

Paul Craig Roberts: US-Iran Talks Collapse: Who's Really Blocking Peace?

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#Nima

The proposal, the U.S. proposal. Then Donald Trump waited for the Iranian response, and he got the response. He said it is totally unacceptable, and here is what he said today.

#Guest

It's unbelievably weak, I would say. I would call it the weakest right now. After reading that piece of garbage they sent us, I didn't even finish reading it. I said, I'm not going to waste my time reading it. I would say it's one of the weakest right now. It's on life support. They understand these are all medical people. Dr. Oz, life support is not a good thing. Do you agree? Diagnostic. I would say the ceasefire is on massive life support, where the doctor walks in and says, "Sir, your loved one has approximately a 1% chance of living."

#Nima

Yeah. Paul, what he added later on, he said, we waited four days for a document from Iran that would take less than 10 minutes to prepare. And here is what we've learned from the head of the Iranian parliament, Paul. He tweeted two important tweets today. The first one is, our armed forces are ready to deliver a well-deserved response to any aggression. Mistaken strategy and mistaken decisions will always lead to mistaken results. The whole world has already figured this out. We are prepared for all options. They will be surprised.

And the second tweet, that was just moments ago before coming to this live, he said he's basically talking about the 14-point plan that they had prepared before. It is that 10-point plan together with some sort of preconditions. That's the final response on the part of the Iranians, and they're not going to change it. And looking at what's going on, Paul, on one side, Donald Trump, it seems that he expected he was going to get a totally different sort of proposal from Iran in all response. It doesn't seem that Iran has moved even a little bit toward what Donald Trump wanted them to be. How do you see the situation?

#Paul

Well, the situation is that Donald Trump allowed Netanyahu to put him in a mess. And Trump hasn't figured out any way of getting out of the mess that doesn't look like defeat, which he can't accept. So he continues to bluster and bluster, and he overlooks that it was not Iran that asked for the ceasefire. It was Trump and Netanyahu who asked for the ceasefire. Why did they ask? Because they were losing. And yet Trump continues to pretend like somehow the Iranians were totally destroyed and should surrender and do whatever he tells them. This is delusion, right? There's nothing else you can say about it.

So as long, I mean, if I was Trump and I had let myself get into such a mess by some outside party, I listened to Israel. I didn't listen to the CIA or the Defense Intelligence Agency or anybody who had American interests in mind. I listened to Netanyahu, who had Israel's interests in mind. And I got in a mess. Well, I certainly wouldn't be blustering against Iran and making more and more threats that I cannot possibly deliver. I would be finding a way to work with them to exit the situation that didn't look like a defeat for Trump. But he's not doing that. So I assume he's still under Netanyahu's thumb.

And Netanyahu is not going to let him out of the conflict because Netanyahu knows he can't fight Iran, that he has to use the Americans to fight Iran. And so Trump is trapped. What is the likely outcome? It's very difficult to tell, isn't it, Nima? It may just be another one of those long, drawn-out conflicts that are sort of put on hold. The conflict is not live, but it's always present. And there are a few exchanges of missiles or drones, and it just goes on forever. So given Trump's approach, which is not helpful to getting the Iranians to agree to let him out with some face saved, it looks like he's stuck.

#Nima

Paul, if we assume that your understanding of Donald Trump, which is Netanyahu basically running the show and Donald Trump just following Netanyahu and his sort of attitude—Netanyahu had an interview with 60 Minutes yesterday in which he pointed out the war is not over. And when he was asked how long it would take to put an end to this war, he said maybe months ahead. You know, the war started with this sort of promise on the part of Donald Trump—it's going to take weeks, a few weeks.

#Paul

Oh, three days?

#Nima

Yeah, three days, yeah. And right now we are weeks into this fight, and Netanyahu is talking about months ahead. It seems that he somehow believes that the United States is going to fight his war.

It's going to be months or years. Something like that is happening in the mind of Netanyahu, in my opinion.

#Paul

Well, the United States has been fighting Israel's wars for a quarter of a century. That's what the so-called war on terror was all about—fighting Israel's wars for greater Israel. We destroyed Libya, Iraq, and Syria for Israel. It was our soldiers who died, not Israelis. It was our money that was wasted. And so, of course, he expects us to continue. Trump has repeatedly endorsed Israel as his first choice of everything on earth, and he's shown clearly that Israel comes before Americans. We see it in everything he does. Think back a few months ago to the protests in American universities, particularly the prestige universities, the Ivy League.

Trump called in—well, not Trump, but he had the Republicans call in the presidents of these universities and question them: how dare you let those students protest against Israel's genocide? As well as, I remember, the Black woman who was president of Harvard had to resign because she didn't send the campus police to beat up the students and stop them from protesting against Israel. And then Trump announced any foreign student in an American university here legally on a visa for study who protests against Israel is expelled back to his home country. So here you see, on the part of the president of the United States, a total commitment to Israel.

It's total. Well, it's easy to understand, isn't it, Nima? Because look at all the funding he had in his campaign. It came from the Jewish multibillionaires. The story is that his whole commercial life benefited from Jewish funding. And he got loans on good terms. And if things went wrong, he wasn't ever pressed. So then he has a Jewish son-in-law that he allows to run, who has no official government appointment, who he allows to run around and negotiate for the United States with Dmitry in Russia, with the Iranians. What else do you need to know?

#Nima

Paul, he said Netanyahu said that Israel is planning to be independent of the United States, not receiving any more funds from the United States. When he was asked about the timeline for that, he said maybe in the next decades. So, Paul, looking at the Israeli economy today, because we've learned from many people since the war started—not only, you know, in June 2025, when the first round of war started—then we had the second round in February 2026. And these two wars have influenced Israeli society. Many people left Israel because of the political and social turmoil that has happened so far.

And how dependent is Israel on the United States? Because we know when it comes to the interceptors or cruise missiles, they're totally dependent on the United States. But when it comes to surveillance, some sort of spying gadgets or the things that they can produce in their country, they're good at producing those things. But those things are not, you know, tools to be used in a

real war. In a real war, you need ammunition, you need artillery, you need all of this, which they've not been able to produce the way they need them in this war. So how do you find the Israeli economy after all? Well...

#Paul

I don't know what to say about the Israeli economy, but I do know what to say about the implication that you're asking about. Israel is totally dependent on the United States for any advanced weapons system. Its air force is American. Its targeting technology is American. Its Iron Dome protective shield, which doesn't protect any longer, is American. And more importantly, its diplomatic protection is American. It can rely on the United States to block every UN resolution against Israel. I forget how many we've vetoed—it's a hundred and something. And also, Israel gets every year a gift of multibillion dollars from the American taxpayers who can't pay their own bills.

And they use that money to come back with it in bulging pockets to purchase the United States House of Representatives, the United States Senate, and the presidency. So the money that the Congress takes from the American taxpayers, the multibillions, and gives to Israel, comes back. It's kind of like a money-laundering operation. The Congress gives them the money. The money comes back to them in campaign contributions. And no one does anything about it. So, I don't know why Netanyahu says they'll be free of dependency on American protection in 10 years. I don't think Israel can exist independently of American protection, unless Putin is going to give them Russian protection. So what do we make of it? It's probably the politics of the situation that Netanyahu has gotten Trump into.

And Trump is in this situation only because of Netanyahu. And so Netanyahu is creating this notion of Israel's separateness from Washington, that Israel is not committed to the relationship beyond another 10 years. It's a way of kind of taking some of the pressure off of Trump, which people are asking, including the members of Make America Great Again, MAGA: how'd you get us in this mess? It's a bigger mess than has been acknowledged economically for us, for the whole world, because the main effect on the oil price hasn't happened yet. And the reason it hasn't happened yet is there were a lot of Russian tankers filled with oil on the seas, a lot of Iranian oil in tankers on the seas. And to alleviate the shortage caused by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, Trump removed the sanctions.

So the Russian oil was delivered, the Iranian oil was delivered. Plus, Trump opened up the American Strategic Petroleum Reserve and dumped all that oil. Well, now that's in the system. There's no more to dump. So if the strait stays closed, you're going to see one hell of a rise in the price of energy, which then brings up everything. So this is an additional cost that Trump faces, and it's why he desperately needs to get out of the situation, but he doesn't know how to behave to get out. He keeps escalating the threats. He keeps blustering what he's going to do to Iran. He can't do anything to Iran. The whole world knows it, and so he makes a fool out of the United States. Where all this ends up, who knows?

#Nima

You know what's so amazing to me is that he today was talking about the Kurds, you know, the Iraqi Kurdistan, and how they were not sending the weapons that Donald Trump sent to them, to send them to the Iranians. You know, this sort of lies and propaganda is unbelievable, because the Israelis—I'm sure the Israelis were selling him these sorts of lies and false intelligence—that if you send these weapons to Iraqi Kurdistan, they're going to help you overthrow the government, to topple the government. And he's not learning anything at all with this war. He's just repeating those same lies that the Israelis were selling him before this war started.

#Paul

Yeah, you know where those weapons are probably going? To Israel, who sells them on the black market and pockets the money. That's the profit that now he uses to keep his coalition satisfied. They share out the profits of the weapon systems that are allegedly sent to treasonous Iranians who are going to overthrow the government for Trump. The Israelis take them, sell them on the black market, pocket the money.

#Paul

Look, I think Trump's hopeless, and he hasn't got the wits to get out of the mess. So who knows what's going to happen.

#Nima

But do you know anybody in the administration or outside the administration who's helping him?

#Paul

No. None of them have any wits. They're all Zionists. They're all pro-Israel. I think they're confused as to who they actually represent. Do they represent America or Israel? You see far more statements from Trump and his officials that they represent Israel than you do that they represent Americans. Trump said, oh, if the gas price goes up, we just have to pay it for Israel's sake. So in other words, the president of the United States has said, look, all you Americans, all you MAGA people who thought I was going to do something, you've got to pay so we can save Israel. That's the message from the Trump administration. And it's not going down well.