

Iran

WORKING GROUP

KEY ISSUES

11/05/2012

- While Istanbul served as a confidence-building meeting, the Baghdad round on May 23th aims to achieve specific results.
- The elections in the USA and new governments in Israel and France may impact the negotiations.

Nuclear Negotiations

27/04/2012

Gary Samore (Obama's top advisor on nuclear proliferation) is wrong: Iran's strategy is **not to "play for time"** but "to accumulate centrifuges, not in order to support a weapons programme, but rather to **negotiate a larger bargain** with the United States." The final goal is to "have [the USA] accept Iran's legitimate role in the regional politics". Past failures occurred because Iran did not have enough bargaining power and preferred to derail the negotiations [\[Read\]](#).

Gareth Porter is an investigative journalist and historian specialising in US national security policy. **Gary Samore** is Obama's top advisor on nuclear proliferation.

Al Jazeera is Qatar-based international satellite broadcaster funded by the Qatari government.

24/04/2012

Iran focused in Istanbul talks on "**face-saving measures**": "talk of war must stop" and the need for "a deal [Iran] can sell to its people to say they won". For Baghdad, the agenda will be heavier: "Iran wants sanctions lifted, but the U.S. will not lift them without confidence-building measures". These include stopping work at Fordow and limiting uranium enrichment to 20 percent [\[Read\]](#).

Michael Adler is former international correspondent for Agence France-Presse News Agency.

Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars is a think-tank which tries to "build a bridge between the worlds of academia and public policy".

26/04/2012

The next talks will require "tremendous political will". While Obama "will likely be politically unable to make **significant concessions in an election year**", the Iranians believe "they have the upper hand [because they] have shown tremendous resilience". The Western idea of totally stopping uranium enrichment has been abandoned [\[Read\]](#).

Dina Esfandiary is Research Analyst and Coordinator of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Programme.

IISS is a UK-based think-tank on global security, political risk and military conflict.

05/2012

Democratic countries have greater capacity to create a successful nuclear programme; recent history shows that authoritarian states face **greater problems** because of both organizational and political factors. Iran seems to be no exception. [\[Read\]](#)

Jacques E.C. Hymans is professor of international relations at the University of Southern California.

Foreign Affairs is an USA magazine and website on international relations and U.S. foreign policy.

Sanctions

07/05/2012

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton failed to convince India to support international sanctions against Iran. Iran is considered geo-strategically very important to India, and "it is therefore imperative for India to try and mediate between the US and Iran" [\[Read\]](#). Meanwhile, Iraq surpassed Iran as the second largest crude supplier to India because Indian private companies have stopped buying Iranian oil. [\[Read\]](#).

Alok Bansal is New Delhi-based security analyst.

Rediff is a news, information, entertainment, and shopping portal. **The Hindu** is a leading Indian newspaper.

Iran: Domestic Views

26/04/2012

After the Istanbul talks, Iranian Friday prayers and officials **expressed optimism and moderation** in their public statements. These sources are personal appointees of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, who is considered to have sidelined Ahmadinejad in the negotiations. This article summarizes the different statements. [\[Read\]](#)

Laura Rozen is an investigative freelance reporter.

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

02/05/2012

Iran's Supreme Leader intervened in the **growing rift among the conservatives** by creating a brand-new "Supreme Council for Resolving Conflicts". By doing this, Khamenei sidelined the Expediency Council (a high advisory council that resolve disputes) to prevent pragmatist Rafsanjani (head of the Expediency Council who favors an opening to the USA) from taking advantage of the conservative rift. [\[Read\]](#).

Ali Khamenei, ex-President of Iran (1981-1989) and Supreme Leader (1989-today) of Iran. Successor of Khomeini.

IranPolitik is a political analysis project. Its authors want to remain anonymous.

16/04/2012

Ali Akbar Salehi stated in an interview that “we are prepared to **create the conditions to alleviate** the spurious concerns that [the West] have created in their imaginations”. “A number of P5+1 members appear to have begun taking [Khamenei’s] fatwa more seriously during the Istanbul talks” [\[Read\]](#).

Who?

Akbar Salehi is Foreign Minister of Iran.

The Source

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Israel

08/05/2012

Is Israel’s new unity government good or bad for negotiations? Good, because Netanyahu’s Likud is less beholden to its far-right and ‘settler’ allies [\[Read\]](#). Bad, because it allows for an “expansion of the possible timetable” related to an attack [\[Read\]](#).

Ehud Olmert is former Primer Minister of Israel.
Yuval Diskin is ex-director of the intelligence agency Shin Bet.

Christian Science Monitor and **Haaretz** are leading newspapers in the USA and Israel, respectively.

28-30/02/2012

Some well-known Israeli officials have expressed their **distrust regarding Prime Minister Netanyahu’s** handling of the situation. Ehud Olmert said that “they are creating an atmosphere and a momentum that may go out of their control” [\[Read\]](#), while Yuval Diskin publicly stated that the government was “misleading the public” and that he doesn’t believe “in a leadership that makes decisions based on messianic feelings” [\[Read\]](#).

New York Times is a leading USA newspaper.

USA

12/02/2012

What is the goal of sanctions? Following a leak from a U.S. official who recognized “regime change” as an objective, there’s been a growing debate about the goal of US policy: is it to press Iran to give up or to create economic havoc which will lead to revolts? [\[Read\]](#)

Jasmin Ramsey is a journalist and the editor of Lobe Log, a US foreign policy blog.

The Guardian is a leading UK newspaper.

European Union

07/05/2012

François Hollande’s election as President of France may result in a **softening of the European Union’s stance on Iran**. While Sarkozy was a major advocate of economic sanctions, the French Socialist Party stresses greater independence from Israel and the United States and has some prominent figures of Iranian origin. [\[Read\]](#)

Muhammad Sahimi holds the NIOC Chair in petroleum engineering at the University of Southern California. He is also active in journalism.

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

The Region

23/04/2012

Iraq’s Maliki’s visit to Tehran could be a step toward further collaboration between Baghdad and Tehran without abandoning Iraq’s mediating role. Maliki is the only politician close both to Iran and the USA. While the Syrian issue pits Iran and Iraq against the USA, the **desire for regional stability** prompts Iraq to help achieve a negotiated solution in the upcoming Baghdad talks. [\[Read\]](#)

Kayhan Barzegar is the Director of the the Institute for Middle East Strategic Studies.

Institute for Middle East Strategic Studies is an Iranian Tehran-based think-tank.

Additional Reading

China and Iran: Economic, Political and Military Relations

19 April 2012. This paper examines factors driving Chinese-Iranian cooperation, potential tensions in the Chinese-Iranian partnership, and U.S. policy options for influencing this partnership. The authors conclude that the U.S. ability to fundamentally reshape China's relationship with Iran is fairly limited, but the U.S. should continue to forestall an Iranian nuclear weapons capability and pressure China to reduce ties to Iran. [\[Read\]](#)

History of Official Proposals on the Iranian Nuclear Issue

Updated April 2012. This timeline summarizes all the official proposals since 2003. [\[Read\]](#)

U.S. and Iranian Strategic Competition. The Sanctions Game: Energy, Arms Control, and Regime Change

26 April 2012. Tightening sanctions and Iran's reactions have become a race against time. Every day brings a new event as the competition between the US and Iran plays out on a global level. The Burke Chair at CSIS has issued a new report that puts this competition in a broader perspective. [\[Read\]](#)

The Unspectacular Future of the IAEA Additional Protocol

26 April 2012. It has been fifteen years since the Additional Protocol was approved by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to rectify serious deficits in IAEA inspections and verification (...). But NPT parties still have not reached a consensus that the protocol should be an essential component of their long-standing Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements. [\[Read\]](#)

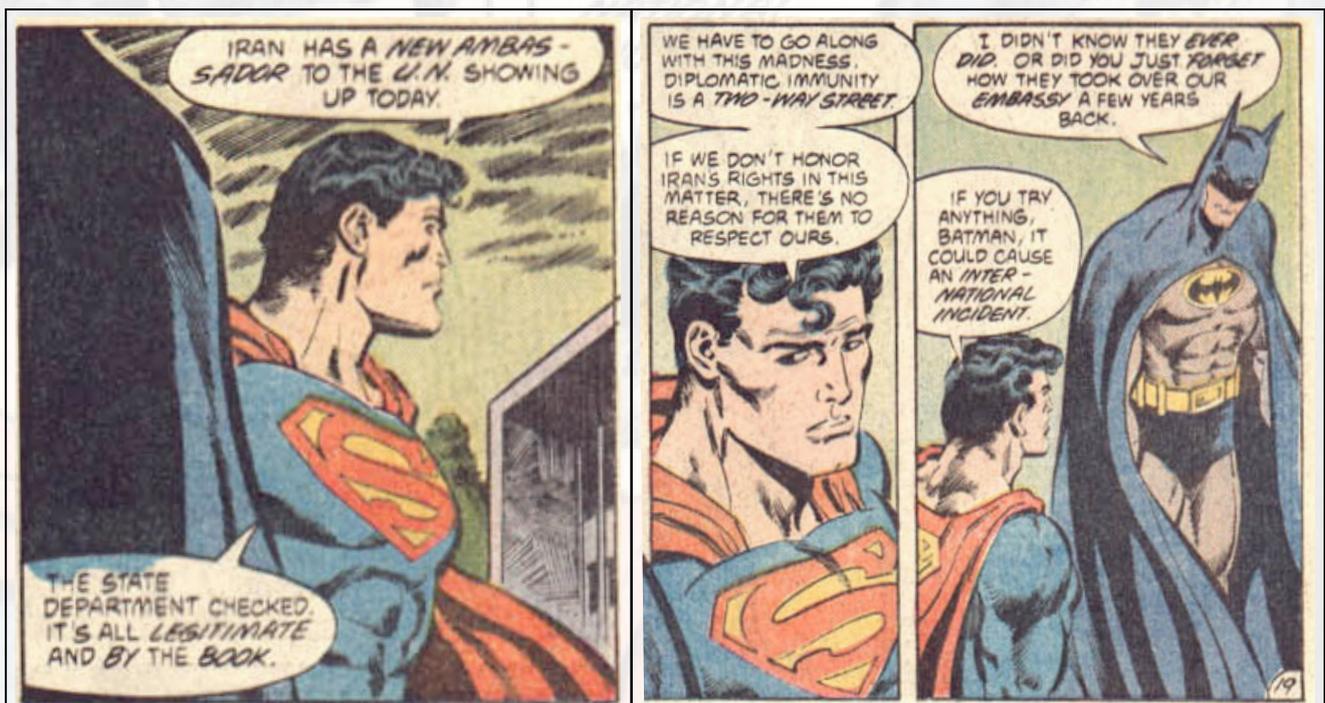
Rand Corporation is a global policy think tank first formed to offer research and analysis to the United States armed forces. It is currently partially financed by the U.S. government.

Arms Control Association is an USA organization supporting effective arms control policies.

CSIS is an USA think-tank that "conduct research and analysis and develop policy initiatives that look to the future and anticipate change".

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

Take a break...



Batman's "A Death in The Family" comic book (1980) featured the Joker as Iran's ambassador to the UN. It also showed a "Lebanese Shi'a group" (in reference to Hezbollah) buying nuclear weapons from The Joker and trying to bomb Tel Aviv.