which also included Steve Witkoff, Mr. Trump’s special envoy, and Jared Kushner, the president’s son-in-law. Also in the U.S. delegation were Andy Baker, the vice president’s national security adviser; Michael Vance, a special adviser to the vice president for Asian affairs; and a variety of subject matter experts.

A team of at least 70 people represented Iran at the talks — led by its speaker of Parliament, [Mr. Ghalibaf](#), one of the [highest-ranking officials](#) in the country. The [Iranian delegation](#) included diplomats and negotiators, military officials and legal advisers, as well as experts in finance and sanctions.



Workers removing scrap metal in Beirut on Saturday from the rubble left by Israeli bombardment of the city. David Guttenfelder/The New York Times

What are the biggest issues?

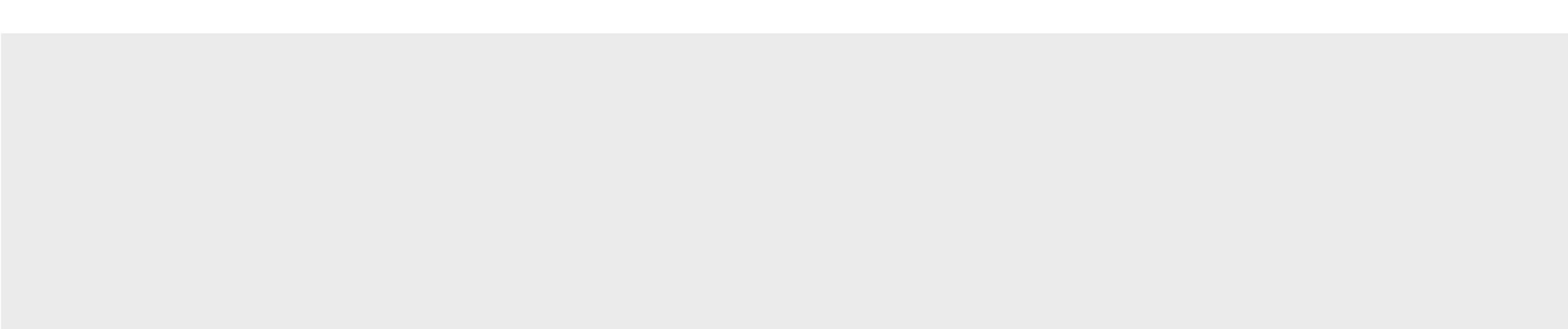
Sanctions, shipping traffic, nuclear enrichment and Israel’s military attacks on Lebanon were on the agenda.

A central demand from the U.S. side is the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, the vital waterway that serves as a conduit for [a quarter of the world’s seaborne oil](#) and one-fifth of its natural gas. Iran has effectively blockaded the strait, and reopening it was the focus of an apocalyptic ultimatum by Mr. Trump, who said he would wipe out a “whole civilization” if Tehran didn’t do so.

Since the current truce was struck, Iran’s military has signaled that it plans to maintain control of the strait, while Mr. Trump has suggested that the United States might [jointly control it](#) with Iran.

Iran’s nuclear program is also a key issue. Iran wants the United States to accept its ability to enrich uranium, but Mr. Trump’s most recent statements reiterated calls for zero enrichment.

Iranians are also seeking a guarantee that the United States will not attack Iran again. That final condition would mean a permanent end to hostilities, going further than the cease-fire that U.S. mediators are currently offering.



Oil tankers and cargo ships in the Strait of Hormuz in March. Altat Qadri/Associated Press

What is Iran’s 10-point proposal?

Iran released [its peace proposal](#) on Wednesday, outlining sweeping demands that seemed to be difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile with U.S. aims.

Iran’s framework allows it to maintain control of the Strait of Hormuz, requires the United States to withdraw its forces from all bases in the region and preserves Iran’s right to pursue nuclear enrichment. It also calls for an end to Israeli attacks on Hezbollah, the Iran-backed militant group, in Lebanon.

Mr. Trump initially described the Iranian framework as “a workable basis on which to negotiate” an end to the war. But a White House official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive talks, said the demands in the 10-point plan released by Iran were not the same as the ones referenced by Mr. Trump.

What is in the U.S. proposal?

Many of Iran’s conditions likely conflict with [a 15-point proposal](#) that U.S. mediators sent to Iran through Pakistani intermediaries last month. Officials said that proposal addressed Iran’s ballistic missile and nuclear programs, as well as maritime trade.

What happens next?

The failure of the weekend’s talks appears to leave the Trump administration facing several unenviable paths: A lengthy negotiation with Tehran, or a resumption of a war that has already created the largest energy disruption in modern times, and the prospect of a long struggle over control of the Strait of Hormuz.

Negotiations with Iran would likely require several significant concessions and compromises. The last time any kind of agreement was struck between the United States and Iran was during the Obama administration. Those talks took years and allowed Iran to maintain a small stockpile and nuclear material, but Mr. Trump withdrew from the agreement in 2018.

Mr. Trump could resume an increasingly unpopular war, one that has isolated allies, caused a global energy crisis and — perhaps most critically, for the president — soured the American voting public on the eve of a critical midterm election.

Mr. Trump’s first action after the failed talks was to announce on social media that the Navy would “begin the process of BLOCKADING any and all Ships trying to enter, or leave, the Strait of Hormuz.” A blockade could be considered an act of war by Iran, and the country’s leaders have given no indication they intend to relax their control of the strait.

Tyler Pager and Ali Watkins contributed reporting.

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A version of this article appears in print on , Section A, Page 8 of the New York edition with the headline: Issues in the U.S.-Iran Cease-Fire Talks and a History of Diplomatic Discord. [Order Reprints](#) | [Today's Paper](#) | [Subscribe](#)

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