

Trump pauses attacks on Iran's energy plants, says talks 'going well'

By Steve Holland, Parisa Hafezi and Alexander Cornwell

March 26, 2026 5:55 AM GMT+2 Updated 17 hours ago



It is simply an exchange of messages through our friends.

Summary

Iranian official calls US proposal 'unfair', but stresses that diplomacy has not ended

Impact of conflict spreads as businesses grapple with disruption

Oil prices resume climb, stock markets retreat as ceasefire

optimism fades

WASHINGTON/DUBAI/TEL AVIV, March 26 (Reuters) - U.S. President [Donald Trump](#) said on Thursday he would pause attacks on Iran's energy plants for 10 days at Tehran's request and said talks with Iran were going "very well," although an Iranian official dismissed a U.S. proposal for ending nearly [four weeks of fighting](#) as "one-sided and unfair."

Trump made the comment in a Truth Social post shortly after threatening during a cabinet meeting at the White House to increase pressure on Iran if it did not make a deal.

The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up [here](#).

Advertisement · Scroll to continue

"As per Iranian Government request ... I am pausing the period of Energy Plant destruction by 10 Days to Monday, April 6, 2026, at 8 P.M., Eastern Time," Trump said in the post.

"Talks are ongoing and, despite erroneous statements to the contrary by the Fake News Media, and others, they are going very well," he said.

The war, which has raged for nearly four weeks, has massively disrupted shipping, sending crude oil prices up nearly 40% and causing a spike of nearly 67% in shipments of liquefied natural gas to Asia. Prices of nitrogen-based fertilizers, critical to food production, have risen by nearly 50%.

Advertisement · Scroll to continue

Despite Trump's upbeat assessment, Iran continued to retaliate against U.S. and Israeli strikes by hitting Israel and U.S. bases; it also struck Gulf states and effectively blocked Middle East fuel exports via the Strait of Hormuz.

During the White House meeting, Trump said the U.S. would become the Islamic Republic's "worst nightmare" if it did not comply with U.S. demands, which include opening the strait and ending Tehran's nuclear program. He said taking control of Iran's oil was an option, but gave no details.

Advertisement · Scroll to continue

The Iranian official told Reuters that a 15-point U.S. proposal, conveyed to Tehran by Pakistan, was reviewed in detail on Wednesday by senior Iranian officials and the representative of Iran's supreme leader. While they felt it served only U.S. and Israeli interests, diplomacy had not ended, the official said.

Trump said during the White House cabinet meeting: "They now have the chance, that is Iran, to permanently abandon their nuclear ambitions and to join a new path forward."

"We'll see if they want to do it. If they don't, we're their worst nightmare. In the meantime, we'll just keep blowing them away."

Oil had jumped to \$108 a barrel on Thursday and stock markets fell on renewed pessimism over ceasefire prospects as global plastics, technology, retail and tourism struggled with the impact. But Trump's social media post buoyed the dollar late in the day.

STRAIT OF HORMUZ A CRUCIAL ISSUE

Trump suggested on Thursday that Iran let 10 oil tankers transit the Strait of Hormuz as a goodwill gesture in negotiations, including some Pakistan-flagged vessels.

The president has sent thousands of troops to the Middle East, some of whom have already arrived, driving expectations of a ground invasion, although details remain scant.

A note seen by Reuters on Tuesday to the United Nations from Iran said "non-hostile vessels" could transit the strait if they coordinated with Iranian authorities.



[1/9]A view of a residential building damaged by a strike, amid the U.S.-Israeli conflict with Iran, in Tehran, Iran, March 23, 2026. Majid Asgaripour/WANA (West Asia News Agency) via REUTERS [Purchase Licensing Rights](#)

A Thai oil tanker has passed through the strait following diplomatic coordination with Iran, and Malaysia said its vessels were also being allowed to transit in a sign that restrictions were loosening for some countries. Iran would be receptive to any request from Spain related to the strait, its embassy in Madrid said, in the first such offer to an EU state.

One former senior U.S. official said Iran, whose leadership apparatus had been shattered by the war, likely felt it needed to inflict more pain to deter future attacks.

"We're a long way from an actual potential, real negotiation with the Iranians at this stage," the former official said, adding that Trump would need to decide soon whether to use force to open the Strait.

Trump's special envoy, Steve Witkoff, confirmed that the U.S. had sent a "15-point action list" as a basis for negotiations to end the war. It includes demands ranging from dismantling Iran's nuclear program to curbing its missiles and effectively handing over control of the strait, according to sources and reports.

Pakistan's foreign minister said "indirect talks" between the U.S. and Iran were taking place through messages relayed by Islamabad, with other states including Turkey and Egypt also supporting mediation efforts.

Any talks, were they to happen, would likely prove very difficult given the positions laid out by both sides.

Iran has hardened its stance since the war began, demanding guarantees against future military action, compensation for losses, and formal control of the strait, Iranian sources say.

It also told intermediaries that Lebanon must be included in any ceasefire deal, regional sources said.

Trump has not identified with whom the U.S. is negotiating in Iran, with many high-ranking officials among the thousands of people killed in the war across the Middle East.

Israel removed Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi and Parliamentary Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf from its hit list after Pakistan urged Washington to press Israel not to target them, a Pakistani source with knowledge of the discussions told Reuters. An Israeli military spokesperson declined to comment.

WAVES OF MISSILES

On Thursday, Iran launched multiple waves of missiles at Israel, striking Tel Aviv, Haifa and other areas, including a Palestinian town in central Israel.

At least one ballistic missile hit Tel Aviv, according to Israel's military, while others carried cluster munitions that dispersed smaller explosives, damaging homes and cars. Israel's ambulance service said a man was killed in Nahariya after Hezbollah fired a rocket barrage at the northern city.

In Iran, strikes hit the southern city of Bandar Abbas and a village on the outskirts of the southern city of Shiraz. A university building in Isfahan was reported to have been hit.

U.S. and Israeli officials said Israel had killed the naval commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, and that it had many more targets left as it degraded Iranian capabilities.

Reporting by Reuters bureaux; Writing by Andrea Shalal, Aidan Lewis and Keith Weir; Editing by Don Durfee, Philippa Fletcher and Matthew Lewis