

Pravin Sawhney: The US-Iran MOU: Ceasefire or Cover?

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The document of the MOU is coming out, and the two sides are talking about it. You see the repercussions in Israel and how the reaction is coming from the Israelis. They don't want it. They see it as a huge defeat for Israel. And it seems that the Trump administration is somehow happy. They're happy with the MOU; that's why they signed it. Donald Trump signed it in France, in Versailles. The location is somehow historic. And the Iranian side is somewhat skeptical about what's going on. We had the Iranian leadership coming out yesterday and putting out a statement that he gave permission to the Iranian government to negotiate. And he said, I think differently, but I gave permission to the government to negotiate. By the way, it was the same — we had the same position from the former Supreme Leader in the case of the JCPOA, saying the same thing.

And later on, we learned that he was right about the JCPOA, because Donald Trump simply destroyed everything — he withdrew from the JCPOA. But right now, it's what's going on. Considering those points in the JCPOA, one of the most important points, in my opinion, is related to the situation between Israel and Lebanon, the ongoing fight that is going on. Donald Trump is trying to put pressure on Benjamin Netanyahu. It's something new. It's something new for Washington. It's not something that Washington is accustomed to. It's something new. That's why you see many people arguing and criticizing Donald Trump in Israel and outside of Israel, in the United States. But how do you see the whole situation — the way that Iran is coming in, the United States is trying to manage some sort of thought and the complexity in Lebanon?

#Pravin

See, you've asked a couple of questions. Let's do that one by one. Now, as far as the MOU is concerned, in my opinion, both Iran and America are keen on this MOU, that this works towards the deal. That means after 60 days and beyond 60 days, they can extend by mutual consent. Now, as far as President Trump is concerned, he wants the war to end, and there are many reasons why I say that. So for the Americans, the war is over. One reason is that President Trump actually has no

military option at all today, whereas the Iranians, they have a lot of military options, and they have economic options. They can bring global pain, economic pain to the world. They can block the Strait of the Red Sea whenever they want. So they have far too many options.

That's one. Second, in my opinion, President Trump wants to be remembered as the president for peace. Because please recall the National Security Strategy of the Trump administration that came out in November 2025. It very clearly said that President Trump wants his legacy to be that of the president of peace. So he's gotten into a wrong war. Now he wants to get out of this war and retain his legacy. Then there's another point, and that is that in 2025, President Trump renamed the Department of Defense as the Department of War. And recently we heard Pete Hicks, the Secretary of War, has sought a budget for 2027 for the Department of War — a whopping 1.5 trillion dollars from the U.S. Congress.

Now, what they want to do is basically get out of this war in West Asia and pivot to the Arctic Ocean, because that is where the problems are for the Trump administration. There are military problems and there are economic security issues also, because if you see the Western Hemisphere, something like 22 countries are on board the Belt and Road Initiative of China. And this is the reason, in my opinion, that President Trump himself has signed the MOU. That means he's taken ownership of the MOU. And after that, now he wants to see this implemented. And this is the reason, as you mentioned, the unusual things are happening — that both President Trump and JD Vance have come out openly against Israel and Netanyahu.

And JD Vance has very clearly said in the open that Israel can only sustain itself with American power. And that is the reality. So that is where we are. So as far as the big war is concerned, in my opinion, the big war is over — the war that America was fighting with Iran. But we are left with the belligerent Israel. Now, as far as Israelis are concerned, everybody knows that they have their different war objectives, so they will continue with what they are doing in Lebanon. Now, there are two things involved here. If you see the MOU, it calls for two things.

One, it says that there must be peace on all the fronts. That means all the allies of the Iranians — that means the entire resistance front should calm down. That includes Lebanon, and that includes the ceasefire in Lebanon that the Israelis should do with Hezbollah. That's one part. The second part is that the territorial integrity of Lebanon has to be maintained. What that means is that the Israelis are already in occupation of southern Lebanon. Something like 20 percent of the territory of Lebanon is under the occupation of Israel. They are now reportedly building up their settlements there. They have changed their maps there.

So I think the Iranians are being extremely wise. They want the ceasefire to hold. I mean, for the time being, it has stopped. That means as far as West Asia is concerned, they have to live with this no war, no peace situation. So long as the ceasefire holds, the territorial integrity issue can be tackled later, which is why the Iranian team led by Abbas Araqchi, they are already now in Switzerland or they are on their way. They are going there unless again Netanyahu breaks the

ceasefire in Lebanon. So that is what is happening in West Asia. So we are looking at what I call a no war, no peace situation. The mischief of Netanyahu will not go away, not only there, but in Gaza also.

If you see, since the ceasefire came about in Gaza in October, Netanyahu — something like 1,000 civilians have been killed. A genocide has been going on there. They are not getting humanitarian aid at all, all because of Netanyahu. So the Zionists will continue with their activities. That's one part. Second part, very interesting that you have just asked me, is about the Supreme Leader of Iran, which is Ayatollah Khamenei. Now see, what has happened is that the Iranians, when you see the MOU, they have got a lot, and they should get a lot because they have won the war. It's as simple as that. This is not an MOU which has been done in peacetime, that both sides have to win.

So all these tantrums that are going on in America from the policymakers, from the media, from the establishment, that Trump has given more to Iran in the MOU than he has got in return — it's baseless, because this MOU is a consequence of war, a war that Iran has won decisively. So once we understand that part, the problem now is there are a lot of Iranian voices which are saying that Iran should have nuclear weapons. So what the Supreme Leader, in my opinion, has done is he has taken those voices also into consideration and issued a statement saying that his views are different from the views of the President.

And what he's saying is, I will go with the opinion of the President because he's the Supreme Leader of the National Security Council of Iran, and he's the man who has signed the MOU. Now, you see, the point that the Iranians need to understand is something that their leadership has understood. That is very simple — what the Iranians are trying to do in West Asia is to take everybody along. This is what the new world order is all about. That means all the problems of the region should be solved by the regional players. That means everybody has to be taken along. Now, if Iran gets a nuclear weapon, what happens is that the trust will be lost. The Iranians will not be trusted by the regional players.

Now, if the trust is not there, then you cannot build up a regional framework — something that the Iranians are trying to do. Because then what will happen is that Iran will be seen as a hegemon and not as a partner country if Iran gets the weapon. So I think what is happening is that the Iranians are wise people, and they have decided to go for the negotiations. But of course, their red line is that Trump and JD want to leash Netanyahu, and Netanyahu has his own agenda. So that is where things stand. But in my opinion, Trump is determined to see this through — you know, the 60 days till the deal is signed, and maybe beyond also by mutual consent. He has no intentions of going back to war. Yeah.

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I think the problem for Donald Trump right now is Lebanon and how he can manage the Israeli government there. Because sooner or later, if they continue with these attacks on Lebanon, Iran is

going to respond. The last two or three days they were talking about how somehow Iran may attack Israel, but there are communications behind the scenes between the United States and Iran on how to manage that. So far, it seems that the United States is every time telling Iran they're putting pressure on Netanyahu and the Israelis to back down. And looking at the way that Israel is going against the Trump administration, they're attacking basically the same people who supported Donald Trump — you know, Alison, those Zionists who supported Donald Trump, who helped him to be elected. And right now they're going against Donald Trump. And you see J.D. Vance coming out and responding to those attacks. How do you see that going on in Lebanon?

#Pravin

So you see, this will go on. But as far as the Iranians are concerned, I see no sense, and they are very wise people. They will not attack Israel. All they have to do is shut down the Strait of Hormuz for commercial traffic. Once they do that, then the pressure is on Trump and J.D. Vance to get after Netanyahu, and that is what they are trying to do. Because you see, as far as the Iranians are concerned, I see the wise people that they are. They are looking ahead. They are looking beyond, in my opinion, even the final deal. They are looking at Gaza. They are looking at Hamas in Gaza. They are even looking at the Palestinian issue. And this is something that at this stage they did not want to put in the MOU. Because please remember that they have the backing of China and Russia, and the Chinese in 2024, in Beijing, got 14 Palestinian factions, including Fatah and Hamas, together.

Because what the Chinese are looking at is some sort of Palestinian self-governance body. And they have repeatedly said that they favor the two-state solution, the borders being 1967 according to that. And they want East Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian state. You see, the Iranians understand that if they can take all the regional powers along with them — which is why one of the key things in the MOU is that the Americans have to vacate their bases and the American forces should not be in the proximity of Iran — because Arakchi and the Iranian leadership, they are looking for all the regional players coming together in a collective security mode. Once that happens, and then after that, once the final deal happens, maybe it gets extended by a little more time, then they will tackle this issue.

So the point I'm making is that I see the possibility in the next one or two years, finally, under the new arrangement of a regional framework, I see the possibility of the Palestinian issue being tackled extremely seriously. And once that happens, then as far as the Zionists are concerned, they will be cut to size. Finally, then they will end their dream of getting that greater Israel. It will be over. So in my opinion, the Iranians are looking way ahead, and they will try their best to see. They will give all the leverage, they will give a long rope to the Americans, but certainly they are adamant. It's a red line for them that the attack on Hezbollah has to stop. Israel's terrorism in Lebanon has to stop. Otherwise, they shut down the Strait of Hormuz, and that is where we are.

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You mentioned that Iran is not going to be – the people in Iran don't want to be the hegemon in the region. I totally agree with that because I have seen nothing, no sign that they're willing to do that. Basically, what they're asking for in the whole region, when it comes to all the neighbors – going from Afghanistan, Pakistan, all the other GCC countries – it's all about having a prosperous region to benefit each and everybody. It's not about dominating because, you know, for example, in the case of Iran, I would say, and Pakistan, one of the best cases to be considered. For such a long time, these two countries are so close to each other. And Iran understands the reality of Pakistan and how close Pakistan is to the United States, for example.

This is the reality. And how good is the relationship between Iran and Pakistan? Putting those together, you see, there is no problem for Iran. Even the Omani government is in the same place. The Omani government has a very good relationship with the United States. They have an American base on their soil. But they were not attacked during this war because Iran respects those countries that respect Iranian sovereignty. Now, that's the whole problem with the GCC countries in the region, with American bases being used against Iran. So this is not a hegemon in the region. This is a country that wants to define itself as a country to cooperate with other powers in the region.

#Pravin

So you see, you are absolutely right. I agree with you. In fact, as you mentioned the relations between Iran and Pakistan, we also have to remember that in the Iranian version of the MOU, they have called it the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding. In other words, as far as the Iranians are concerned, in the new regional framework that they are trying to make with the help of two great powers, China and Russia, Pakistan will have a very important and central role to play in West Asia in this regional framework. So that is why they have specifically mentioned Pakistan, because you see, when you look ahead, what we see is that one of the key things in the MOU is that US forces need to go away from the proximity of Iran.

So the first proximity will be the GCC countries. Because if you see today, the Americans have something like 40 to 50,000 troops in 10 countries and 19 bases in West Asia. And when you look at those 10 bases, five countries are the GCC countries. So in my opinion, what is happening is that, first of all, Qatar. Qatar is in a very delicate situation because the Qataris do not have a land border with Iran. Then their export is LNG. They have a gas field that they share with Iran. Then the forward headquarters of Central Command is there in Qatar. Then in Qatar, you have the major American air base for air operations — the major hub is there.

Something like 10,000 American forces are there in Qatar. So the Qataris, already like the Saudis, have clinched a deal for security with the Pakistan Army. The same thing — the Qataris are also in talks. And in my opinion, as time goes by, although today we see that the UAE is looking at different routes because they don't want to use the Persian Gulf, they are basically looking at the east-west

route. Then the Kuwaitis also want to join in the east-west route of the UAE. So the point is, once over, I see a possibility that this regional framework will come up. Iran has won the war against the biggest military power in the world — America.

And it is a decisive win, as I said, because they still have the options. But it will not play a hegemonic role at all. It will look at a regional framework, and that is where they are moving slowly. And this is the reason also that Abbas Araghchi, anything that the Iranians do, he is immediately on the phone talking with all the regional players, his counterparts, talking with Sergei Lavrov, talking with Wang Yi. So he is in touch with everybody, and he is in touch with the leadership in Pakistan. So the point I'm making is that Iran is moving in an extremely sensible way, and what they have asked for, despite whatever the American establishment says, whatever they have asked for is very reasonable.

And in this MOU, the significance of this MOU is that what they have asked for is the minimum. They will not deviate from that. Otherwise, as far as they are concerned, they have the option of closing the Strait of Hormuz. And as far as the Americans are concerned, when you see the American establishment, you see their political leadership, their commentators, their senior analysts, their media, think tanks — all these people live in a bubble of their own. They still believe that America is the sole superpower in the world. The world is unipolar. The world has changed. The world is no longer unipolar. They need to understand, and they need to understand that today it's a multipolar world with three great powers, and America is one of those three great powers.

But this is something they don't understand because they don't want to understand. This is the level of hubris that exists among the Americans. They don't want to understand that the world is between orders, that a new world order is being shaped. And here is the most interesting thing that I would like to say — what this new world order is, if I may just take a minute to put this across. The present world order that we talk about, which is a hegemonic order, is based on two exceptional strengths of America: its military power and the dollar as the reserve currency of the world. This order is a hegemonic order. This order is one where America makes and breaks the rules at will.

We are talking now of a new world order where the focus is on development through peace. And that means the peace cannot be absolute peace, because absolute peace leads to conflicts and war. So this is about collective security, which is what the Iranians are trying to do. And this is about the rules having to be UN-based, which is why the last point, if you see the 14th point in the MOU, clearly says that the final deal will be endorsed by the United Nations. That means China and Russia will back this final deal whenever it comes out under the aegis of the United Nations. And it clearly says that there will be no interference in any other country's affairs. And that is precisely what the Iranians are trying to do.

Please also recall that in the month of May, Abbas Araghchi, he had gone to Moscow, where he spent an hour and a half with President Putin. And after that, he went to China, he met up with his counterpart, Wang Yi there. And once he was back in Tehran, he spoke for the first time about the

new post-war regional framework. And that is this regional framework which is unfolding now, where they are taking everybody along, which is about partnership, which is not about a hegemonic order. So the point I'm making is that this new world order, we will see this unfold for the first time in the world in West Asia after this final deal happens. So this is the most interesting development, in my opinion, at the global level.