

The Iranian Regime: Between Surrender or a Decisive Blow

Middle East

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USPA NEWS - The Russian Initiative

Introduction

Iran is currently at a critical crossroads, facing escalating political, military, and economic pressures both internally and externally. With increasing tensions in the Middle East, particularly amid indirect confrontations with Israel and the United States, the pressing question remains: Will Tehran agree to make real and comprehensive concessions, or is it heading towards a military confrontation that could be a decisive blow to the regime?

Meanwhile, Russia has put forth an urgent initiative to resolve the U.S.-Iran dispute, advocating a negotiation mechanism aimed at dismantling Iran's missile arsenal, grounding its drone fleet, and halting its nuclear program.

Internal and External Pressures

*Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has submitted his resignation to the Supreme Leader due to severe economic conditions and immense political pressures.

*Mohammad Javad Zarif, the Iranian Vice President for Strategic Affairs, has also resigned following intense internal disputes.

*Economy Minister Abdolnasser Hemmati was dismissed amid skyrocketing inflation, soaring prices, and the depreciation of the Iranian toman.

*Esmail Qaani, commander of the IRGC's Quds Force, has disappeared, with accusations of espionage for Israel.

*Several high-ranking officers in the Iranian military and Quds Force have been arrested on charges of high treason.

Iran is suffering from a crippling economic crisis due to U.S. sanctions imposed since Washington withdrew from the nuclear deal in 2018, as well as losing key markets in Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon. These sanctions and economic losses have led to the collapse of the Iranian rial, soaring prices, and rampant unemployment, fueling public discontent and emboldening opposition voices.

Internally, ongoing protests and growing dissatisfaction within the regime itself pose a serious challenge to Tehran's leadership in maintaining internal stability.

Externally, Iran is facing increasing international isolation as its regional influence wanes—especially after the fall of the Assad regime in Syria, the dismantling of Hezbollah's power in Lebanon, the destruction of Houthi infrastructure in Yemen, and the curbing of armed factions in Iraq. These developments, along with international political, military, and economic pressures, and the latest impactful Israeli strikes on Iran's air defenses and IRGC infrastructure, are pushing Tehran into a corner.

Available Options for the Iranian Leadership

First Option: Concessions and Acceptance of the Russian Mediation

One possible path for the Iranian regime is to de-escalate tensions by returning to negotiations, accepting Russia's new mediation role, and agreeing to stricter terms on the nuclear deal, including dismantling its missile capabilities. This option could provide economic relief for Tehran but would require fundamental concessions regarding its nuclear and missile programs, as well as its regional influence—something that could be perceived internally as a humiliating surrender.

Second Option: Military Confrontation and Gambling with the Regime's Future

The alternative is to escalate militarily, either by launching direct attacks on Israel and U.S. forces or by rapidly advancing its nuclear program to the threshold level, crossing all red lines. However, this approach could provoke a sweeping and devastating military strike from Israel, the United States, or both, potentially dismantling Iran's military and economic infrastructure, thereby threatening the regime's survival—especially if such a strike coincides with an internal uprising led by the opposition.

The Most Likely Scenario

It is unlikely that the Iranian regime will surrender completely without resistance, but it may be forced to make calculated concessions to avoid a potentially devastating military strike and accept Russian mediation to initiate negotiations. At the same time, Iran might resort to limited escalation through its proxies in Iraq and Yemen in an attempt to improve its bargaining position without engaging in a full-scale confrontation.

Iran is facing an existential test, and the decisions its leadership makes in the coming days and months could shape the future of the regime and the region for decades to come.

The Impact of the Russian Initiative on Resolving the Iran-U.S. Crisis

Russia's initiative to resolve the crisis between Iran and the United States comes amid escalating tensions, including ongoing U.S. sanctions and rising hostilities between Iran and Israel, as seen in mutual strikes on military bases. Seeking a swift resolution to the war in Ukraine with U.S. cooperation, Russia is positioning itself as a key diplomatic power, attempting to act as a credible mediator and prevent a regional conflict that could disrupt global stability.

Moreover, Iran's relationship with Russia is notable, as Tehran has provided military and logistical support to Moscow in its war against Ukraine. This strengthens Russia's leverage as a mediator.

Russia's Objectives Behind the Initiative

- *Enhancing Diplomatic Influence: Russia aims to position itself as a capable global mediator in resolving complex crises, thereby reinforcing its power in the emerging multipolar world order.

- *Protecting Middle Eastern Interests: With strategic ties to Iran and Syria, Moscow seeks to prevent an escalation that could threaten its regional interests and alliances.

- *Breaking International Isolation: Facing Western sanctions over the Ukraine war, Russia seeks to bolster its global standing and foster closer ties with both the U.S. and Iran.

- *Stabilizing the Energy Market: A military escalation in the Gulf could disrupt oil and gas markets, affecting Russian energy revenues.

Potential Outcomes of the Russian Initiative

- *For Iran: Tehran may view the initiative as an opportunity to ease U.S. pressure without making major concessions. However, it understands that Washington—especially under President Donald Trump—is unlikely to accept any deal that does not include strict limitations on Iran's nuclear and military programs.

- *For the U.S.: Seeking an end to the Ukraine war and Russia's reintegration into the global stage, Washington may allow Moscow to play a strategic role in mediating with Tehran, potentially averting a destructive regional conflict.

- *For Israel and U.S. Allies in the Region: Israel and Gulf states may oppose the initiative unless it imposes strict limitations on Iran's military and regional activities.

The Likely Outcome

The Russian initiative is unlikely to achieve a comprehensive breakthrough but could facilitate indirect dialogue between Tehran and Washington while buying time for Iran to stabilize its internal situation. At best, it may lead to a temporary de-escalation, though a lasting resolution remains unlikely without a significant shift in either party's calculations.

Possible U.S.-Israeli Strike on Iran:

Scenarios and Consequences

Following recent missile and airstrike exchanges between Iran and Israel, Israeli and U.S. threats of a preemptive strike are growing, particularly if Tehran crosses red lines regarding its nuclear program or directly threatens American and Israeli interests.

To bolster its military capabilities against potential Iranian threats, Israel has recently acquired advanced U.S.

weaponry, including:

- *Bunker-Buster Bombs: 40,000 bombs (2,000-pound) and 7,000 bombs (20,000-pound) capable of destroying underground facilities

such as Iran's nuclear sites and missile bases.

*Advanced Fighter Jets: Additional F-35 stealth fighters with electronic warfare capabilities for precision strikes on strategic targets.

*Aerial Refueling Systems: U.S.-supplied tankers extend Israeli aircraft range, enabling deep penetration into Iranian territory.

Most Likely Military Scenarios

Scenario 1: Limited Strike (Most Likely)

Objective: Destroy key nuclear sites and disrupt uranium enrichment.

Tactics: Airstrikes via stealth fighters (F-35, B-2) and cruise missile attacks (Tomahawk) targeting Natanz, Fordow, and Isfahan.

Expected Outcome: Iran's nuclear program would be significantly damaged but not eliminated. Iran may respond with limited missile attacks on Israel or U.S. bases but will avoid major escalation.

Scenario 2: Large-Scale Military Operation

Objective: Cripple Iran's military capabilities and regional influence.

Tactics: Target military bases, missile sites, and IRGC infrastructure; assassinate key military figures.

Expected Outcome: Iran may escalate through proxies, striking Saudi, UAE, or Israel with missiles and drones, risking broader conflict.

Scenario 3: Full-Scale War (Least Likely)

Objective: Overthrow the Iranian regime or force radical policy changes.

Tactics: Prolonged air campaign, cyberattacks, direct attacks on Supreme Leader and key officials.

Expected Outcome: Could destabilize the region, drawing Russia and China into the conflict.

Conclusion

The Iranian regime faces a crucial choice:

accept negotiations under Russian mediation and dismantle its nuclear and missile programs, or resist and risk devastating U.S.-Israeli strikes that could cripple its military and economic infrastructure. Alternatively, continued economic sanctions and internal unrest may lead to regime collapse from within.

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