



Zarif: Difficult Nuclear Talks
Good Start for a Final Agree-
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Iran Today

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Zarif: Difficult Nuclear Talks Good Start for a Final Agreement

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has termed as "fruitful and extensive" the nuclear talks between Tehran and P5+1 in Vienna, saying negotiations were "a good start" for reaching a final agreement.

“We had three fruitful and extensive working days and both sides have the feeling that it was a good start for the difficult task we have ahead,” Zarif said in a joint press conference with EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton in Vienna on February 20.

The talks over Iran's nuclear energy program started between Iran and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council - the United States, China, Russia, France and Britain - plus Germany in the Austrian capital, Vienna, on February 18.

The discussions were presided over by Zarif and Ashton, Press TV reported.

“In addition to the discussions we had at the political level, we also started technical discussions,” Zarif said, adding that the two sides also agreed upon a time frame to follow up issues in the next four months.

The top Iranian diplomat said that during the talks in Vienna, both sides came up with a framework for comprehensive talks to reach a final agreement.

To that end, Zarif said, technical experts from both sides would meet in March, adding that he would hold a meeting with Ashton on March 17.

Ashton, for her part, said, “We had three very productive days during which we identified all the issues we need to address (to reach a final agreement). There is a lot to do. It won't be easy but we've made a good start.”

She said that both sides had identified the issues that would be addressed in the negotiations ahead.

The talks in Vienna came after the two sides clinched a landmark interim deal in the Swiss city of Geneva in November 2013. The deal took effect on January 20.



Iran's Nuclear Energy Only Subject of Talks: Zarif

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif says Tehran's nuclear energy program has been the only subject of the negotiations between Iran and the P5+1 in the Austrian capital Vienna.

The Iranian foreign minister made the remarks late on February 20 before leaving Vienna for Tehran.

He said that no other subject except for Iran's nuclear energy program will be discussed in the negotiations, stressing that there has been a common understanding among all sides in the talks over the issue.

Zarif said that during the talks, both sides came

up with a framework for comprehensive talks to reach a final agreement.

"I assure you that no one has had or will ever have the chance to talk with the Iranian nation's delegation with any language but the language of respect during the talks, and nobody will be able to impose anything on us," Zarif stated, according to IRNA report.

On February 12, the Iranian Foreign Ministry

said the country's "peaceful" nuclear energy program will be the only issue on the agenda of nuclear talks.

"Except for Iran's peaceful nuclear activities, no other issue was on the agenda of talks with the P5+1 group in any of the previous stages and will not be on the agenda of future negotiations either," said Iranian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Marzieh Afkham.

On February 12, the Iranian Foreign Ministry said the country's "peaceful" nuclear energy program will be the only issue on the agenda of nuclear talks.

Geneva Deal Solid Basis for Final Agreement: Lavrov

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov says the Geneva nuclear agreement signed by Iran and the six major world powers has created a solid foundation to reach a final agreement on Tehran's nuclear energy program.

“The agreement reached (in Geneva) creates a solid foundation for reaching a final, comprehensive settlement of all the issues,” Lavrov said on February 19.

Iran and the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council - China, Russia, Britain, France and

the United States - plus Germany concluded their fresh talks as part of efforts to reach a final agreement on February 19 in the United Nations office in the Austrian capital, Vienna.

“The Vienna meeting aims to agree on all aspects of a final package and, we hope, its implementation will finally solve this

problem,” Lavrov added.

The Russian foreign minister said both side in the talks must preserve the experience gained during last rounds of negotiations to help settle the issues.

“Right now it is extremely important to preserve and develop the Geneva experience of joint work,” he said.





Iran Nuclear Talks Constructive, Useful: US

On February 19, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Abbas Araqchi said that Tehran and the six countries had finalized a framework for comprehensive talks to reach a final agreement.

US State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf has described as “constructive and useful” the nuclear negotiations between Iran and P5+1 in the Austrian capital, Vienna.

Harf said on February 19 that the Vienna talks between Iran and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany are making progress. The negotiations are part of efforts to reach a final and permanent agreement on Tehran’s nuclear energy program.

Negotiators discussed “both process and substance,” she said.

The talks, which commenced on February 18, were presided over by Iranian Foreign Minister

Mohammad Javad Zarif and EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton.

On February 19, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Abbas Araqchi said that Tehran and the six countries had finalized a framework for comprehensive talks to reach a final agreement.

The Iranian nuclear negotiator said that the talks were held in a positive atmosphere, IRNA reported.

The talks in Vienna mark the first round of high-level negotiations held between Tehran and the P5+1 after

they clinched a landmark interim deal in the Swiss city of Geneva on November 24, 2013.

Under the deal, dubbed the Geneva Joint Plan of Action, the six countries undertook to provide Iran with some sanctions relief in exchange for Iran agreeing to limit certain aspects of its nuclear activities during a six-month period. It was also agreed that no nuclear-related sanctions will be imposed on Iran within the same timeframe. All sanctions must be lifted within a year.

Iran Continuing Its Nuclear Activities

An Iranian nuclear official says Iran is continuing with its nuclear activities, enriching uranium to five-percent purity level.

“All our nuclear sites are actively continuing their work,” Behrouz Kamalvandi, the spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) told reporters on February 19.

Kamalvandi's remarks came a day after Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Abbas Araqchi told reporters in Vienna that the Islamic Republic has never stopped its peaceful nuclear activities and will not do so in future.

As part of the deal struck between Tehran and six major world powers in Geneva last November, Iran on January 20 suspended 20 percent uranium enrichment in the presence of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors. Iran also started the process to dilute and oxidize its 196-kg stockpile of 20-percent-enriched uranium.

Kamalvandi further said that Iran and the Sextet of world can reach a final agreement on the Islamic Republic's nuclear energy program within six months if the US shows goodwill.

“If the American side has goodwill, it is possible to reach a result in six months,” the AEOI spokesman added.

“Our approach is to be able to achieve a result within six months. Although the negotiations are difficult, it does not mean that an agreement within six months is not possible,” Kamalvandi pointed out.

He emphasized that during the Vienna talks, the Iranian nuclear negotiating team focused on safeguarding Iran's nuclear achievements, securing the nation's rights and operating within the framework of the country's red lines.

According to the Joint Plan of Action nuclear deal between Iran and the Sextet of world powers, the two sides envisaged reaching an agreement in a year, he said, adding that the six countries have so far made no comment about the prolongation of the negotiations.

Iran Complying with Nuclear Obligations: IAEA

The United Nations' nuclear agency says Iran is complying with its obligations under the deal it struck with P5+1 last November.

In a new report released on February 20, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said 20-percent uranium enrichment “is no longer taking place” by Iran as agreed in the deal with the P5+1 – the United States, France, Britain, Russia, China and Germany.

The IAEA report added that a portion of Iran's stockpile of 20-percent-enriched uranium “is being downblended and the remainder is being converted to uranium oxide.”

It confirmed that no additional uranium enrichment centrifuges have been installed at Iran's Natanz and Fordow nuclear facilities, Press TV reported.

Regarding Iran's Arak nuclear reactor, the report said, “No additional major components have been installed at this reactor and there has been no manufacture and testing of fuel for the reactor.”

Iran has also provided the IAEA with an updated Design Information Questionnaire (DIQ) for the facility in Arak.

“The measures implemented by Iran and the further commitments it has undertaken represent a positive step forward,” the IAEA report said.

The IAEA report was released as Iran and the six powers concluded talks in Vienna and agreed to meet again on March 17.

62 US Organizations Oppose Congress Bill

As an anti-Iran bill gained support among Republican senators in the US Senate, more than 60 US organizations delivered a joint letter to the upper chamber urging senators to oppose the new Iran sanctions legislation.

The letter came after Iran, the United States and other members of the P5+1 agreed to implement the terms of the Joint Action Plan struck in November in Geneva, which will ease existing sanctions on Tehran, Press TV reported.

The 62 organizations warned the Senate passage of new Iran sanctions would critically endanger the possibility of diplomatic resolution to a decade-long nuclear standoff with Iran.

They also warned that additional sanctions could increase the likelihood of a new costly war in the Middle East and strongly discouraged Senate consideration of new Iran sanctions while nuclear negotiations proceed.

The letter was jointly organized by the National Iranian American Council, Friends Committee on National Legislation, and Win Without War, and was signed, among others, by CREDO and MoveOn.org.

The bill was originally introduced by Sen. Robert Menendez and Sen. Mark Kirk and has now the support of almost 60 senators.

Majority action

Senate majority leader Harry Reid on Monday

prevented the chamber from voting on the controversial legislation following the US president's opposition.

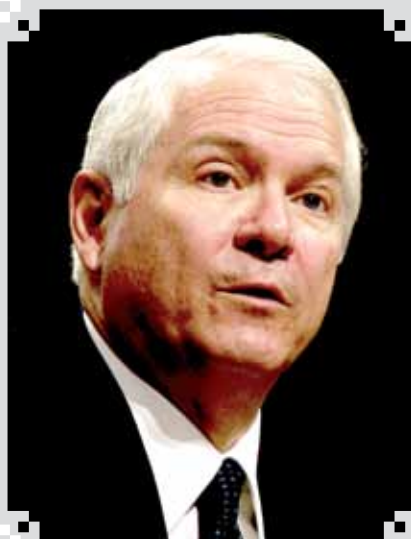
President Barack Obama has threatened to veto any sanctions legislation, saying it would undermine the ongoing talks with Iran.

Tehran also has said that the Geneva deal would be dead if the sanctions bill passes US Congress.

Under the Geneva agreement, the P5+1 undertook to lift some of the existing sanctions against Iran in exchange for Tehran's measure to limit certain aspects of its nuclear activities for a six-month period. It was also agreed that no nuclear-related sanctions would be imposed on the country within the same timeframe.

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also warned that additional sanctions could increase the likelihood of a new costly war in the Middle East and strongly discouraged Senate consideration of new Iran sanctions while nuclear negotiations proceed.



Gates: New Sanctions a Terrible Mistake

Former US defense secretary Robert Gates censured the anti-Iran bill, calling the potential imposition of any new bans on the Islamic Republic "a terrible mistake".

"Imposing new sanctions right now is a terrible mistake and would be a strategic error," Gates said in an interview with PBS NewsHour.

Gates, who first served as the United States' secretary of defense under former President George W. Bush, further said in the interview that any new sanctions against Iran should be tied to the failure of the nuclear negotiations.

He added that the US had "no choice but to sit down at the [negotiating] table with the Iranians".

German Legislator: New Sanctions Endangers Talks

A leading German legislator of the co-ruling Christian Democratic party (CDU) also warned that the new sanctions could endanger fragile talks between Iran and six world powers on a final comprehensive nuclear agreement.

Speaking to IRNA following a five-day trip to Iran, the vice chairman of the CDU faction, Andreas Schockenhoff stressed it was 'very important' that no new sanctions be imposed against Iran as long as the negotiations over a nuclear deal were ongoing, saying imposing new sanctions would be a 'breach of trust'.

He reiterated it was his impression that Iran and the West were 'serious' in the search for a permanent nuclear accord.

Schockenhoff said the latest signals from Washington as well as the bilateral talks between Iran and the US strengthened his view that there was a chance for a final agreement.

The lawmaker did admit though that the negotiations over it would be 'difficult'.

He added the in-

terim accord paved the way for a lasting deal.

The conservative MP reaffirmed Iran's right to have access to nuclear technology, including for medical and research purposes.

Schockenhoff hailed the new Iranian government for what he termed its 'constructive approach' in the sphere of foreign policy.

On Syria, Schockenhoff welcomed mounting international calls for Iran's participation at the Syria talks in the Swiss city of Montreux on January 22.

"I 'absolutely' support the position of the new German government that Iran should be at the negotiation table of the Syrian conference," the close ally of Chancellor Angela Merkel said.

He also made clear there should be 'no sideline formats' at the Syrian meeting for consultations.

Schockenhoff pointed out that Iran was having a major responsibility towards Syria and therefore any solution to the Syrian conflict had to also include Tehran.

Following a five-day trip to Iran, the vice chairman of the CDU faction, Andreas Schockenhoff stressed it was 'very important' that no new sanctions be imposed against Iran as long as the negotiations over a nuclear deal were ongoing, saying imposing new sanctions would be a 'breach of trust'.



Andreas Schockenhoff, German Legislator

Senate Democrats Stall on Iran Sanctions



By Erin Delmore | Journalist, Washington D.C.

Senate Democrats are stalling on a proposed Iran sanctions bill backed by a majority of Congress's upper chamber, with Majority Leader Harry Reid declining to bring the legislation up for a vote.

President Obama charged that the proposed legislation, which is co-sponsored by Sen. Robert Menendez, New Jersey Republican, and Sen. Mark Kirk, an Illinois Republican, would hamper diplomatic efforts aimed at getting Iran to deescalate its nuclear program, which the country maintains is for civilian energy use.

The bill would impose new sanctions on Iran if the country violates the terms of the interim deal crafted last November and set to take effect on January 20. While supporters say the threat strengthens the US's negotiating hand, critics fear the move would anger Iranian negotiators and undermine the chance of reaching a deal.

"Unprecedented sanctions and tough diplomacy helped to bring Iran to the negotiating table, and I'm grateful to our partners in Congress who share our goal of preventing Iran from

acquiring a nuclear weapon," Obama said in a statement.

But imposing additional sanctions now, he said, "will only risk derailing our efforts to resolve this issue peacefully." He promised to veto any attempts to enact new sanctions against Iran while

negotiations are ongoing.

A statement by National Security Council spokeswoman Bernadette Meehan on January 16 ratcheted up pressure on Democratic lawmakers, saying the bill "possibly closes the door on diplomacy and makes it

But imposing additional sanctions now, Obama said, "will only risk derailing our efforts to resolve this issue peacefully." He promised to veto any attempts to enact new sanctions against Iran while negotiations are ongoing.



NUCLEAR DEAL

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more likely that the United States will have to choose between military operations or allowing Iran's nuclear program to proceed."

Under the interim nuclear agreement, Iran would roll back its nuclear program. The deal calls on Iran to halt uranium enrichment above 5% and neutralize its stockpile of 20% enriched uranium – the nearest to weapons-grade. It also requires Iran to cease work on its plutonium reactor and enrichment capacity.

Iran must also allow

access to UN inspectors in order to verify compliance.

In return, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany have agreed to lift \$7-8 billion in sanctions that have damaged Iran's economy, and unlock \$4 billion in previously inaccessible oil revenue.

The bill presented by Menendez and Kirk, which is backed by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, would impose new sanctions on Iran should

the country fail to reach or comply with a permanent agreement. It would also flesh out terms acceptable by Congress for a final deal, including the cessation of uranium enrichment and construction of new centrifuges, as well as the dismantling of Iran's nuclear reactors.

On the heels of news that an implementation agreement had been reached and the six-month agreement would begin on January 20, Reid said that he would "wait and see how this plays out" before committing to bring up the bill in a vote on the Senate floor.

A majority of Senators support the bill, including at least 16 Democrats, but critically, at least 10 committee chairs oppose it. Supporters are pushing for the legislation to be brought up in the House, where it is expected to pass.

Erin Delmore is a journalist working in Washington, D.C. She graduated cum laude from Georgetown University with dual degrees in government and English. Erin currently works for "Hardball with Chris Matthews" on MSNBC. Erin has been featured in the L.A. Times, the New York Daily News, Marie Claire Magazine, and the Huffington Post. She's appeared on "World News Tonight with Diane Sawyer," FOX News, NBC's "TODAY" show and mtvU.

Source: MSNBC

The five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany have agreed to lift \$7-8 billion in sanctions and unlock \$4 billion in previously inaccessible oil revenue.



Don't Derail Iran Nuclear Deal



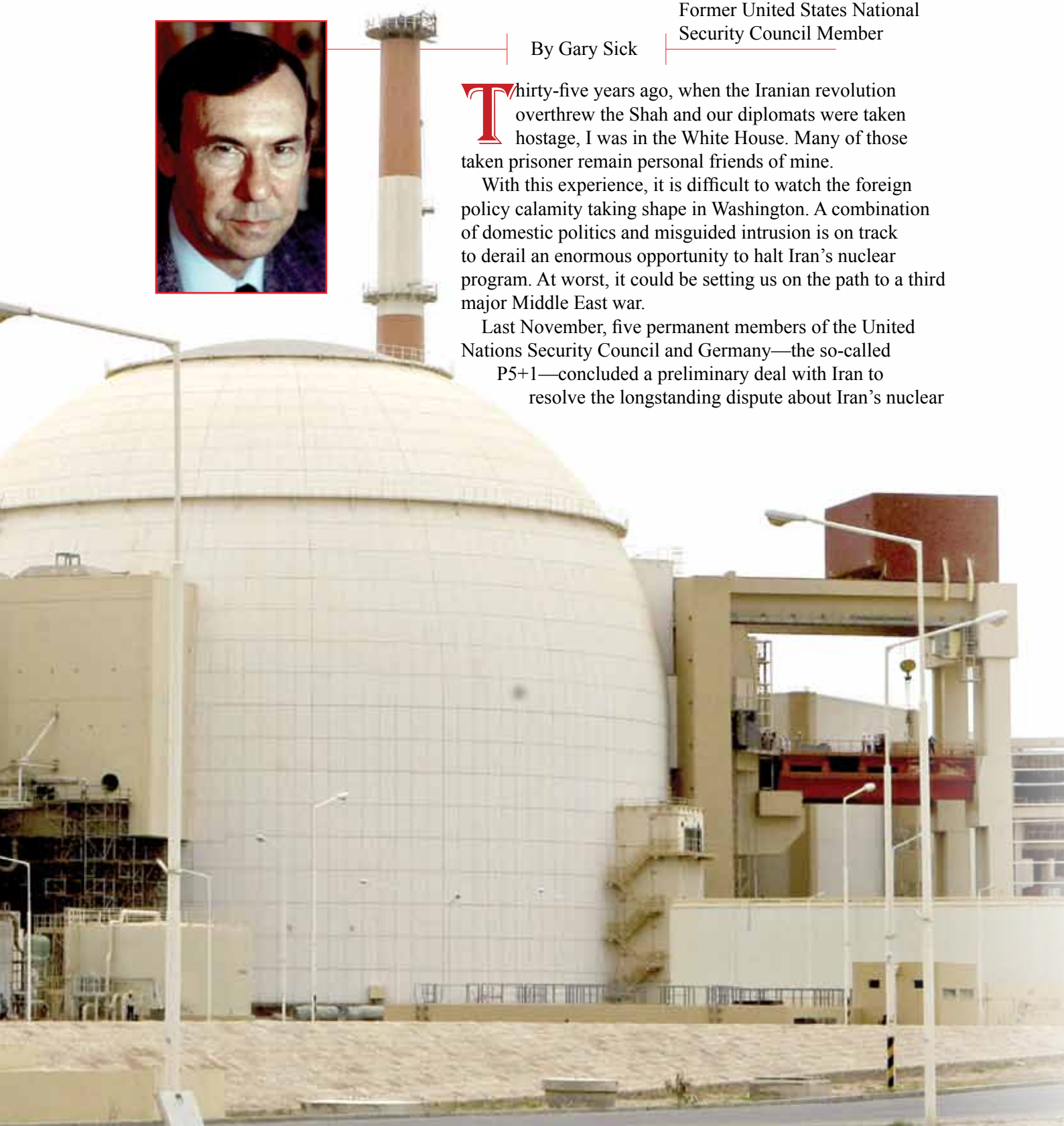
By Gary Sick

Former United States National
Security Council Member

Thirty-five years ago, when the Iranian revolution overthrew the Shah and our diplomats were taken hostage, I was in the White House. Many of those taken prisoner remain personal friends of mine.

With this experience, it is difficult to watch the foreign policy calamity taking shape in Washington. A combination of domestic politics and misguided intrusion is on track to derail an enormous opportunity to halt Iran's nuclear program. At worst, it could be setting us on the path to a third major Middle East war.

Last November, five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and Germany—the so-called P5+1—concluded a preliminary deal with Iran to resolve the longstanding dispute about Iran's nuclear



program. This agreement, set to take effect on January 20, was possible because the election in Iran last year brought a fresh face, Hassan Rouhani, to the presidency in Iran. He replaced Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, whose policies had isolated Iran as never before.

A decade earlier, Rouhani had been the chief negotiator of the nuclear issue. At that time, he basically offered to maintain Iran's nuclear enrichment program at a low level in return for recognition of Iran's right to develop peaceful nuclear power.

European negotiators, with the backing of the Bush administration, rejected the offer, insisting instead that no deal was possible unless Iran halted all enrichment of uranium.

After the talks broke down, two things happened. First, Ahmadinejad replaced the Rouhani team, accusing it of being too generous to the West. Second, Iran accelerated its production and installation of centrifuges. To date, according to the US intelligence community, Iran has taken no decision to build a nuclear weapon. However, Iran now has the technical know-how to produce a bomb. In short, we are still paying for our misjudgment of Iran and our own interests a decade ago.

The agreement between the P5+1 and Iran on Nov. 23 basically freezes Iran's nuclear program in place while talks proceed on a permanent settlement. During that time, the US and its allies agree not to introduce any new nuclear-related sanctions on Iran, while providing some modest relief from the sanctions that they have imposed on Iran over the past few years.

Now, a group of senators—some Democrats, more Republicans—is sponsoring a bill that would impose new sanctions and urges the United States to provide military support if Israel decides to unilaterally attack Iran.

This misguided bill threatens to derail the negotiations and sabotage progress. Our negotiators do not want or need this

extra sanctions threat. They already have a strong hand and new sanctions will almost certainly be seen by Iran as evidence of bad faith.

A new round of sanctions will also send a message to our allies that the US is not serious about achieving a negotiated outcome, and allied support is critical. In addition, if further sanctions are needed, they can quickly be imposed later.

If negotiations do collapse, it will be hard-liners in Iran who will be the biggest winners. The failure of another round of talks will prove their claim that negotiating with the US is pointless and strengthen their argument that those seeking to open Iran to the West are weak and naive.

President Obama has threatened to veto the bill, but that might not be enough. Anti-Iran legislation is politically popular and, with powerful lobbying behind it, such bills often pass by veto-proof majorities.

Today we are at the most hopeful moment of the past three decades. A final agreement has yet to be negotiated, and there are certain to be ups and downs. Even so, we have a real chance to cap Iran's nuclear development and establish iron-clad measures to guarantee that it will not be used for military purposes.

By contrast, the Senate bill attempts to inject the Congress into a delicate international negotiation. That only risks derailing efforts to find a peaceful solution, bringing us closer to another war in the Middle East.

Gary Sick is a senior research scholar at Columbia University's Middle East Institute and an adjunct professor at the School of International and Public Affairs. Sick served on the National Security Council under Presidents Ford, Carter, and Reagan. He was the principal White House aide for Iran during the Iranian Revolution and the hostage crisis. Sick is a captain (ret.) in the U.S. Navy, with service in the Persian Gulf, North Africa, and the Mediterranean.

Source: USA Today

The misguided bill threatens to derail the negotiations and sabotage progress. Our negotiators do not want or need this extra sanctions threat. They already have a strong hand and new sanctions will almost certainly be seen by Iran as evidence of bad faith.



What is Next?



By Sadroddin Moosavi (PhD)

The Geneva deal is now finalized and its implementation has already started.

After the two sides reached an agreement on the details of the Nov. 24 Joint Plan of Action, the countries concerned announced their consent with the modality and agreed

to start its implementation from January 20.

The speed of developments has messages for the people both inside and outside the country.

The following are the messages for the people inside the country:

First, the deal has been approved by the highest of-

fices in Iran. In other words, the mainstream is what has been approved by the Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei. Therefore, today, the need of the hour is to hold fast to the national interests and forgo factional interests.

Second, the fact that the



capitals verified the deal in less than 48 hours after its approval by the experts indicates that there is a political will at the highest level to reengage Iran into global trends—while preserving national dignity—on the basis of dignity, wisdom and exigency.

Therefore, what is needed today is national consensus for continuing support for the negotiating team in future talks.

Some of the messages for foreign players:

First, the fact that the

agreement was finalized in a few hours by different capitals indicates that there is an international consensus in this regard, which is a good development. This consensus is, of course, based on the fact that Iran's proposals are rational and based on President Rouhani's win-win diplomacy. The deal sends a clear message to P5+1: From now on, the onus is on them to win the support of different circles in their capitals to make the deal a success.

Second, the process of

negotiations showed that Iran will neither submit to pressure nor will it give up its rights. True, Iran was and is ready to negotiate, as the Leader—who has the final say in this regard—declared a number of times. However, in future talks, the foreign partners should bear in mind that they too must formulate their negotiations within the framework of the win-win diplomacy.

Third, the finalization of the deal has practically diffused the “plot” of hardliners in the US Congress. The US Congressmen, both Republican and Democrats—who are keen on continuing the use of sanctions as leverage against Iran—should have realized by now that this is not effective anymore. Instead of intimidating Iran, it would be better for them to win the confidence of the Iranian nation and government to prepare the grounds for a mutually beneficial Iran-US rapprochement. Fourth, developments in the Middle East have shown that Iran can be the most reliable political partner in the region for mutual and multilateral cooperation. The deal has opened up this opportunity; it is time to grasp it and move forward from nuclear talks toward talks on Iran-US relations. This is not only in the interests of the two countries but also of the world at large and the region in particular.

The deal has been approved by the highest offices in Iran. In other words, the mainstream is what has been approved by the Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei. Therefore, today, the need of the hour is to hold fast to the national interests and forgo factional interests.

The Iran Vote: This Really Matters



By James Fallows

This is a moment that counts, on an important, time-sensitive issue, so here goes:

- The Obama Administration, along with some of the usual US allies—the UK, France, Germany—and such non-allied parties as Russia and China, has taken steps with the potential of peacefully ending Iran’s 35-year estrangement from most of the rest of the world. That would be of enormous benefit and significance to Iran, the US, and nearly everyone else concerned.

Obviously potential is not a guarantee, and a year from now everyone could look back on this as a time of deluded hope. But today’s potential is far greater than most “savvy” experts expected a year ago. As I argued last month, the US may be in a position right now with Iran analogous to the one with China in the early stages of the Nixon-Mao rapprochement. Nothing is guaranteed, but the benefits of normalized relations would be so great that they must be given every chance to

succeed.

- Often there is cleavage within the executive branch—State, Defense, the White House—on the merits of a military commitment or a potential deal. Not this time.

Very often there is similar disagreement among Western powers, and most of the time the Russians and Chinese find themselves on the opposite side of strategic calculations from the US Again, not now. All involved view the benefits of reengaging Iran to be so great, and the consequence of a drift toward war so dire, that they want to make sure that no artificial barriers to a deal get in the way. (On the dire consequences of a drift toward war: Nearly 10 years ago, The Atlantic ran a war game concluding that an air strike designed to take out Iran’s nuclear potential would be the height of strategic folly for the attacking party, whether Israel or the United States. Nothing that has happened since then makes it a more plausible option.)

- Two countries the US cares about are known to oppose this deal: Saudi

Arabia, and Israel. The Saudis, because a stronger, oil-exporting, Shiite Iran probably means a less influential Sunni kingdom. The Israelis, because the Netanyahu government has launched disinformation campaign against Iran, with whom any deal or compromise is by definition doomed.

I believe that Netanyahu is wrong, but it’s his country, and he is the elected leader. I don’t like the idea of him (or the Saudis) trying to derail what our elected leaders so strongly considers to be in the interests of the United States.

- That derailment is what seems to be underway in the Senate right now. Republicans led by Mitch McConnell are pushing for a sanctions bill that is universally recognized (except by its sponsors) as a poison-pill for the current negotiations. Fine; opposing the administration is the GOP’s default position. But a striking number of Democrats have joined them, for no evident reason other than AIPAC’s whole-hearted, priority-one support for the

Two countries the US cares about are known to oppose this deal: Saudi Arabia, and Israel. The Saudis, because a stronger, oil-exporting, Shiite Iran probably means a less influential Sunni kingdom. The Israelis, because the Netanyahu government has launched disinformation campaign against Iran, with whom any deal or compromise is by definition doomed.

sanctions bill.

In the long run, these Democrats are not in a tenable position. Or not a good one. They are opposing what their president, his secretaries of state and defense, our normal major allies, and even the Russians and Chinese view as a step toward peace. And their stated reason for doing so—that new sanction threats will “help” the negotiations, even though every American, French, British, German, etc., and Iranian figure involved in the talks says the reverse—doesn’t pass the straight-face test.

Via the AP: “I think that the Iran sanctions bill is meant to strengthen the president, not in any way impede the ongoing negotiation which should and hopefully will be successful,” Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., a co-sponsor of the legislation, said. Oh sure. You can imagine what a person as smart as Blumenthal—or Chuck Schumer, or Cory Booker, or Mark Warner, all supporting the sanctions—would do to similar assertions in normal circumstances.

James Fallows is a national correspondent for The Atlantic and has written for the magazine since the late 1970s. He has reported extensively from outside the United States and once worked as President Carter’s chief speechwriter. This article was first published by The Atlantic.

More Iran Sanctions Will Hurt US

By Bloomberg Editor

If something works once, why not do it again?

That’s the putative logic behind a congressional move to impose new sanctions against Iran. By reducing Iran’s oil exports by more than half, existing sanctions have compelled Iran to agree to preliminary limits to its nuclear program. So, the thinking goes, additional penalties will produce greater, long-term limits.

So far, so good. Only two problems: The theory doesn’t quite hold, and it also ignores reality.

As for the theory: Punishment produces results when the recipient has an expectation that compliance will end the punishment. Senate Bill 1881, which with 59 co-sponsors already has almost enough support to withstand a threatened veto by President Barack Obama, would strip Iran of that expectation.

The reality is also awkward. Under the legislation, sanctions aimed at eliminating all Iranian oil exports would take effect unless the US president certified that Iran was meeting various conditions. They go beyond Iran’s nuclear program, beyond the terms of the interim nuclear deal Iran and world powers completed, beyond even the realm of the possible.

Specifically, the president would have to certify that Iran has

not conducted tests for a ballistic missile with a range exceeding 500 kilometers (310 miles). No time span is given, so such tests in the past arguably would qualify.

By requiring Iran to give up its uranium-enrichment capability, the bill also dictates parameters for a final nuclear deal that contradict the terms of the interim deal. In an election year, both Republican and Democratic supporters are casting the measure as tough on Iran and as increasing the chances of a deal.

They are right on the first count and wrong on the second. If the bill becomes law, Iran will correctly understand it as a means of subverting the Obama administration’s diplomatic effort to reach a comprehensive nuclear deal.

Iran’s leaders have threatened to abandon negotiations altogether if the bill passes, but even if they don’t, making progress will become difficult if not impossible.

If negotiations fail, the US almost surely will be blamed, weakening its ability to maintain the unprecedented international sanctions against Iran that it has orchestrated. Without those, Iran’s economy can get by, no matter how restrictive US sanctions are. In which case, the bill’s sponsors wouldn’t have even theoretical justifications for their measure, much less realistic ones.



What's Weird about US Congress's Iran Sanctions Push

By Max Fisher

Washington Post's foreign affairs blogger

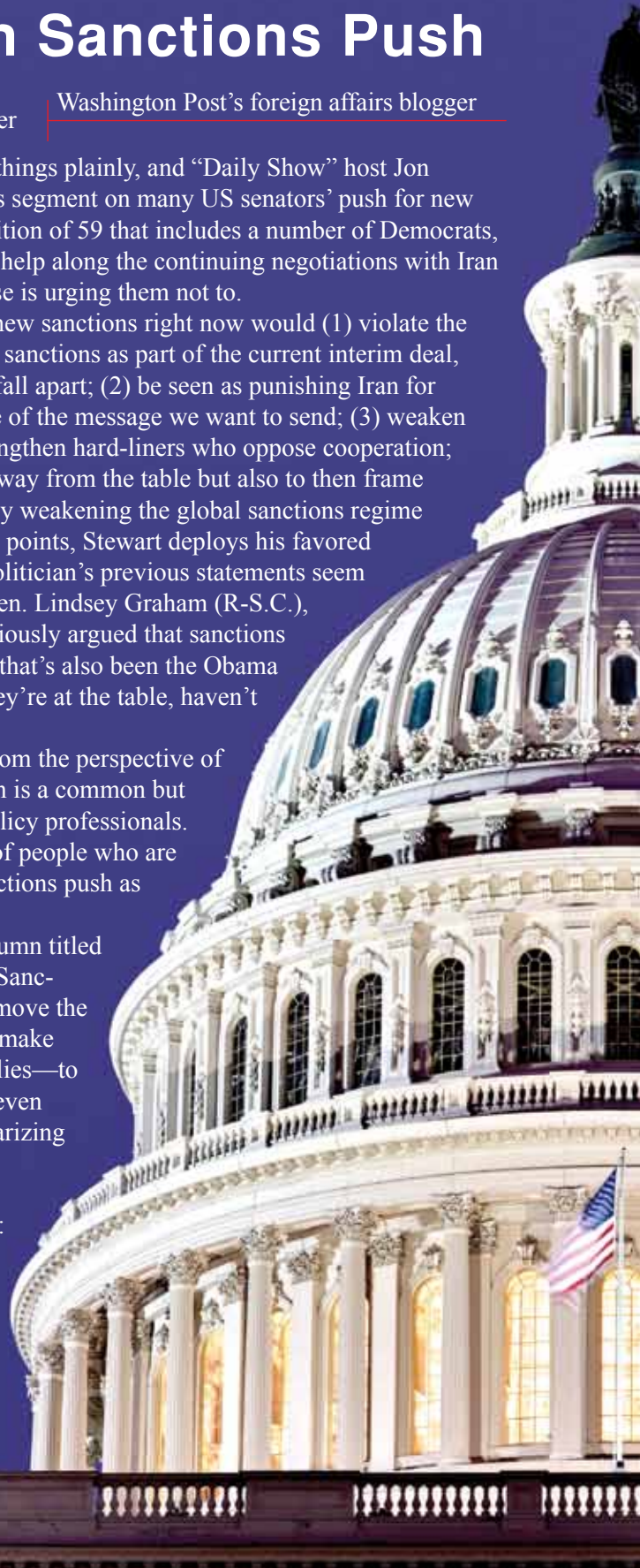
Sometimes it takes a satirist to state things plainly, and “Daily Show” host Jon Stewart did that January 15 with his segment on many US senators’ push for new Iran sanctions. The senators, a coalition of 59 that includes a number of Democrats, argue that imposing new sanctions would help along the continuing negotiations with Iran over its nuclear program. The White House is urging them not to.

Critics of the senators’ plan argue that new sanctions right now would (1) violate the United States’ promise not to impose new sanctions as part of the current interim deal, making it much likelier that the deal will fall apart; (2) be seen as punishing Iran for cooperating with us, which is the opposite of the message we want to send; (3) weaken pro-diplomacy forces within Iran and strengthen hard-liners who oppose cooperation; (4) give Iran an excuse to not only walk away from the table but also to then frame the US as the intransigent party, potentially weakening the global sanctions regime against Iran. In touching on some of these points, Stewart deploys his favored tactic of using old video to show how a politician’s previous statements seem to contradict his or her current position. Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), who supports the new sanctions, had previously argued that sanctions would bring Iran to the negotiating table (that’s also been the Obama administration’s position). So now that they’re at the table, haven’t sanctions accomplished their purpose?

To be clear, Stewart is coming at this from the perspective of a liberal who supports the Iran deal, which is a common but far from universal view among foreign policy professionals. But, and this is the thing, even a number of people who are skeptical of the deal itself still see the sanctions push as self-defeating.

Bloomberg’s Jeffrey Goldberg, in a column titled “An Iran Hawk’s Case Against New Iran Sanctions,” warned that the sanctions would “move the US closer to war with Iran and, crucially, make Iran appear—even to many of the US’s allies—to be the victim of American intransigence, even aggression.” All without actually denuclearizing Iran, which is the senators’ stated goal.

I do think Stewart is misguided on one very important point. He asks, reasonably: Why are 59 senators pushing for a sanctions bill that most observers seem to think will actually set back the bill’s goal? He argues that this is explained by the nefarious behind-the-scenes lobbying of pro-Israel groups such as the American





Israel Public Affairs Committee. AIPAC's supposedly vast power is certainly conventional wisdom here in D.C. In practice, though, the group is highly successful at lobbying Congress to pass popular legislation that carries a low political risk and is much less successful at getting unpopular legislation passed. Stewart is right to argue that it would be absurd to give Israel a vote in Congress; fortunately, that's not what's happening here.

As I've written previously, it seems much more likely that senators are supporting Iran sanctions because doing so is squarely in their political self-interest.

Republicans are already signaling that they may use the Obama administration's Iran outreach as a weapon in coming elections.

Any lawmaker who votes against new sanctions, even if it is for very sound foreign policy reasons, is taking a big political risk.

That's doubly true if the Iran deal fails.

And if the Iran deal succeeds, all the credit will go to the Obama administration, so there's little political incentive for individual members of Congress to support diplomacy.

Max Fisher is the Washington Post's foreign affairs blogger. He has a master's degree in security studies from Johns Hopkins University. This article was first published by The Washington Post.

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Iran Not to Back off from Nuclear Right

The Iranian president says the Islamic Republic will not retreat one iota from its right to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

Iran is resolute in defending its rights, said Hassan Rouhani in a joint flag-hoisting ceremony of the Armed Forces in the southern city of Ahvaz, Press TV reported.

"Iran has never sought nuclear weapons and will not do so as this is the fatwa of the Leader [of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei] and also our country's commitment," he said.

"We, as a country which is persistent in defending its rights, will not budge an inch on our rights as we won't allow an inch of our territory to be encroached upon," the president added.

Stressing that Iran is not seeking weapons of mass destruction (WMD), Rouhani said Tehran has joined all international

conventions banning the use of such arms. However, he stressed, Tehran will not back down from developing peaceful technologies.

Ayatollah Khamenei has issued a fatwa, forbidding any attempt to build and stockpile weapons of mass destruction.

Iran is a peace-loving nation, the president underlined.

"We have never launched aggression against any country and have no intention of doing so, whatsoever," President Rouhani underscored.

Nevertheless, the president emphasized, Iran will stand up to aggressors with full force and "make the enemy regret its aggression".

Geneva Deal Defeats Unjust Sanctions

Elsewhere, President Rouhani said that the Geneva deal means breaking the barrier of unjust sanctions imposed on the peace-loving people of Iran.

Geneva deal has shown submission of the Western powers to the Iranian nation's nuclear rights that means defeating the unjust sanctions imposed against the country.

Noting that implementation of the November 24 landmark agreement will start on January 20, the president said, "Geneva deal means the international community has recognized Iran's right to peaceful nuclear technology which is the result of courage and efforts of young Iranian scientists."

President Rouhani stressed that his government is committed to pursuing the rights and interests of the Iranian nation.

"We will determine our international relations based on national interests," said the president.

No Discrimination

In a meeting with the chiefs of tribes in the southwestern province of Khuzestan on Wednesday, President Rouhani said his government will not tolerate discrimination



against the civil rights of tribal people and ethnic groups.

The president said given the high capacity of tribal people, they should be encouraged to participate in the development of the country.

No to Nukes

Addressing in a meeting with religious scholars and seminary students late, Rouhani said that the Islamic Republic is after nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and does not seek nuclear weapons.

“The Islamic Republic has never been after nuclear weapons, in no point in time has it been [after atomic weapons],” he said.

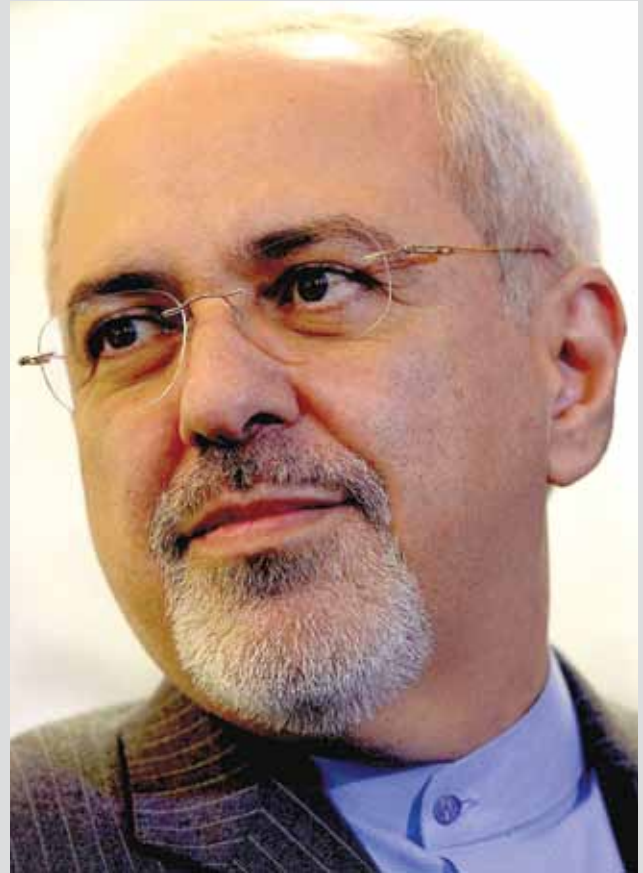
“All those [countries] that sought [nuclear] bombs did it secretly, and achieved it secretly,”

the president said, adding that Iran would not be a signatory to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and would not allow the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to inspect its nuclear sites if it intended to develop nuclear bombs.

However, he said, the powerful Iranophobic propaganda by the West managed to present a false image of Iran.

President Rouhani said his administration has been seeking to counter Iranophobia by asserting to the world that “the Islamic Republic of Iran is after nuclear technology but not [nuclear] bombs”.

“This was the foundation for our negotiations with the P5+1 and the West and the world’s big powers,” he said.



Putin Lauds Tehran Efforts in Nuclear Talks

Putin: The implementation of the landmark agreement will provide conditions... [to] ensure Iran's right to possess peaceful atoms under the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) control.

Russia President Vladimir Putin hailed Iran's 'efforts' to advance nuclear talks with the P5+1 group, which led to the inking of a landmark nuclear deal in Geneva last year.

In a meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in Moscow on January 16, Putin praised the 'progress' in negotiations between Tehran and the Sextet—Russia, China, the US, France, Britain and Germany—which are aimed at resolving the West's dispute over Tehran's nuclear energy program, Press TV reported.

The Russian leader said, "I am certain that this has been done, to a considerable extent, thanks to the efforts and stances of

the Iranian authorities."

Iran and the six major world powers signed an interim agreement in the Swiss city of Geneva on November 24, 2013. The two sides have agreed to start implementing the agreement as of January 20, 2014.

Putin added that the implementation of the landmark agreement "will provide conditions...[to] ensure Iran's right to possess peaceful atoms under the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) control".

Putin to Visit Iran

Putin called for more economic cooperation between Tehran and Moscow, adding, "We have a large bilateral agenda. This

relates firstly to our trade and economic ties, of course.”

During the meeting, Zarif also extended an official invitation to Putin. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has invited his Russian counterpart Putin to visit Iran.

Putin welcomed the invitation, saying, “I hope to visit you in Tehran very soon.”

Zarif, for his part, thanked Moscow for its contribution to the peaceful resolution of the West’s dispute with Tehran over its nuclear energy program, saying, “Our victory in the Geneva [nuclear] talks is owed to Russia’s longstanding efforts.”

The top Iranian diplomat further praised Russia’s diplomatic efforts to end the bloody crisis which has been gripping Syria since March 2011.

The Iranian foreign minister also reassured Russia of Tehran’s willingness to enhance cooperation with Moscow in different areas.

Also speaking at a press conference in Moscow with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov, Zarif said Russia has played a crucial role in finding a peaceful solution to outstanding issues. The two foreign ministers also exchanged views on issues of global and regional concern, including ways to deal with the growing wave of extremism and terrorism in the region.

Construction of New Nuclear Power Plants

Meanwhile, in an interview with Russian-language news channel Rossiya 24, Zarif said that he has exchanged views with senior Russian officials on the construction of new nuclear power plants in Iran.

“We discussed our nuclear cooperation, construction of NPPs, construction of reactors and peaceful atomic cooperation,” he said.

In September 2013, Iran officially took over from Russia the first unit of its first 1,000-mega-watt nuclear power plant in Bushehr for two years.

The top Iranian diplomat was in Moscow for talks with senior Russian officials over issues of bilateral and regional importance. The visit came following his tour of the Middle East countries including Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan and Syria.

Japan Makes First Oil Payment to Iran

Japan on February 6 became the first of Iran’s oil buyers to make a payment for crude imports under an interim nuclear deal, sources told Reuters, as the West eased a year-long stranglehold on revenues.

Tokyo’s role in sending the first funds may be a boon for Japanese firms jostling for position with international rivals to invest in Iran’s oil and gas sector, should a further agreement end the dispute over Tehran’s nuclear program.

It is unclear why Japan was the first of Iran’s oil buyers to pay. China, India and South Korea also buy crude from Iran and all have billions of dollars of cash held in Iranian accounts pending transfer, Reuters said.

The Iranian funds were released from an account held by the Bank of Japan, three sources told Reuters speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue. One of the sources confirmed the amount was for \$550 million, while another said it was likely further releases of Iranian funds would be made by Japan as they come due.

A substantial portion of frozen Iranian funds are held at the Bank of Japan, one of the sources said.

The funds were transferred to Central Bank of Iran account in Switzerland, a US Treasury spokeswoman said.

Under a November 24 agreement with six major powers, Tehran gets limited sanctions relief in exchange for steps to curb its nuclear program.

The interim agreement gives Iran access to \$4.2 billion of its oil revenues frozen abroad if it carries out its part of the deal, while parties continue negotiations for a final agreement within a year. The West baselessly claims Iran was using the nuclear program to develop nuclear weapons. Iran’s program is to generate electricity and for medical isotopes and is under the supervision of IAEA.

Some payments under the six-month deal, which officially began on January 20, depend on Iran fulfilling its commitment to dilute half of its 20 percent enriched uranium to no more than five percent enriched uranium.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said in January that Iran was seeking a comprehensive agreement so it can develop its battered economy, inviting Western companies to seize opportunities now and promising oil executives a new, attractive investment model for oil contracts by September.

US, EU Roll Back Sanctions Iran, Obama warn against new bans



By Mohammad Reza Mazlumi



The United States and European Union began to relieve Iran sanctions on January 20 within the framework of a landmark nuclear deal, the day the agreement took - including lifting a ban on insuring its oil, officials said.

Iran will get a first installment around February 1 of \$550 million of \$4.2 billion being unblocked under a six-month landmark nuclear deal with the West, a US official said.

"The installment schedule starts on February 1 and the payments are evenly distributed" across 180 days, a senior US administration official told AFP.

"That means the installment payments are every 34 days, except the last payment happens on day 180, which is 33 days after the fifth installment payment," the official said in an email, asking not to be named. However, as February 1 is a Saturday, the first payment might not be made until February 3.

The money is being unblocked under a landmark deal, set to take effect starting January 20, that curbs parts of Iran's nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief.

Tehran agreed in November to roll back parts of its nuclear work and halt

further advances in exchange for the release of \$4.2 billion in frozen assets and limited relief from sanctions.

There will be a second installment on March 7 of \$550 million, followed by equal installments of \$550 million monthly with the last due on July 20, although that again is a Saturday and therefore could take place on July 21.

In addition, a payment of \$450 million is planned for March 1 in return for Iran diluting half its stock of 20 percent enriched uranium to no more than five percent.

A second similar payment of \$450 million will be due on April 15 if Tehran completes the dilution of all its stock of 20 percent enriched uranium.

Under this schedule, Iran will receive two injections of cash in both March and April if, as agreed, it waters down its 20 percent enriched uranium, ensuring it will no longer be weapons-grade material.

Sanctions Warnings

Meanwhile, a senior Iranian nuclear negotiator warned against any new sanctions by the United States on Tehran as President Barack Obama said that he would veto any legislation enacting new embargos on Iran.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Abbas Araqchi said that the Geneva deal between Iran and the six major world powers would be canceled if the US congress approves new sanctions, IRNA reported.

The Iranian negotiator also said that Iran is not ready to hold talks under pressure.

"If the US congress wants to pressure us on new pretexts, we'd say with certainty that we won't negotiate under pressure at all, and if new sanctions are imposed, the Geneva deal would be canceled," Araqchi said.

Meanwhile, US President Barack Obama

said in a statement that he would veto any legislation enacting new sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

"Imposing additional sanctions now will only risk derailing our efforts to resolve this issue peacefully, and I will veto any legislation enacting new sanctions during the negotiation," Obama said.

"Today, Iran and the P5+1 finalized an agreement on ways to take the first step to implement the Joint Plan of Action. The two sides reached a consensus," he told reporters.

Araqchi said once Iran begins to implement the Geneva deal, the P5+1—five permanent

members of the UN Security Council plus Germany—will begin to ease sanctions on Tehran.

He added that the other side will release \$4.2 billion in Iranian frozen assets in eight stages and Iran, in return, will oxidize its 20-percent-enriched uranium within a year.

Araqchi emphasized that both Tehran and the P5+1 will proceed to implement the Geneva deal in a balanced way.

The official also expressed Tehran's readiness to allow the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to verify the implementation of the Geneva deal.

Iran and the world

powers concluded two days of talks in Geneva on January 10 about how to implement the landmark deal.

European Union foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton also confirmed the date, and said the sides would now ask the UN nuclear watchdog to verify the deal's implementation.

"We will ask the IAEA to undertake the necessary nuclear-related monitoring and verification activities," she said in a statement, referring to the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Ashton represents the P5+1 in contacts with Iran related to its contested nuclear program.

Major Oil Firms Awaiting to Enter Iranian Oil Market

Major international oil and gas companies, including France's Total, are waiting for an opportunity to enter the Iranian market, said the deputy oil minister for commercial and international affairs.

Masoud Hashemian also said that Iran should prepare the ground for the more significant presence of foreign investors in the Iranian oil and gas sector, IRNA reported.

"Total has good memories of cooperation with Iran. If fact, the Western sanctions targeted major international companies rather than Iran, because the country is ready for cooperation with all of them," he said.

Iran's oil sector is large enough for all international companies to participate.

Hashemian said Iran has favorable conditions for attracting foreign investments.

Commenting on the visit of French delegation to Iran, the deputy minister said it consists of French companies that have arrived to study Iran's investment conditions.

"International companies are very keen on return-

ing to the Iranian oil market and cooperating in oil projects," he said.

Hashemian added that the speech made by President Hassan Rouhani in the meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, has been effective in attracting foreign investments.

In January, Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh also said international oil companies have announced their readiness to return to Iran's oil market.

He added that the participation of Iranian delegation in Davos had positive results.

"On the sidelines of the WEF annual meeting, I met with a number of CEOs of major international oil companies and discussed resumption of cooperation with them. They were interested in returning to Iran's oil market. We are due to hold more meetings in future," he said.

Zanganeh also said four months ago, the Oil Ministry set up a committee to review and amend buyback oil contracts.

Iran's Access to Nuclear Technology Strengthens Identity-based Islam



By Mahdi Goljan (PhD)

Head of the Department of History,
Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran.

Introduction

Iran's nuclear program that had started in 1950 with the support of the United States entered a more serious stage in 1974 following the establishment of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization and the signing of the agreement for construction of Bushehr atomic power plant. Iran that became a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 1958 signed the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1968 and it was approved by the national assembly in 1970. Iran's plan in 1974 called for the indigenization of the full fuel cycle in twenty years and generation of 23,000 megawatts of electricity by 22 nuclear power plants. Iran's nuclear program was supported by the United States prior to the victory of Iran's Islamic Revolution. But after the triumph of Iran's Islamic

Revolution in 1979 the United States and other Western countries changed their stance and made use of every leverage for preventing the progress of Iran's nuclear program.

Background of Iran's nuclear activities

Iran's nuclear program that had started in 1950 with the support of the United States entered a more serious stage in 1974 following the establishment of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization and the signing of the agreement for construction of Bushehr atomic power plant. The Atomic Energy Organization signed an agreement with the technology and research department of the atomic energy organization of West Germany for long-term cooperation and following this Kraftwerk Union AG Company that was affiliated to Germany's Siemens was tasked

with the construction of two atomic plants every one with the nominal capacity of 1293 megawatts and the net capacity of 1196 megawatts in Bushehr. Following the victory of Iran's Islamic Revolution in 1979 at a time when approximately 75 percent of the first unit and 60 percent of the second unit of the plant were constructed the German side halted its operations. The then Iranian government filed a complaint against the German company at an international tribunal and based on the ruling issued by the tribunal on March 13, 1982 it was decided to grant the ownership to Iran of all the devices and equipment of the two units of power plant till that time plus half of the nuclear fuel and the contractor was obligated to deliver the said equipment to Iran at Bushehr port. The activities at Bushehr power plant were resumed in the 60s

and concurrent with the presence of German experts at the power plant the missile attack by Iraq which targeted a part of the plant's building led to the German failure for the continuation of the project.

In 1989 following the trip by the then president Ayatollah Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani to Russia, an agreement on nuclear cooperation was signed by both countries. The contract for completion of the first unit of Bushehr power plant was signed in November 1994. Based on the contract it was decided to complete the construction of the plant till the end of 2000. Meanwhile, Iran became committed to return the fuel waste of Bushehr plant to Russia. But the plant did not become operational on the aforementioned date.

Iran's first research reactor

The United States sold the first 5-megawatt light water research reactor to Iran in 1967 and the American Machine and Foundry Company installed the reactor at Tehran University. The then US president Eisenhower agreed with the sale of one small research reactor to Iran for the sake of proceeding with his nuclear policies that was known as atom for peace. The said 5-megawatt reactor came into operation in 1967. The reactor operated with 5.584 kilos of 93 percent very enriched uranium fuel that was obtained by the US till 1979 and is considered as the starting point of Iran's nuclear activities.

Iran's nuclear activities after the Islamic Revolution

Following the triumph of Iran's Islamic Revolution, the

Islamic Republic of Iran decided to continue its membership and compliance with the NPT, the Safeguards Agreement and the IAEA statute. Despite such a good will, Western countries suspended their agreements and contracts including the construction of Bushehr power plant. Siemens Company refused to complete the plant and other Western states and the US refrained from transferring any nuclear technology or

for the country's nuclear plants. Iran announced on April 2006 that it has managed to enrich uranium at the level of 3.5 percent. Iran announced on the same year that it has made operational the second round of its gas centrifuges and has enriched uranium. Iran now has the capability to enrich uranium to the level of 20 percent. American officials baselessly claim that Iran needs only a year to bring its uranium enrichment

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equipment to the Islamic Republic of Iran. They even took steps for exerting pressure on other countries such as China and Russia. Despite the existing difficulties, Iran made efforts to proceed with its nuclear activities indifferent domains such as the following:

- Research nuclear reactors;
- Nuclear reactors for generation of power;
- Nuclear development in medical, industrial and agricultural fields.

Iran's access to nuclear technology

The then president Seyed Mohammad Khatami on February 9, 2003 announced the production of nuclear fuel by Iranian specialists

level to 95 percent (which is needed for manufacturing a nuclear bomb).

Suspension of nuclear activities

Iran announced in 2003 in the course of joint meeting of foreign ministers of the three European states and the Iranian delegation which was held in Tehran that it would cooperate with the IAEA inspectors for visiting the country's atomic facilities and for a limited period of time and on a voluntary basis would suspend the injection of gas into Natanz centrifuges for the sake of proving the peaceful nature of the country's nuclear program. Britain and France undertook to prevent



the sending of Iran's dossier to the UN Security Council.

Resumption of enrichment

Following the Paris agreement in the first year of the ninth government, the Islamic Republic of Iran announced that the voluntary suspension of enrichment has come to an end and will continue the activities of Isfahan's UCF under IAEA supervision by removing the seals. In the meantime, Iran in January 2006 removed the seals of Natanz nuclear research complex at the presence of IAEA inspectors. But the UNSC in March of 2006 set a one month deadline for Iran to halt its nuclear activities.

The UNSC adopted resolution 1696 on July 2006 that called for the suspension of uranium enrichment in Iran. Moreover, resolution 1737 was approved in December 2006 that targeted most of the country's commercial and financial activities as well as Iran's nuclear and missile

industries based on paragraph 41 of chapter 7 of the UN charter. This resolution was the first international legal document that introduced Iran's nuclear activities as a threat to regional peace and stability. Tehran has emphasized NPT's paragraph 4 describing the allegations as unfounded calling for a non-discriminatory behavior towards the country's atomic activities.

Reasons behind US-Western opposition to a nuclear Iran

Based on analyses presented by American media, one of the reasons behind opposition to Iran's atomic program is the threatening policies of the Islamic Republic against Israel. The Zionist regime army has officially described Iran as a threat to the existence of Israel and according to CIA directors; Israel is determined to prevent the progress of Iran's atomic program.

Speaking of other concerns by

Western countries is the possibility of dual use of this technology in the manufacturing of nuclear arms. Iran has always stressed the peaceful nature of its nuclear program and has agreed with inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency for the sake of confidence-building and elimination of any ambiguity concerning the peaceful nature of the country's nuclear activities. The point noteworthy to consider is that the inspections and the images recorded by cameras indicate that Iran has acted in accordance with international regulations.

Speaking of other impediments concerning progress in nuclear talks between Iran and the West is the government-oriented approach by Western countries. Such an approach must not misguide the world concerning Iran. A government-oriented approach in foreign relations is an important issue. The West must not fall prey to a government-



oriented approach with regard to Iran's foreign relations' issues particularly the nuclear dossier and it has to smartly realize Iran's strategy in foreign policy, something that does not change and in case of change it would be quite deep and fundamental. This is the basic difference between strategy and tactic. Strategy does not change continuously and there is no need for it to change. But tactic undergoes changes. A government-oriented approach towards foreign policy and Iran's nuclear dossier in particular has caused the West and Europe in particular to commit a mistake. A nuclear Iran is not much related to governments. It is a strategy with peaceful purposes and it is neither a threat nor intimidation. The governments based on their different interests and tastes either accelerate or slow down the speed and quality of work or suspend the activities for any other reason. But what is important is the strategy of

the Islamic Republic of Iran that has not been changed or at least it is not influenced by the tastes and interests of different governments.

Iran's reaction to negative propaganda and ballyhoo by Western and Zionist media

As the first step, the Islamic Republic of Iran considers access to peaceful nuclear energy as the legitimate and inalienable right of the Iranian nation and has emphasized that it will not retreat from its just stances whatsoever. In this midst, the fatwa by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution forbidding the use of nuclear weapons foiled the Western ballyhoo and schemes that seek to portray Iran's efforts for gaining access to nuclear technology as having military intentions. In fact, by reviewing the jurisprudential texts concerning the subject of mass destruction weapons and nuclear weapons in particular one will realize that Islam has no problem as far as the

possession of combat weapons either in general or specific terms is concerned. As a matter of fact, the holy Quran has recommended the Prophet to prepare himself for confronting the enemies from every perspective.

Many exegetes and jurists consider the term force or strength mentioned in verse 60 of Anfal Chapter in the holy Quran as an example in this connection. This means that the term strength or force incorporates all types of modern and semi-modern weapons in every era. The subject of enemy's fear has been emphasized by the holy Quran and it has been expressed as such: "And prepare against them what force you can and horses tied at the frontier, to frighten thereby the enemy of Allah and your enemy..." (8: 60)

To develop weapons of mass destruction (including nuclear weapons) is forbidden by Islam. Using such weapons is also definitely forbidden since such

weapons harm the people of society from various strata including women and children.

Furthermore, the legitimacy of a government in today's modern world either depends on the amount of its weapons or the government's tendency for the administration of justice. The just behavior of the government is of great significance from the viewpoint of Islam and in some cases justice has contributed to the legitimacy of a government and such a government has been corroborated by the jurists and scholars. How can a justice-oriented government that has attained its legitimacy in this way seek to acquire nuclear weapons?

Based on the fatwa issued by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, the use of weapons of mass destruction is clearly forbidden by religion. Moreover, from his point of view even the manufacturing of nuclear weapons is forbidden let alone using such weapons. The fatwa became so prominent from the view of its significance, effectiveness and novelty that the world media were forced to disseminate it.

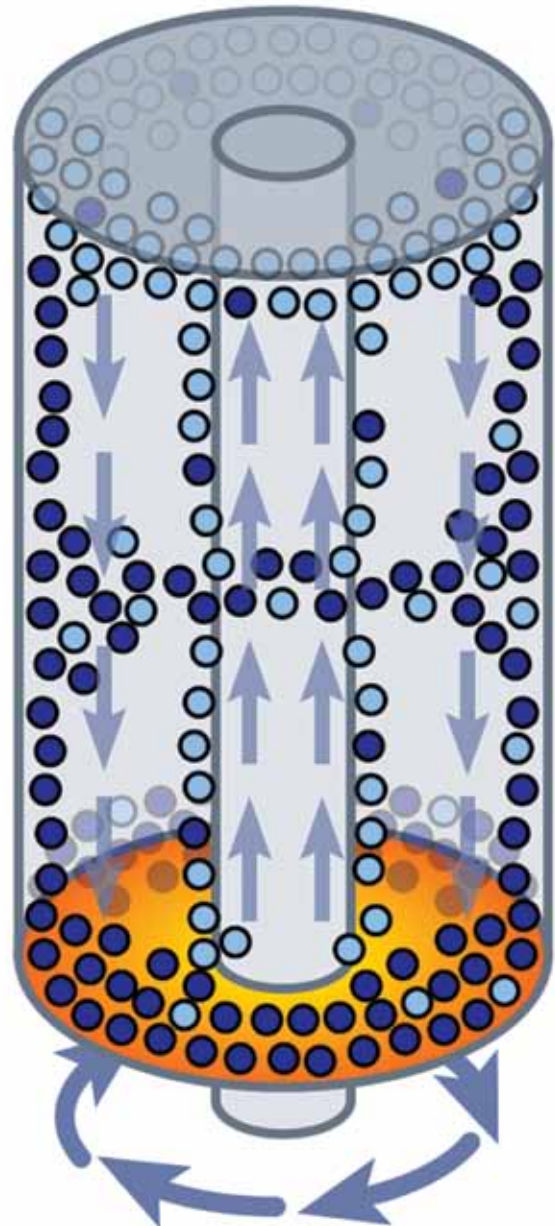
The emphasis by the Leader on several occasions concerning the fatwa as Iran's religious and political logic in official diplomatic negotiations led to the international atmosphere being influenced by Islamic thoughts. The attention paid to a religious fatwa in the course of political talks is a winning card for us and all Muslims particularly with regard to the fact that politics in its customary definition in the world has nothing to do with ethics, religiosity and honesty.

The Leader's fatwa has created a new challenge for the West. This is due to the fact that Western states make use of the pretext of Iran's efforts for acquiring nuclear weapons for the sake of deceiving the public opinion and exerting more pressure on Iran and such a trick is less used now.

A nuclear Iran instead of being

considered as a threat for the future of the world can be an opportunity for the Middle East and the world. A country that once was one of the two empires existing in the world and enjoys a culture and civilization as old as human history cannot be considered as a threat to humanity. Western historians ranging from

To develop weapons of mass destruction (including nuclear weapons) is forbidden by Islam. Using such weapons is also definitely forbidden since such weapons harm the people of society from various strata including women and children.



Herodotus to the Greek Xenophon all have a history-based approach considering Iran as a country that enjoys a cultural and artistic background with art-loving people. How can one consider such a nation even in case of possessing nuclear weapons as a threat to the world and at the same time do not consider as a threat today's powers such as the US, European countries and even non-European countries that possess nuclear weapons bearing in mind that their discovery does not even go beyond three or four centuries. This is not something to retaliate or pursue a tit-for-tat policy. But the roots that are as deep as human history will preserve humanity.

Why is the West opposed to a nuclear Iran?

The question is that how come the US that supported Iran's nuclear program before the revolution has totally changed its stance and is now staunchly opposing the program?

It seems that the answer to this question must be sought in the general approach of the West led by the US. The acts of obstructionism by the Westerners started from the very early days of the establishment of the Islamic Republic and is not limited to the nuclear program. The 8-year Iraq-Iran war was the most important challenge of the Islamic Republic system in its first decade that was imposed with the full-fledged support of the US and Western countries and led to the failure of Western countries. With the termination of the war, a new round of Western hostility and obstructionism began which reached its climax with regard to Iran's nuclear dossier. The United States and Western countries claim that Iran is after making military use of nuclear technology and claim that their opposition with

Iran's nuclear program is in line with maintaining peace in the world and the Middle East in particular. If this was true, Israel had to come under international sanctions and pressures not Iran. The Zionist regime is in possession of the biggest nuclear arsenal for the manufacturing of weapons of mass destruction. But none of the so-called advocates of global peace show any reaction to this issue and on the other hand consider Iran's peaceful nuclear program as a threat to stability of the region.

Of course it should be noted that these hostilities are not limited to the nuclear issue. In other words, the West is concerned about a movement in the Islamic and Shiite world. Iran's nuclear issue has close bonds with issues revolving around the identity of the world of Islam. An Islamic state and particularly a Shiite country like Iran becoming nuclear is an identity-based issue for Islam. An issue that puts forth the revival of Islamic identity and the revitalization of Islamic civilization. Nowadays, an identity-oriented Islam is considered as a serious challenge for the Western world that considers it as its civilizational rival. The Western civilization considers anything which supports this identity-oriented Islam as its opponent particularly if such a support is aimed at strengthening the identity-oriented Islam in its struggle against oppression. The Western conflict with a nuclear Iran is a conflict against the revival of an identity-oriented or civilizational Islam. From this point of view, one will simply realize that a nuclear Iran is a major nightmare for Western governments. This is the approach adopted by the Westerners towards Iran's nuclear dossier which refuses to consider it as a resolvable issue through diplomatic negotiations and dialogue.

The legitimacy of a government in today's modern world either depends on the amount of its weapons or the government's tendency for the administration of justice. The just behavior of the government is of great significance from the viewpoint of Islam and in some cases justice has contributed to the legitimacy of a government and such a government has been corroborated by the jurists and scholars.

Iran Air Chief: Plane Parts Awaits US Treasury Permission

Iran Air Chairman Farhad Parvaresh said plane parts will be delivered to Iran in the next few weeks once the US Treasury Department issues the permission.

Parvaresh said that Iranian air lines have submitted a list of their requirements to foreign manufacturers to purchase plane parts, IRNA reported.

He added that all foreign manufacturers have voiced their readiness to supply Iran with plane parts.

Once the plane parts are supplied, some 10 passenger planes will be repaired and added to the air fleet.

Parvaresh further said Iran Air itself is not facing any problem for resuming direct flights to the US.

"We have planned to operate one or two (direct) flights to the US per week," Parvaresh told reporters, Fars News Agency reported.

He underlined that there are many prerequisites for direct flights between Iran and the US, including an aviation agreement between the two countries and coordination with the Foreign Ministry. Presidential Advisor and Acting Head of the High Council of Iranians Affairs Abroad Akbar Torkan announced in October that President Hassan Rouhani has issued an order to study the possibility of resuming direct flights between Iran and the US to facilitate visits of the two countries' nationals.

Once the plane parts are supplied, some 10 passenger planes will be repaired and added to the air fleet. Parvaresh further said Iran Air itself is not facing any problem for resuming direct flights to the US.

'Reviving Constructive Relations with Iran Matters Greatly to EU'

A senior member of the European Parliament has said that reviving the past constructive relations with Iran is of great importance for the European Union.

Hannes Swoboda, who is leading a parliamentary delegation to Tehran, made the remarks during a meeting with Iranian Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani.

Swoboda described Iran as a major and influential country in the region and expressed hope that the Islamic Republic would become a key partner for the West, particularly in combating terrorism and illegal drugs as well as promoting economic ties.

He added that Iran and Europe have many issues in common and that the two sides can establish long-lasting relations.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the European parliamentarian said that Iran is a key player in resolving the Syrian crisis and must actively participate in the Geneva peace talks, slated for November 23.

Swoboda also said that the European Parliament, like Iran, is strongly opposed to any foreign and military interference in Syria and believes that the only way out of

the Syrian crisis is through taking political measures and the participation of all the Syrian people.

Larijani, for his part, said that Europe has been an old economic partner of Iran and the mutual economic relations have served the interests of both European and Iranian people.

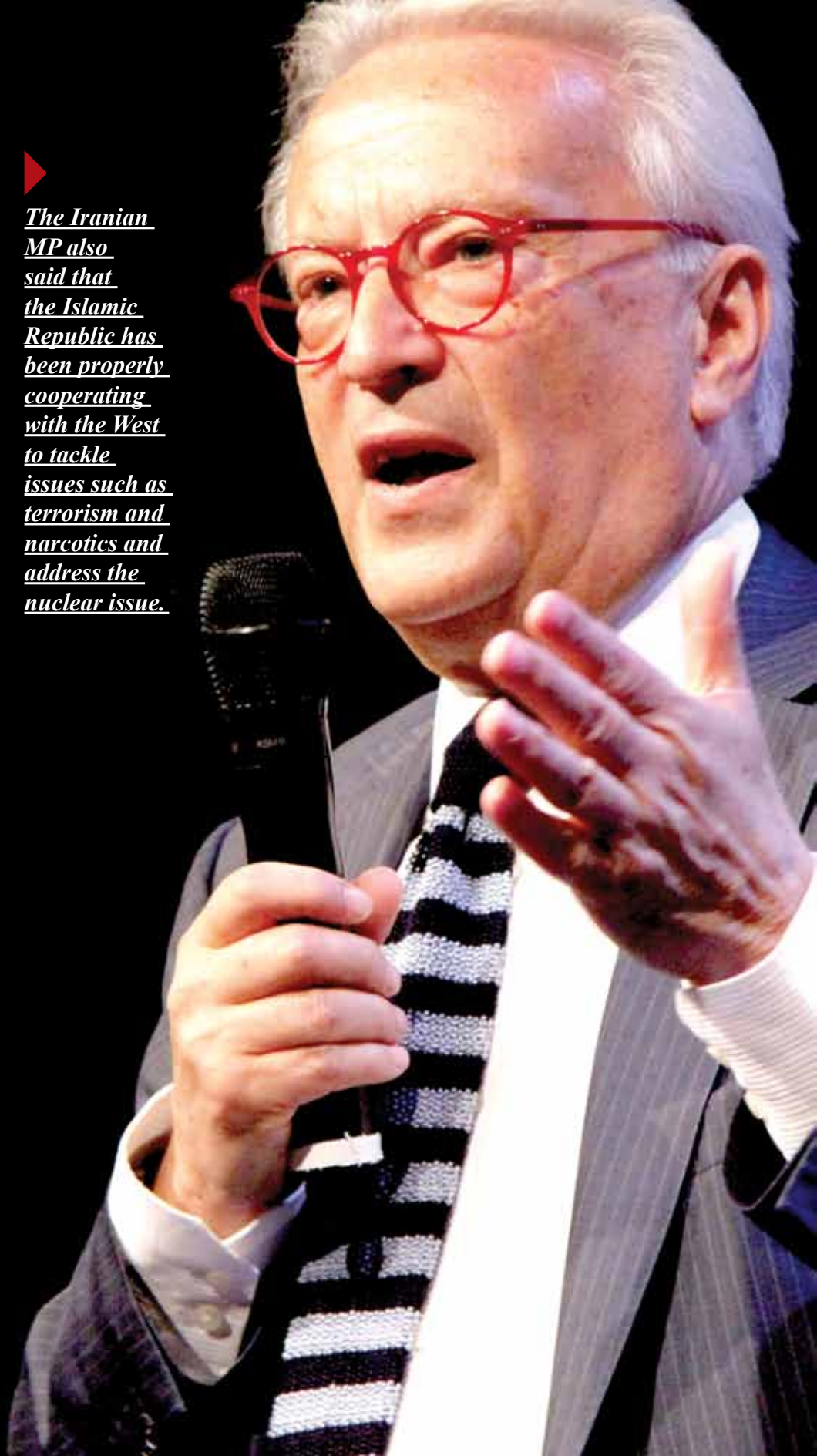
The Iranian MP also said that the Islamic Republic has been properly cooperating with the West to tackle issues such as terrorism and narcotics and address the nuclear issue.

On the nuclear issue, which is a bone of contention between Iran and the West, Larijani said that the Majlis supports the ongoing nuclear talks between Tehran and the major powers and expressed hope that the negotiations would lead to tangible results.

Iran and the six major powers (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany, known as the 5+1 group) held “substantive” talks over Tehran’s nuclear program in Geneva on October 15 and 16 and agreed to hold further talks in Geneva on November 7 and 8.

The European delegation that arrived in Tehran is scheduled to hold various meetings with Iranian senior officials.

▶ *The Iranian MP also said that the Islamic Republic has been properly cooperating with the West to tackle issues such as terrorism and narcotics and address the nuclear issue.*



Joint Plan of Action

Iran
Mohammad
Javad Zarif,
Minister of
Foreign Affairs



United States
John Kerry,
Secretary of
State



European Union
Catherine Ashton, High
Representative of the
Union for Foreign Affairs
and Security Policy



Following is a full text of the deal. (The “EU3+3” reference in the text denotes Britain, France and Germany along with the United States, Russia and China, while the “IAEA” denotes the International Atomic Energy Agency).

Preamble

The goal for these negotiations is to reach a mutually-agreed long-term comprehensive solution that would ensure Iran’s nuclear program will be exclusively peaceful. Iran reaffirms that under

no circumstances will Iran ever seek or develop any nuclear weapons. This comprehensive solution would build on these initial measures and result in a final step for a period to be agreed upon and the resolution of concerns. This comprehensive solution would enable Iran to fully enjoy its right to nuclear energy

for peaceful purposes under the relevant articles of the NPT (nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty) in conformity with its obligations therein. This comprehensive solution would involve a mutually defined (uranium) enrichment program with practical limits and transparency measures to ensure the peaceful nature of the program. This comprehensive solution would constitute an integrated whole where nothing is agreed until everything is agreed. This comprehensive solution would involve a reciprocal, step-by-step process, and would produce the comprehensive lifting of all U.N. Security Council sanctions, as well as multilateral and national sanctions related to Iran’s nuclear program.

There would be additional steps in between the initial measures and the final step, including, among other things, addressing the U.N. Security Council resolu-

Russia
Sergey Lavrov,
Foreign Minister



France
Laurent Fabius,
Foreign Minister



tions, with a view toward bringing to a satisfactory conclusion the U.N. Security Council's consideration of this matter. The E3+3 and Iran will be responsible for conclusion and implementation of mutual near-term measures and the comprehensive solution in

good faith. A Joint Commission of E3/EU+3 and Iran will be established to monitor the implementation of the near-term measures and address issues that may arise, with the IAEA responsible for verification of nuclear-related measures. The Joint Commission will work

with the IAEA to facilitate resolution of past and present issues of concern.

Elements of a first step

The first step would be time-bound, with a duration of 6 months, and renewable by

China
Wang Yi,
Foreign Minister



Germany
Guido Westerwelle,
Minister of Foreign
Affairs



United Kingdom
William Hague,
Foreign Secretary



mutual consent, during which all parties will work to maintain a constructive atmosphere for negotiations in good faith.

Iran would undertake the following voluntary measures:

- From the existing uranium enriched to 20%, retain half as working stock of 20% oxide for fabrication of fuel for the TRR (Tehran Research Reactor). Dilute the remaining 20% UF₆ to no more than 5%. No reconversion line.

- Iran announces that it will not enrich uranium over 5% for the duration of the 6 months.

- Iran announces that it will not make any further advances of its activities at the Natanz Fuel Enrichment Plant (1), Fordow (2), or the Arak reactor (3), designated by the IAEA as IR-40.

- Beginning when the line for conversion of UF₆ enriched up to 5 percent to UO₂ is ready, Iran has decided to convert to oxide UF₆ newly enriched up to 5 percent during the six-month period, as provided in the operational schedule of the conversion plant declared to the IAEA.

- No new locations for enrichment.

- Iran will continue its safeguarded R&D (research-and-development) practices, including its current enrichment R&D practices, which are not

With respect to the final step and any steps in between, the standard principle that “nothing is agreed until everything is agreed” applies.



designed for accumulation of enriched uranium.

- No reprocessing or construction of a facility capable of reprocessing.

Enhanced monitoring:

- Provision of specified information to the IAEA, including information on Iran's plans for nuclear facilities, a description of each building on each nuclear site, a description of the scale of operations for each location engaged in specified nuclear activities, information on uranium mines and mills, and information on source material. This information would be provided within three months of the adoption of these measures.

- Submission of an updated DIQ (design

information questionnaire) for the reactor at Arak, designated by the IAEA as the IR-40, to the IAEA.

- Steps to agree with the IAEA on conclusion of (a) Safeguards Approach for the reactor at Arak, designated by the IAEA as the IR-40.

- Daily IAEA inspector access when inspectors are not present for the purpose of Design Information Verification, Interim Inventory Verification, Physical Inventory Verification, and unannounced inspections, for the purpose of access to offline surveillance records, at Fordow and Natanz.

- IAEA inspector-managed access to:

- centrifuge assembly workshops (4);

- centrifuge rotor produc-



tion workshops and storage facilities; and,

- uranium mines and mills.

In return, the E3/EU+3 would undertake the following voluntary measures:

- Pause efforts to further reduce Iran's crude oil sales, enabling Iran's current customers to purchase their current average amounts of crude oil. Enable the repatriation of an agreed amount of revenue held abroad. For such oil sales, suspend the EU and U.S. sanctions on associated insurance and transportation services.
- Suspend U.S. and EU sanctions on:
- Iran's petrochemical exports, as well as sanctions

on associated services. (5)

- Gold and precious metals, as well as sanctions on associated services.
- Suspend U.S. sanctions on Iran's auto industry, as well as sanctions on associated services.
- License the supply and installation in Iran of spare parts for safety of flight for Iranian civil aviation and associated services. License safety-related inspections and repairs in Iran as well as associated services. (6)
- No new nuclear-related UN Security Council sanctions.
- No new EU nuclear-related sanctions.
- The U.S. Administration, acting consistent with the respective roles of the President and the Congress, will refrain from imposing

new nuclear-related sanctions.

- Establish a financial channel to facilitate humanitarian trade for Iran's domestic needs using Iranian oil revenues held abroad. Humanitarian trade would be defined as transactions involving food and agricultural products, medicine, medical devices and medical expenses incurred abroad. This channel would involve specified foreign banks and non-designated Iranian banks to be defined when establishing the channel.

• This channel could also enable:

- transactions required to pay Iran's U.N. obligations; and,
- direct tuition payments to universities and colleges for Iranian students studying abroad, up to an agreed amount for the six month period.
- Increase the EU authorization thresholds for transactions for non-sanctioned trade to an agreed amount.

Elements of the final step of a comprehensive solution:

The final step of a comprehensive solution, which the parties aim to conclude negotiating and commence implementing no more than one year after the adoption of this document, would:

- Have a specified long-

“Sanctions on associated services” means any service, such as insurance, transportation, or financial, subject to the underlying U.S. or EU sanctions applicable, insofar as each service is related to the underlying sanction and required to facilitate the desired transactions. These services could involve any non-designated Iranian entities.

There would be additional steps in between the initial measures and the final step, including, among other things, addressing the U.N. Security Council resolutions, with a view toward bringing to a satisfactory conclusion the U.N. Security Council's consideration of this matter. The E3+3 and Iran will be responsible for conclusion and implementation of mutual near-term measures and the comprehensive solution in good faith. A Joint Commission of E3/EU+3 and Iran will be established to monitor the implementation of the near-term measures and address issues that may arise, with the IAEA responsible for verification of nuclear-related measures. The Joint Commission will work with the IAEA to facilitate resolution of past and present issues of concern.

term duration to be agreed upon.

- Reflect the rights and obligations of parties to the NPT and IAEA Safeguards Agreements.

- Comprehensively lift U.N. Security Council, multilateral and national nuclear-related sanctions, including steps on access in areas of trade, technology, finance and energy, on a schedule to be agreed upon.

- Involve a mutually defined enrichment program with mutually agreed parameters consistent with practical needs, with agreed limits on scope and level of enrichment activities, capacity, where it is carried out, and stocks of enriched uranium, for a period to be agreed upon.

- Fully resolve concerns related to the reactor at Arak, designated by the IAEA as the IR-40. No reprocessing or construction of a facility capable of reprocessing.

- Fully implement the agreed transparency measures and enhanced monitoring. Ratify and implement the (IAEA's) Additional Protocol, consistent with the respective roles of the President and the Majlis (Iranian parliament).

- Include international civil nuclear cooperation, including among others, on acquiring modern light-water power and research reactors and associated equipment, and the supply of modern nuclear fuel as well as agreed R&D practices.

Following successful implementation of the final step of the comprehensive solution for its full duration, the Iranian nuclear program will be treated in the same manner as that of any non-nuclear weapon state party to the NPT.

* With respect to the final step and any steps in between, the standard

principle that "nothing is agreed until everything is agreed" applies.

Footnotes:

(1) Namely, during the 6 months, Iran will not feed UF₆ into the centrifuges installed but not enriching uranium. Not install additional centrifuges. Iran announces that during the first six months, it will replace existing centrifuges with centrifuges of the same type.

(2) At Fordow, no further enrichment over 5% at four cascades now enriching uranium, and not increase enrichment capacity. Not feed UF₆ into the other 12 cascades, which would remain in a non-operative state. No interconnections between cascades. Iran announces that during the first 6 months, it will replace existing centrifuges with centrifuges of the same type.

(3) Iran announces on concerns related to the construction of the reactor at Arak that for six months it will not commission the reactor or transfer fuel or heavy water to the reactor site, and will not test additional fuel or produce more fuel for the reactor or install remaining components.

(4) Consistent with its plans, Iran's centrifuge production during the six months will be dedicated to replace damaged machines.

(5) "Sanctions on associated services" means any service, such as insurance, transportation, or financial, subject to the underlying U.S. or EU sanctions applicable, insofar as each service is related to the underlying sanction and required to facilitate the desired transactions. These services could involve any non-designated Iranian entities.

(6) Sanctions relief could involve any non-designated Iranian airlines as well as Iran Air.