

Iran

WORKING GROUP

KEY ISSUES

15/06/2012

- After Baghdad, both sides accused each other of avoiding compromise, putting into risk the Moscow talks.
- Different agendas in the P5+1 are hindering the negotiations.
- Iran has adopted a tougher public stance.

Nuclear Negotiations

08/06/2012

The failure of the Baghdad talks is to be blamed on the **miscalculations made by Iran and the West**. Each side believed it had the upper hand, and stuck to its previous positions (Iran not giving up nuclear enrichment, the West not accepting to lift sanctions), which made negotiations derail. It is also important to stress the role of the beneficiaries of the current deadlock, like some sectors of the IRGC and some Arab countries [\[Read\]](#).

Hadi Kahalzadeh served as an economist for Iran's Social Security Organization from 2003 to 2011.

InsideIran is an informative webpage offering insights on Iran. It is part of the Iran Program of The Century Foundation.

06 /2012

The U.S. **should press for bilateral talks** (the "Nixon China option") because the P5+1 format is "formulaic, stagnant, and not likely to achieve any breakthrough on their own. The Iranians feel out-numbered by diverse participants with varying agendas". After Istanbul, the US now has an opportunity to establish new ways to explore common ground [\[Read\]](#).

William H. Luers served as US Ambassador. **Thomas R. Pickering** is a former U.S. Under Secretary of State and Ambassador to the United Nations.

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

31/05/2012

Baghdad failed because "the issue of sanctions has to be addressed; yet the West was **not prepared to even discuss** the sanctions". Although some in the West accuse Iran of "buying time" to prolong nuclear enrichment, it is the West who is "keener to prolong the negotiations and delay a face-saving solution to the nuclear impasse so that sanctions have more effect" [\[Read\]](#).

Hussein Mousavian is former spokesman for Iran's nuclear negotiators.

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11/06/2012

A diplomatic blame game has **put the Moscow talks at risk**, when each side accused the other of not taking the preparations seriously and stalling for time. The crisis had to be solved through direct talks between the highest negotiators, Catherine Ashton and Saeed Jalili. Moreover, European diplomats blamed Iran for the past failures because it "has yet to specify in the talks what it will and will not accept" [\[Read\]](#).

Scott Peterson is a journalist specialized in Iran and the Middle East.

Christian Science Monitor is a leading U.S. newspaper.

The Parchin Files

05-06/2012

ISIS published a report, based on exclusive satellite imagery, that shows **suspected activity in the Parchin military base** with two buildings being razed and the facilities being cleaned. Accordingly, this may well be part of an effort to conceal past activities [\[Read\]](#). Parchin is the cornerstone of the current negotiations between the IAEA and Iran that are being held in parallel to the P5+1-Iranian process. Those negotiations are **currently in a stalemate** [\[Read\]](#). Iran argues that the IAEA presents no evidence and that "there is a possibility for classified military information to be leaked through inspections", so a framework should be agreed upon first. [\[Read\]](#).

David Albright is a physicist and founder and President of the ISIS. **Hassan Beheshti Pour** is an International Affairs Analyst.

ISIS is an U.S. think-tank dedicated to informing the public about science and policy issues affecting international security. **Radio Free Europe** is a broadcaster funded by the U.S. Congress. **Iranian Diplomacy**

Russia

05-06/2012

Russia's decision to call for Iranian involvement in solving Syria's crisis put the Kremlin at odds with the White House before the Moscow talks [\[Read\]](#). However, "Iran is at the negotiating table partly because its presumptive allies, Russia and China, demand that it take steps to demonstrate the peaceful intent of its nuclear program", so the U.S. needs to keep Russia at his side, even if it means conceding the Kremlin a greater role in the Middle East [\[Read\]](#).

Tony Karon is a senior editor and analyst at Time.

Time is a leading U.S. magazine.

Iran: Domestic Views

11/06/2012

The Iranian elite closely observes the USA political scene, and seems to have concluded that, given the upcoming Presidential election, **“Obama needs to prolong the talks** and achieve minor goals to demonstrate that talks are making progress” and that “both sides will benefit in delaying any substantive agreement until after the U.S. elections in November.” Iran has, in the past, expressed its preference of negotiating with Republican administrations [[Read](#)].

Mehdi Khaliji is a senior fellow at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy and studied Shia theology in the Qom seminary of Iran.

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

01/06/2012

Iran and the West must be, despite the difficulties, **willing to reach an agreement** that is in the interest of both sides. “Why we should act in a way to increase their suspicion and enmity towards us? We are paying a high price as a result of sanctions. Western countries have also paid a high price for applying sanctions against Iran. Those who have benefitted from sanctions include Russia, China, the UAE, Turkey and international middlemen” [[Read](#)].

Sadegh Zibakalam, is professor of Political Science at Tehran University.

Iranian Diplomacy is an online magazine directed by reformist Sadegh Karrazi, former diplomat in the Khatami government.

11/06/2012

However, another perspective is that “we must accept the fact that the punitive and sanction-based aspects of the P5+1’s behavior are stronger than its constructive aspects” and “therefore (...) they took advantage of Iran’s optimism” [[Read](#)].

Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh is a university professor and international affairs expert

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

01/06/2012

Meanwhile, Rafsanjani is making a comeback on Iran’s political scene. In a new interview, he made some **bold statements** criticizing most of the current positions, internal and external, of the Islamic Republic. Given his political weight, and the upcoming 2012 presidential election, these statements are very relevant [[Read](#)].

Eskandar Sadeghi-Boroujerdi is Iran Researcher at Oxford Research Group.

Jame’e-ye Baaz / The Open Society is Eskandar’s weblog about Iranian politics.

05/06/2012

Does the “Nuclear fatwa” (forbidding nuclear weapons) really exist, or are they a series of political statements? If it exists, we must remember that fatwas can be changed. The point is that “such political declarations, insofar as they are [public] declarations and not formal juridical rulings, **make it costly for Iran to overturn** the publicly stated position not to pursue a nuclear capability” [[Read](#)].

Who?

The Source

USA

07/06/2012

According to diplomatic sources, the Obama administration might put forward a **broader proposal to Iran** during the next round of nuclear talks scheduled for later this month. This is considered a “go big” approach rather than the more incremental one presented at a meeting last month in Baghdad [[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”.

13/06/2012

There are two obstacles to an Obama strategy. First, “for the sake of peace, **congressional obstructionism** [setting unfeasible red lines and unachievable objectives] must end”. Second, there is “an exaggerated belief in what sanctions can actually achieve” while history “does not support the notion that this pressure will bring down the clerical autocracy in Tehran and lead to democracy” [[Read](#)].

Trita Parsi is president of the National Iranian American Council and the author of “A Single Roll of the Dice: Obama’s Diplomacy with Iran”.

New York Times is a leading U.S. newspaper.

Additional Reading

Nuclear Fatwa: Religion and Politics in Iran's Proliferation Strategy

September 2011. Since the Islamic Republic's inception, its decision-making has been shaped by tension between the traditional tenets of Shia Islam and the pragmatic concerns of statecraft. This document analyzes the so-called "Nuclear Fatwa" (forbidding nuclear weapons) in relation to Iran policymaking to assess its relevance and position in the Nuclear decision making process [[Read](#)].

Russia's Relation with Iran: Dialogue Without Commitments

June 2012. Under current conditions, it would be naive to expect Russia to severely curtail its relations with Tehran or officially support the West's stance regarding the nuclear question. At the same time, Russia's pragmatic, cost-benefit approach to foreign policy remains paramount, making a true alliance with volatile Iran highly improbable [[Read](#)].

IAEA Critical for Making Diplomacy with Iran Work

1 June 2012. Since the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) concluded in 2003 that Iran had systematically concealed activities that it was required to report to the agency, two tracks have been used to respond to Iran's challenge: an IAEA track and a diplomatic track. The diplomatic track is now in high gear. But it would be a mistake to conclude that the IAEA's role in resolving the crisis will be secondary [[Read](#)].

Outcomes of Iran's Resistance on Nuclear Issue

28 May 2012. This visual presentation summarizes the 44 speeches on which Ali Jamenei talks about the nuclear issue. It classifies Iran's perceived achievements and outcomes in 12 different categories [[Read](#)].

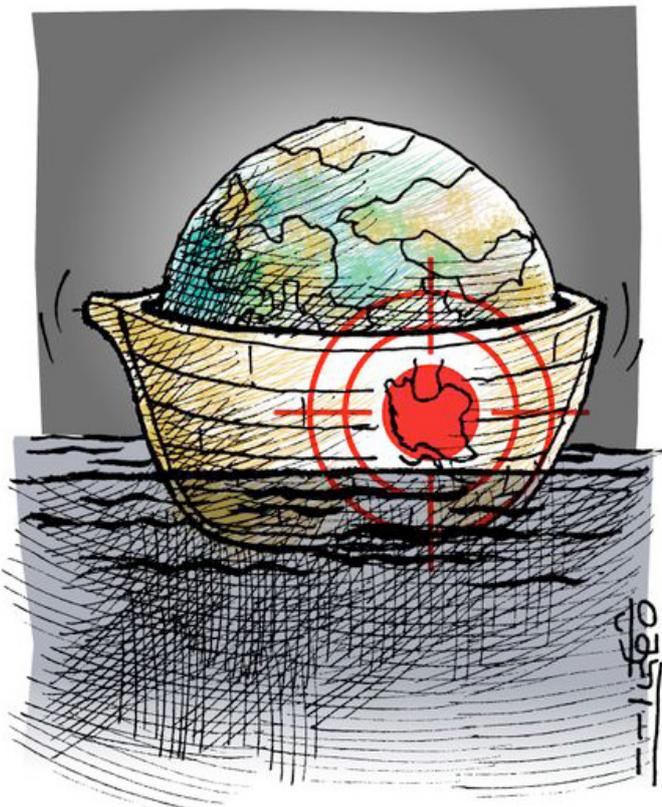
Washington Institute for Near East Policy

is a think tank based in Washington, D.C. focused on United States foreign policy in the Middle East.

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

Khamenei.ir is the official webpage of Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Jamenei.

Take a Break...



Kianoush Ramezani, born in Iran in 1973, is a cartoonist, journalist and activist currently living in Paris. His work as a cartoonist is available at www.cartoonmovement.com