Coordination Between Israel and the US Regarding Nuclear Talks with Iran

written by Meir Ben Shabbat | 25.04.2025

“If the Americans continue to adopt a constructive approach and refrain from making unreasonable demands, we will reach a good agreement,” said Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi last week, on the eve of his visit to China to renew Beijing’s support for Tehran’s position.

President Trump’s conversation with Prime Minister Netanyahu, and his subsequent statement that “we are on the same side on all issues,” did not cause any particular concern in the palace of the Supreme Leader. Neither did the postponement of the technical team meeting, originally scheduled for last week, now set for this coming Saturday alongside the meeting of the heads of delegations.

From the Iranian perspective, the mere continuation of negotiations yields several benefits:

1. Immunity from military attack on Iran for as long as negotiations continue.
2. Precious time to restore air defense capabilities damaged by the Israeli strike in October and to increase stockpiles of offensive weapons.
3. A potential escape route from fateful decisions for Iran that may emerge from the IAEA Board of Governors meeting on June 9. That discussion is expected to determine whether Iran is meeting its commitments under the nuclear agreement. Based on its conclusions, a decision may be made to activate the snapback mechanism to reimpose the sanctions lifted following the 2015 agreement.
4. Erosion of US opening positions against it. Iran already can count as a success the limitation of the negotiations to the nuclear issue alone and American willingness to discuss approval of a civilian nuclear program in Iran.
5. Moral reinforcement for regime elements and possible relief from

domestic pressure due to the encouraging message the talks convey about the prospect of developments that might bring a positive change to the economic situation.

6. A temporary (at least) boost to Iran's regional and diplomatic status due to diminished expectations of a military resolution.
7. Creation of (real or simulated) tension between Jerusalem and Washington, especially with such a pro-Israel administration at the start of its term.In this situation, Israel needs to coordinate with the US on three key issues: 1. The red lines for an agreement. 2. The timetable for concluding the talks. 3. The measures to be taken if no agreement is reached.

   The "red lines" must include the complete elimination (destruction or removal from Iranian hands) of capabilities that could be used for a military nuclear program – materials, components, and facilities; the imposition of restrictions on Iran's missile program; establishment of an effective inspection mechanism and automatic penalties for violations; and restrictions and penalties for involvement in terrorism, weapons proliferation, and the use of proxy forces.

All of this must be permanent and without an expiration date.

Regarding a timetable, the IAEA Board of Governors meeting on June 9 should serve as the deadline. It would be prudent to agree on this while the US continues its efforts to activate the snapback option for renewed sanctions.

As for measures if no agreement is reached, it would be wise to minimize public discussion and reserve this for internal deliberations.

Israel's concern over the possibility of a bad agreement is understandable, but it should not be seen as a foregone conclusion. Trump understands the risks of such a deal. After all, he was the one who labeled the JCPOA of 2015 a "terrible agreement" and detailed its weaknesses.

The arguments against that agreement have only grown stronger since then. One does not need a vivid imagination to understand the danger posed by a radical Islamic regime with advanced missile technology and nuclear capabilities.

If the diplomatic channel does not yield the expected results from Trump's

perspective (assuming they reflect Israel's position as well), this would not only justify but obligate other courses of action to remove the Iranian threat. And for that as well the US and Israel must prepare.