



Word for Word

The American way of negotiation

Introduction

The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a rational actor on the global stage operating within the framework of religious rationality, is committed to developing its foreign relations with various nations and to participating in international coalitions. Consequently, an active foreign policy and the instrumental use of diplomacy are tools at the disposal of Iran's foreign policy apparatus, and it cannot be characterized as an isolationist actor.

"Extensive interaction with the world is our permanent advice. We can have vast and extensive interaction with the world. We can both help other nations and governments and we can receive their help."

Aug 3, 2017

Diplomacy within the framework of national identity and interests

Safeguarding the national interests of the country in economic and political spheres is the inherent duty of any nation's diplomats. Every state and nation, according to its national interests and identity, determines certain red lines for itself in the arena of dialogue and diplomacy.

"Securing national interests is the main goal of the country's diplomatic relations. With reliance on God, dedication to self-development, and through wise, thoughtful planning and correct actions, you must achieve the objectives of the Islamic Republic's diplomatic relations, which is securing Iran's national interests."

"National interests are national interests only when they do not disagree with the national and

revolutionary identity of the people of Iran. Interests become national only when they are not in conflict with national identity. Otherwise, when we consider something as a national interest which causes national identity to be trampled upon, we have certainly made a mistake. Such things do not constitute national interests.”

Jun 12, 2017

The nuclear industry and national interest

Iran's vast territory and population of nearly ninety million have created diverse needs across various industrial, agricultural, medical, and aerospace fields, among others. Considering these needs, and noting the transition of advanced countries from non-renewable fuels to renewable ones, Iran decided years ago to develop a domestic nuclear industry and uranium enrichment capability. Now, this legitimate and rational need has for years become one of the central challenges of Iran's foreign policy, and colonial powers such as the US obstruct the fulfillment of this need.

“Enriched uranium has various applications that benefit people in different aspects of their lives. It is useful in agriculture, it plays a significant role in agriculture; in industry and materials; in nutrition, which is tied to agriculture; in environmental matters and natural resources. Furthermore, it's useful for research, in education, and in scientific pursuits. Of course, the effect it has in generating electrical power is quite clear. Today, in many of the world's developed countries, power plants are run on uranium. On the other hand, we run most of our power plants on gasoline and natural gas. This not only incurs high costs but also pollutes the environment and the air. However, the electricity generated from enriched uranium and nuclear power plants produces zero pollution, costs significantly less, has a much longer operational life, and offers many other advantages.”

Sep 23, 2025

Why we do not negotiate with the US

Negotiation is an instrument available to diplomacy, but negotiation in and of itself is not a value. The subject of the negotiation, the counterpart, and its nature and scope must revolve around the safeguarding of national interests, and naturally, wherever these interests are compromised, a reconsideration of the very principle of negotiation is possible.

“Well, what is being discussed is negotiations with the US. They use the term negotiations, saying that negotiations are a good thing. It's as if someone disagrees about negotiations being good! Today, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran is one of the busiest foreign ministries. That's what its job is. They negotiate, come and go, talk, and sign contracts with countries around the world, Eastern and Western, all kinds. The exception is the US. Why is the US an exception? What is the reason? First, negotiations with the United States have no effect on solving the country's problems. What they say shouldn't make it seem to us that if we sit at the negotiating table with that government, this or that problem will be solved. No, negotiations with the US won't solve any problems. The reason? Experience! In the 1390s (2010s), we sat down and negotiated with the US for about two years. Our administration at that time engaged in negotiations. They went, came back, sat down, stood up, negotiated, talked, laughed, shook hands, and were friendly. They did everything, and an agreement was formed. In this agreement, the Iranian side was very generous and gave many concessions to the other side. But the US didn't carry out that very agreement. The same person who is now in office tore up that agreement. He said he would tear it up, and he did. They didn't carry it out. Even before he came, those with whom the agreement was reached didn't carry it out. The agreement was supposed to result in the lifting of US sanctions, but they weren't lifted.”

Feb 7, 2025

Negotiation for surrender

Given that the demands and stipulations of the US at the negotiation table stand in complete contradiction to Iran's national interests, the officials of foreign policy will naturally proceed with reconsideration and caution in this matter.

"The US's main demand is that they don't want you [Iran] to even have a nuclear industry. They want you to be reliant on them for radiopharmaceuticals, energy, desalination equipment, and in tens of other critical fields. They don't want you to even have a nuclear industry. Thousands of scientists and researchers have been trained in Iran. Today, we have thousands of young scientists [trained] in nuclear and nuclear-related fields in our country. These individuals have been trained in just the past few years. Should we disappoint them, make them unemployed, and take away their hope in the future of our country? This is what the US wants. This is what they're saying. This is what they're demanding from us. The rude, insolent US leaders keep repeating this demand in different ways. They're opposed to our progress. They're opposed to Iran's progress. They're opposed to self-sufficiency for the Iranian nation."

Jun 4, 2025

"Our response to the absurd remarks of the loudmouthed, imprudent US administration is obvious. One day a few years ago, one of the US presidents said he would dismantle and eliminate the nuts and bolts of Iran's nuclear industry if he could. Of course, he admitted that he couldn't. Since that day, the nuts and bolts of our nuclear industry have even become much stronger. Of course, he confessed that he couldn't dismantle them. He said, "I can't, but I would if I could." Those in power today — the Zionists and the Americans — should know that they can't do a damn thing in this area."

Jun 4, 2025

Negotiation or dictation?

The US model of negotiation, in addition to its surrender-oriented characteristic, is also a form of imposition and a pre-written dictate. In reality, there is no negotiation taking place; rather, the acceptance of the US side's demands is what is meant by negotiation.

"Under the present circumstances — now it's possible that in 20 or 30 years the situation may be different, but we aren't discussing that right now — in the current situation, first of all, negotiating with the US government does nothing to serve our national interests. It will bring us no benefit, nor will it shield us from any harm. Because the US side has previously specified the outcome of the negotiations in advance. It has declared that it will only accept negotiations, it wants to enter negotiations, where the outcome will be an end to nuclear activities and enrichment in Iran. This means we would sit at the negotiating table with the US, only for the result of our talks to be precisely what they've already decreed must be done. This isn't negotiations; it's dictating the outcome. It's imposition. To sit and negotiate with a party when the result must necessarily be exactly what they want and demand — is that negotiations? This is how the other side is talking now. That is coercion. That means accepting the US's coercion and imposition. That isn't negotiations."

Sep 23, 2025

The real solution: Strengthening Iran

From the perspective of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, negotiation is not the ultimate solution to problems, but rather a subsidiary instrument at the disposal of governments. What truly resolves the problems is the strengthening of Iran's internal capabilities.

"The key to the country's progress is becoming strong. We must become strong. We must be strong militarily, we must be strong scientifically, and we must be strong in our government, in our structure, and in our organizations. Our intelligent individuals and our sincere experts must convene to identify the ways to strengthen the country, then pursue these paths, and so forth. If this is achieved, then the other side will not even make threats. When it sees that its opposing side is strong, it won't even issue threats. This, in my opinion, is the only solution."

Sep 23, 2025



Words of Wisdom

Such negotiations are useful for the current US president. He would hold his head up high and say, "I threatened Iran and brought them to the negotiating table." He would boast about it on the world stage. But for us, it would only be harmful. It would have no benefit for us whatsoever.

The side we're facing breaks their promises in every matter. They lie about everything and try to deceive. They constantly make military threats. If they can, they assassinate people. Or they bomb nuclear facilities. We cannot negotiate with such a party. We cannot sit down with them in confidence and trust to speak, listen, and make agreements with them.

From Imam Khamenei's televised speech on Sept. 23, 2025



Memorable Frame

"I do not consider the US President worth exchanging any message with"

1. On June 13, 2019, the late Shinzo Abe, then Prime Minister of Japan, met with the Leader of the Islamic Revolution in Tehran. The main purpose of his visit was to deliver a message from the President of the US. This visit took place after the US withdrawal from Iran's nuclear agreement with the P5+1, an accord reached through years of challenges and months of diplomatic effort.

2. The message that Mr. Abe carried from the US President reportedly included several points: a declared willingness to resume what was described as a sincere negotiation with Iran, an emphasis on preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons, an assurance that the United States had no intention of pursuing regime change in Iran, and a claim that renewed negotiations with the US would bring progress for Iran.

3. At the beginning of the meeting, Mr. Abe stated that he intended to convey the message of the US President. In response, the Leader remarked that he did not consider the US President a person worthy of exchanging any message with and that he had no response for him, nor would he offer one in the future.

4. The Leader spoke about America's lack of honesty, the bitter experience of the nuclear negotiations, and the irrationality of repeating a failed path. He also reminded Mr. Abe that the US had sought to change Iran's political system for forty years but had not succeeded. Furthermore, he clarified that Iran had no intention of building nuclear weapons, viewing such an action as unreasonable.

5. One of the most noteworthy moments of the meeting was Mr. Abe's description of America's conduct toward other nations. He noted that the US often tried to impose its own way of thinking and beliefs on others. The Leader confirmed this observation, emphasizing that it was good that Mr. Abe recognized this reality and adding that the Americans were never content with any limits when it came to imposing their views on other countries.





Reflections

In support of the “Global Sumud Flotilla”: A fleet of ships to break the siege of Gaza
As the page of history is turning, you are standing on the right side of it.
You have now formed a branch of the Resistance Front.

From Imam Khamenei’s Letter to American University Students (May 25, 2024)



Artist: Beatrice Alemagna | From Italy



Artist: Giulia Bardelli | From Rome



Artist: Sally Samir | From Egypt



Artist: Francesca Falasca | From Italy



Artist: Bianca d’Ascanio | From Italy



Artist: Marie Barthlen | From Belgium



Artist: Khaled Sobh | From Palestine



Artist: Na’imeh Fazeli | From Iran



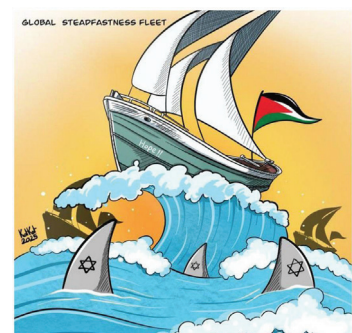
Artist: Mohammad Farih | From Palestine



Global Sumud Flotilla



Artist: Nader Asmar | From Palestine



Cartoonist: Morad Kotkot | From Jordan



Become Familiar with the Quran

(Inspired by Imam Khamenei's letter to American university students on May 25, 2024)



لَا يَنْهَاكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ (سورة الممتحنة، الآية ٨)

"Allah does not forbid you from dealing with kindness and justice with those [polytheists] who did not make war against you on account of religion and did not expel you from your homes." (Surah Al-Mumtahina, Verse 8)

Just relations with disbelievers in the absence of hostility toward Islam and Muslims

The opposition of the Islamic Republic against those who it is standing against, is an opposition to oppression, arrogance, and aggression. Don't ask, "Why are you against certain countries?" We are not opposed to other governments, countries, or nations as a rule. Rather, we are opposed to oppression, arrogance, and aggression. We are opposed to the events that you see unfolding in Gaza today. A nation, the owners of a land, are subjected to such severe oppression in their own land. Their women, their children, their families, their homes, their infrastructures, and their belongings are destroyed with sheer brutality and heartlessness, while some countries stand by and watch. Not only do they not oppose or prevent these actions, they even help in this. The US, Britain, and some European countries help them [these actions]. This is what we are saying. We are opposed to this. The things that set the Islamic Republic in opposition to the opposite front are these concepts, which are denounced by rational, traditional, religious, and human moral standards. We oppose these things. The Islamic Republic is opposed to these things. Otherwise, the Holy Quran, regarding the disbelievers, states, "Allah does not forbid you in regard to those who did not make war against you on account of religion and did not expel you from your homes" (60:8). If there is a disbeliever who fulfills the terms of a transaction with him/her in Islam, there is no problem.

Mar 7, 2024



Opinion

Negotiation: Neither a virtue nor a vice

Hossein Mohammadi Sirat, faculty member at Imam Sadiq (pbuh) University

Introduction

Negotiation, particularly with the government of the US, has been among the most contentious political issues of the past decades. Time and again, under various pretexts, it has become a subject of debate and divergent opinions. Within this discourse, some view negotiation with the US as the only solution to the nation's difficulties, describing it as the paradise garden of politics and, in a romantic delusion, dreaming of an ideal negotiation with the US side. This current, confined within a narrow and rigid political outlook, regards negotiation with the US as the sole or at least the principal solution to the country's challenges. In contrast to this romantic illusion, there exists a clichéd and confrontational stance that perceives any form of negotiation as opening the gates of hell. Adherents of this stance even attribute their hostility toward negotiation to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution.

The present text seeks to offer a balanced understanding of negotiation within the framework of religious rationality. It maintains that the leaders of the Islamic Revolution are neither advocates nor opponents of negotiation; rather, they consider negotiation a conditional instrument that is employed when interests are secured, and in the event of its ineffectiveness, they have described insistence upon it as erroneous and a grave mistake.

1. The misappropriation of concepts

One of the recurring pitfalls in understanding fundamental concepts in the field of political thought is their distortion and the spread of incorrect definitions that eventually become established in both public and elite discourse. "Negotiation" is one such frequently used concept. Through a one-sided narrative advanced by Western-influenced intellectual

and executive actors, it has acquired a specific definition and, in a sense, has been misappropriated. Whenever negotiation is mentioned, what immediately comes to mind is negotiation with the US. However, negotiation encompasses various types and forms and cannot be so narrowly confined or misappropriated.

2. Negotiation as an instrumental, not an essential concept

In response to what has occurred, it can be clearly stated that negotiation, in religious discourse and discourse pertaining to the Islamic Revolution, is a neutral and instrumental concept, not an essential one bearing any inherent positive or negative value. Negotiation is a tool that, when it serves the interests of the Islamic community, may rightly be employed, and its use is deemed reasonable. Yet when it yields no benefit, repeated insistence on it adds no value and grants it no intrinsic worth. In the conduct of the Noble Prophet of Islam (pbuh), there are instances both of engaging in negotiation and of rejecting it. For example, in the sixth year after Hijra, when the Prophet set out to perform the Hajj pilgrimage, the Quraysh disbelievers prevented his entry. The Muslim caravan was eventually halted at Hudaibiyyah, near Mecca, where negotiations took place with the Quraysh and resulted in an agreement later known in history as the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah. Another instance occurred at the end of the battle with the people of the city of Ta'if. Although the Muslims were nearly victorious, the Prophet halted the fighting and accepted the people of Ta'if's request for dialogue. Through these discussions, an agreement was reached regarding future relations with Ta'if, ultimately bringing great victory and abundant spoils to the Muslims.

There were, however, situations in which the Prophet did not accept any offer of

peace or negotiation and chose to continue the confrontation. In the Battle of Khaybar, for instance, the people of Khaybar conditioned the cessation of war upon keeping their fortresses, which the Prophet refused. Similarly, during the battle with Ta'if, some of the disbelievers agreed to reconciliation on the condition that they be exempted from the rulings concerning alms (zakat) and prayer (salat), a request which the Prophet rejected.

3. Negotiation with the US: A bitter experience

Experience is one of the sources of human knowledge, both in the empirical sciences and in the humanities. In the political history of the Islamic Republic of Iran, negotiation has a record filled with numerous experiences that serve as a clear mirror before any prudent political actor. These experiences have led to deep mistrust toward the American side and demonstrate repeated failures in securing benefit or preventing harm through negotiations with the US. Therefore, negotiation is not an issue devoid of experiential foundation. Like many other social concepts and ideas, it is context-dependent. It must be emphasized that political and social principles are never realized in a vacuum but are deeply shaped by prevailing social and political conditions. Our own experience has taught us that, under the current global circumstances and the nature of its dominant actors, one cannot hold an optimistic view toward negotiation. Experience itself stands as our guide.

"Negotiating with the US is not wise, is not intelligent, and is not honorable. The reason? Experience!"

"Those aren't proper negotiations. We mustn't forget our past experiences. We mustn't forget this experience of the past 10 years. The opposing party that is the subject of our discussion at present is the US."

4. The American model of negotiation

In the practical experience of the Islamic Republic of Iran over the past five decades, the American model of negotiation has exhibited certain characteristics that have, in effect, stripped it of the essence of rational diplomacy and turned it into something

entirely different. These features can be summarized as follows:

4.1 Threats

Among the most peculiar traits of the American model of negotiation is its foundation upon threats. Negotiations flavored with intimidation.

"The other side has threatened that if we don't negotiate, this and that will happen. They say, 'We'll bomb you,' or 'We'll do this or that.' There are threats of this nature, some are vague and others are stated bluntly. [They say,] 'Either negotiate, or if you don't, this and that will happen.' This is a threat."

4.2 Humiliation

Another element evident in the American model of negotiation is the process of coercion and humiliation imposed upon the other party before, during, and even after the negotiations.

"He [the US president] uses absurd, unacceptable rhetoric to openly demand that the Iranian people surrender to him."

4.3 Imposition

Among the strangest features of the American model is the imposition of the negotiation's outcome beforehand and a one-sided dialogue.

"The US side has previously specified the outcome of the negotiations in advance. It has declared that it will only accept negotiations, it wants to enter negotiations, where the outcome will be an end to nuclear activities and enrichment in Iran. This means we would sit at the negotiating table with the US, only for the result of our talks to be precisely what they've already decreed must be done. This isn't negotiations; it's dictating the outcome. It's imposition."

5. Conditional and case-specific negotiations, not foundational ones

According to Quranic principles, as well as the explicit texts and the conduct of the Infallible Imams (pbwt), engaging in foundational negotiations with the enemy or the combatant disbeliever is impossible. Based on the blessed Surah al-Mumtahanah, believers are not permitted to establish any form of instrumental guardianship with the combatant

disbelievers. Negotiation is only conceivable in very limited and temporary cases, within the boundaries of shared and short-term interests, and only in regard to a specific and conditional matter.

An example of this is the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah, which stands as one of the most notable instances of the Noble Prophet's negotiations with combatant disbelievers. That negotiation was not foundational but rather designed within a limited and conditional framework. The Noble Prophet never expressed any willingness to compromise the principles of faith. He did not recognize the ignorant pre-Islamic values of Quraysh, including their idolatry, as legitimate. Instead, from a tactical perspective, he sought to control and manage the hostile relations with the false current within the boundaries of the agreed terms.

In negotiations with the US, it is therefore not possible to engage in dialogue over the fundamental principles and values of the Islamic Revolution. Nor can the foundational principles of foreign policy and regional conduct, which have been shaped according to Islamic teachings, be subjected to negotiation. Dialogue can only occur within a limited and specific scope.

6. Revolutionary rationality

All that has been said can perhaps be understood under a single principle: Revolutionary rationality. A rational actor, from a conscious and logical perspective, examines tools and opportunities and, depending on whether they serve benefit or avert harm, may permit or reject the use of an instrument such as negotiation. It is evident that accepting negotiations under conditions of coercion, humiliation, or surrender is not rational.

"Today, we sometimes hear the word 'rationality' used in some discourses. They invoke 'rationality,' but what they mean by it is for us to bow down to the US. This is how they describe 'rationality!' What they want is for us to surrender to an aggressive power. This is what they consider 'rationality' to be! This isn't rationality."



Timeless Truths

We gained a new experience during the nuclear negotiations. We should not forget about this experience. This experience is that if we compromise with America, he will not stop playing his destructive role. We held meetings with the 5+1 committee, and we even negotiated with the Americans separately on the nuclear matter. Our brothers and our diligent officials reached some agreements and results. The other side – America – made some commitments. The Islamic Republic fulfilled its commitments, but that untrustworthy, unreliable, and dishonest side is going back on their promises! The US has continued to break their promises until today! Very well, then, this is an experience. When you are discussing and arguing with America over any other matter, if you compromise and give in, he will preserve his destructive role. This is the outcome of all issues – on the issue of human rights, missiles, terrorism, Lebanon, and Palestine. Whenever you compromise and abandon your principles and your beliefs – of course, this is impossible – you should know that he will not get along with you. At first, he enters the arena with warm words and with a smile on his face, but when it is action time, he goes back on his promises, and he will not fulfill the commitments that he has made. You should attach great significance to this experience.

Jun 3, 2016



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