

Iran

WORKING GROUP

Baghdad Talks

22/05/2012

- USA and IAEA put positive gloss on upcoming talks.
- Iran won't abandon its right to enrich uranium.
- The most likely deal is a trade-off between easing of sanctions and lowering uranium enrichment (accompanied by tougher IAEA inspections).

The P5+1 would allow enrichment

18-19/05/2012

DebkaFile claims to have come across an 8-point draft of the agreement to be proposed to Iran. Accordingly, Iran would be allowed to enrich uranium below the 20% threshold and keep all facilities open, and sanctions would be lifted; but it would have to sign the Additional Protocol of the Non Proliferation Treaty and move the stockpiled uranium out of Iran [Read]. Los Angeles Times reports almost the same deal, but also mentions the stopping of production in the underground Fordow nuclear facilities [Read].

16/05/2012

Every Iranian concession is likely to test the unity of the P5+1: the Iranian gamble is to “split the six”. A European diplomat agrees with this: how to react to an Iranian step could be divisive [Read].

The Parchin file

12-14-16/05/2012

An “IAEA country (...) critical of Iran” leaked intelligence about Iran’s Parchin military base regarding the supposed weaponization programme being carried out there [Read]. Parchin is not part of Iran’s nuclear facilities but the IAEA has repeatedly demanded access to it. Iran “had implicitly been using the IAEA’s desire for the Parchin visit as a bargaining chip in negotiations” [Read]. According to Mark Hibbs, “it can be expected that any comprehensive settlement will therefore require Iran to implement the [IAEA’s] Additional Protocol”, which would make Parchin and other non-nuclear facilities available to the international watchdog [Read]. **The Parchin file is one of the most critical, divisive and disputed of the issues in the talks.**

France pushes for a softer position

14-16/05/2012

France’s “Hollande administration is **much closer to the US and British positions:** it is willing to accept an extended process which could lead the international community to accept limited, and strictly monitored, Iranian uranium enrichment” [Read]. In this regard, the former French Prime Minister’s visit to Tehran, during which he met with the Iranian Foreign Minister and the nuclear negotiator, is seen as a strong signal that **Hollande’s government is trying to soften the European position** [Read].

Israel says it will only accept a total halt

18-19/05/2012

Israel’s Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu strongly clarified what is needed to get Israel to approve the outcome of the Baghdad Talks: **1) freeze all enrichment inside Iran 2) remove all enriched material outside of Iran and 3) dismantle Qom** [referring to the Fordow uranium enrichment facility] [Read]. However, DebkaFiles claims that, secretly, Israel has approved the 8-point agreement of the P5+1 [Read].

Unnamed Sources who, in both cases, claim to be involved in the current negotiation process.

Dennis Ross is a former Middle East adviser to the White House.

Gareth Porter is an investigative historian and journalist specialized in U.S. national security policy.

Mark Hibbs is Carnegie’s Senior Associate to the Nuclear Policy Programme.

Gideon Kutz works as a journalist for Israeli newspaper Maariv.

Julian Borger is the Guardian’s diplomatic editor. He was previously a correspondent in the US and the Middle East.

Laura Rozen is an investigative freelance reporter.

DebkaFile is an Israeli security and intelligence website.

Los Angeles Times is a leading USA newspaper.

Reuters is a UK-based leading news agency.

Tehran Bureau is an independent source of news and commentary about Iran in partnership with PBS’s Frontline.

Inter Press Service is a global independent news agency.

Carnegie is a “private, nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing cooperation between nations”.

AlMonitor is an online daily which “seeks to introduce a global audience to the Middle East in its own words”.

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Iran's red lines

15/05/2012

Supreme Leader Khamenei has historically suffered from a lack of charisma and legitimacy. “For Khamenei, **nuclear capability is not a goal but rather a means** to force the West and its regional allies to recognize the regime’s strategic interests” and, secondarily, **its own role in the Iranian political scene**. So, Mehdi Khalaji argues, “a guarantee that the West (...) is not seeking the overthrow of Iran’s leaders would have to be a key component of a nuclear compromise” [[Read](#)].

11/05/2012

Two former Iranian nuclear negotiators identify two Iranian “red lines”: “Tehran may be open to taking a patient approach on sanctions so long as **1) oil and the central bank are off the list** and **2) Iran’s right to nuclear enrichment for peaceful purposes is respected**” [[Read](#)].

14/05/2012

Establishing the **legitimacy of uranium enrichment** is one of the main goals of Iran and the reason behind the past Iranian tactic of “buying time”. By developing the nuclear programme under sanctions, Iran shaped the terms of the discussion: **from negotiating the very existence of the programme to negotiating the level of enrichment and inspections**. This Iranian ‘victory’, however, could help all sides claim that they won and help defuse the crisis. [[Read](#)].

Russia - USA relations strained

21/05/2012

Russia remains **the most unwilling ally of the P5+1** because of its strained relation with the USA. Although Russian relations with Iran are cold and Moscow is increasingly seeing a nuclear Iran as a threat, it is also very skeptical about following the lead of the USA. The 2011 Libya war is still seen by the Russians as an American deceit. [[Read](#)]

Who?

Mehdi Khalaji is a senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

Hossein Mousavian is former spokesman for Iran’s nuclear negotiators. **Kaveh Afrasiabi** is a former adviser to the Iranian nuclear negotiating team.

Thomas Erdbrink is the Tehran bureau chief from the New York Times.

Robert W. Merry is editor of The National Interest and the author of books on American history and foreign policy.

The Source

Your Middle East is an independent digital newspaper based in Sweden.

New York Times is a leading USA newspaper.

New York Times is a leading USA newspaper.

The National Interest is an international relations magazine.

Additional Reading

Institute for Science and International Security
Opening the Door to a Solution with Iran [[Read](#)]

Oxford Research Group
Iran’s Nuclear Impasse – Breaking the Deadlock [[Read](#)]

Pew Global Attitudes Project
A Global “No” To a Nuclear-Armed Iran [[Read](#)]