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Iran peace talks again on shaky ground

Negotiations uncertain after U.S. seizes ship

Kathryn Palmer, Adrianna Rodriguez and Francesca Chambers
USA TODAY

Iran is considering attending peace talks with the United States in Pakistan, a senior Iranian official told Reuters on April 20, following moves by Islamabad to end a U.S. blockade of Iran's ports, a major hurdle for Iran to rejoin peace efforts. However, the official stressed that no decision had been made.

With a two-week ceasefire set to expire on April 22, a senior Iranian official said Tehran was "positively reviewing" its participation but no final decision had been made. The comments conveyed a clear change of tone from earlier statements ruling out attendance and pledging to retaliate for U.S. aggression.

The Iranian official said mediator Pakistan was making positive efforts to end the U.S. blockade and ensure Iran's participation.

The ceasefire had appeared in jeopardy after the United States said it had seized an Iranian cargo ship on April 19 that tried to evade its blockade in the Strait of Hormuz and Tehran vowed to retaliate.

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People walk near an anti-U.S. billboard in Tehran, Iran, on April 20. A two-week ceasefire between the United States and Iran is set to expire on April 22. MAJID ASGARIPOUR/WEST ASIA NEWS AGENCY VIA REUTERS

Major downtown Sarasota housing plan back in play



The city of Sarasota bought this building at 1544 First St. for \$2.1 million in September 2024, with a plan to use the land as part of an attainable housing complex. PHOTOS BY EARLE KIMEL/SARASOTA HERALD-TRIBUNE

Purchase of credit union would link city parcels

Earle Kimel
Sarasota Herald-Tribune
USA TODAY NETWORK

The city of Sarasota's plan to build attainable housing on First Street across from City Hall, near many of Main Street's most popular restaurants and bars, received a new spark of life this month, as the Sarasota City Commission voted to revisit negotiations to buy the First Street Credit Union at 1558 First St.

If successful, that would give the city control of almost 1.2 acres of prime downtown real estate, stretching west from the southeast corner of First Street and Orange Avenue.

Without that, the city will still own two unconnected parcels — almost



The city of Sarasota's plan to build attainable housing downtown on First Street across from City Hall has received new life with a vote to negotiate an option to purchase the First Street Credit Union.

0.46 acres occupied by the First Professional Building at 1590 First St. — and slightly more than a half-acre occupied by a city parking lot at 1530 First St. and

the adjacent structure at 1544 First St. Without the credit union, the attainable housing complex — which would likely include ground-floor commercial businesses and several levels of parking — was envisioned to include about 15,100 square feet of commercial space, up to 192 residential units and a 280-space parking garage.

What did the city commission approve?

On a 4-1 vote with Commissioner Jennifer Ahearn-Koch in dissent, the commission voted to direct interim city manager Jennifer Jorgensen to negotiate a non-binding option to purchase agreement to buy the credit union, as well as the hiring of a consultant who would have a hand in the city hiring an eventual developer.

See **HOUSING**, Page 5A

ANALYSIS

Trump's options for actions in Cuba look problematic

Rick Jervis and Francesca Chambers
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — As President Donald Trump begins to look beyond Iran, his options on what to do with Cuba appear varied and thorny — and all of them fraught with political landmines.

Launch a military strike and the Unit-

ed States could be saddled with an unpopular nation-building mission. Cut a deal with Havana and risk a revolt from Cuban American lawmakers in Trump's party — who bristle at the thought of negotiating with the regime that forced their families into exile.

In many ways, it's a lose-lose-lose situation, said Michael Bustamante of

Inside

U.S. tells Cuba to free its political prisoners. **3A**

the Cuban and Cuban-American Studies at the University of Miami.

"It's a domestic political issue that seems to have very little upside for any-

one involved," he said, adding: "None of these options seem particularly palatable or feasible."

After imposing an oil embargo on Cuba that has pushed the island to the brink of a humanitarian crisis, the Trump administration seemed poised

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