

Iran

WORKING GROUP

KEY ISSUES

23/07/2012

- The P5+1 format has not been able to overcome the US-Iran crisis, which is at the core of past failures.
- The Syria crisis and the Bulgaria bombing have further deteriorated US-Iran relations.
- Each side has accused the other of intransigence.

Nuclear Negotiations

24/06/2012

The US and European offer to sell Iran spare aircraft parts is an old and controversial one. It has been used in diplomatic bargaining for as long as 20 years, since the first Clinton presidency. It is controversial because of the high number of aircraft crashes that haunt Iran's civil aviation and which are said to be a direct consequence of the sanctions [\[Read\]](#). An Iranian pilot who became a national hero after a complicated emergency landing in 2012 [\[see video\]](#) has initiated an awareness campaign to attract international attention and demand an end to sanctions on spare parts and new planes [\[Read\]](#).

06/07/2012

Three causes could explain why Iran allowed the Moscow talks to fail. 1) Iranians think they won't be attacked, 2) they think that after Obama's re-election, and without the Republicans pushing for a tougher stance, they can reach a better deal and 3) they feel that the "step by step" approach and "reciprocal" spirit, as announced in Istanbul, have been betrayed by the P5+1 and its insistence on a "stop, shut, ship" solution [\[Read\]](#).

05/07/2012

Both sides privately recognized that **the failure of the Moscow talks "occurred largely because the United States moved the goalposts—again"**. This is because "multilateral talks have reached a deadlock [and therefore] the United States perceives that it stands a better chance of getting what it really needs by escalating the conflict" and waiting for Iran to give in. However, "the complicating factors in both Washington and Tehran are so numerous that if either side waits for the right time, it will never come." [\[Read\]](#).

07/2012

In the present context, "it is unhelpful and underhanded that Iran, in its recent statements amid ongoing diplomacy, has further clouded the broth by broadcasting its intention to build nuclear-powered submarines". These submarines require high-enriched uranium and could be used in the future as an excuse for Tehran to continue its activities. "The involved parties already have charted the rough outlines of a long-term deal": they should, instead, stick to it [\[Read\]](#).

Eskandar Sadeghi-Boroujerdi is Iran Researcher at Oxford Research Group and a frequent collaborator at Tehran Bureau.

Reza Marashi is director of research at the National Iranian American Council.

Olli Heinonen served for 27 years at the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna.

AlMonitor is an online daily which "seeks to introduce a global audience to the Middle East in its own words". **New York Times** is a leading US newspaper.

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

The Guardian is a leading UK newspaper.

The Arms Control Association is a US-based organization promoting public understanding of and support for effective arms control policies.

Bulgaria Bombing

18/07/2012

Iran is a very likely suspect in the terror attack against Israeli tourists in Bulgaria. It could be in retaliation for supposed Israeli assassinations of Iranian scientists and senior military officials. The US is trying to cool the situation down and "US officials have privately expressed concern that one of the purposes of Israeli attacks in Iran has been to generate an Iranian response that could serve as a casus belli for Israel" [\[Read\]](#).

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".

The Daily Beast is an American news reporting and opinion website.

Israel

15/07/2012

Former National Security Advisor stated that “**the right way to deal with Iran is through diplomacy**”, and blamed the US administrations for not having adopted the Russian-backed solution in the past. Now, “the likelihood of an Israeli military strike on Iran is much less than 50%; while the likelihood that Iran will become a nuclear power is above 50%” [Read [\(summarized\)](#)] [Read [\(paywall\)](#)].

Giora Eiland is former IDF planning chief and National Security Advisor.

Haaretz is a leading Israeli newspaper.

United States

02/07/2012

Before embarking “hastily” on a second war with Iran, **it is interesting to remember the long forgotten first war between the US and Iran** (the “Tanker war”), as well as the Iran-Iraq war. Some lessons to extract are that 1) a conflict could make Iran more extreme and determined, and not the contrary 2) Iran will not be easily intimidated by America and 3) the US should be careful with its allies’ advice: back in the 80’s, Israel was anxious about Iraq and pushed for a rapprochement with Iran [\[Read\]](#).

Bruce Riedel is a former longtime CIA officer, and senior fellow in the Saban Center at the Brookings Institution.

The Daily Beast is an American news reporting and opinion website.

Iran: Domestic Views

02/07/2012

Some divisions are becoming visible amongst the Iranian elite and public opinion regarding the diplomatic crisis. Distancing himself from the official line, Iranian Minister of Industry, Mines and Trade publicly stated that “the West’s sanctions imposed on Iran are paralyzing,” and that the confrontation is “serious and dangerous” for the political system [\[Read\]](#). The important reformist cleric, Abdullah Nouri, proposed a national referendum on the nuclear programme [\[Read\]](#). Lastly, a polemic arose when a news website controlled by the public broadcaster had to withdraw two polls. In the first poll, a majority of participants had chosen the option “suspend uranium enrichment in return for gradual lifting of the sanctions” as the preferred solution to the crisis. A second poll on the closure of the Strait of Hormuz yielded similar results against the official position. The public broadcaster blamed those results on a BBC Persian hack [\[Read\]](#).

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

10/07/2012

In an interview, **Iran’s ambassador to the UN said that Iran would not “initiate any provocative steps”** such as pursuing further uranium enrichment or closing the Strait of Hormuz. He is confident that it is still possible to “close the gap” between Iran and the P5+1. However, the language used by the P5+1 in the step-by-step approach reflected a lack of commitment: for every Iranian concession, the West said it would “consider”, “try” or “think about” the reward. This adds to the mistrust that “exists between the two sides, especially on the Iranian side” [\[Read\]](#).

Mohammad Khazaei is Iran’s ambassador to the United Nations.

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

Europe

12/07/2012

The MI6 (British intelligence) chief suprisingly stated that **the United Kingdom’s covert operations prevented Iran from achieving nuclear weaponization as early as 2008**, and put the date of 2014 as the current threshold beyond which Iran will be able to develop nuclear arms [\[Read\]](#).

John Sawers is the British intelligence MI6 chief.

The Telegraph is a UK leading newspaper.

Additional Reading

“A framework for comprehensive and targeted dialogue for long term cooperation among 7 countries”: Iran’s Powerpoint

23 June 2012. Christian Science Monitor’s journalist Scott Petterson has obtained a copy of the powerpoint presentation used by Iranian negotiators to clarify their position in the Moscow round of negotiations held in June [\[Read\]](#).

Polls show support for tougher sanctions against Iran, but not for military force

17 July 2012. As the confrontation over Iran’s nuclear program intensifies, international public support for sanctions on Iran is fairly strong, but not for the use of military force. These are some of the findings in a newly updated digest of polls from around the world and the United States on the topic of nuclear proliferation [\[Read\]](#).

Iran sanctions halt long-range ballistic-missile development

July 2012. There is mounting evidence to suggest that, whereas the sanctions regime has not prevented Tehran from operating an increased number of centrifuges for uranium-enrichment activities or adding to its stockpile of fissile material, it has stymied efforts to develop and produce the long-range ballistic missiles capable of striking potential targets in Western Europe and beyond [\[Read\]](#).

Christian Science Monitor is a US newspaper.

World Public Opinion is an international collaborative project whose aim is to give voice to public opinion around the world on international issues.

International Institute for Strategic Studies is a British research institute in the area of international affairs that is specialized in political-military conflict.

Mutual Distrust

Kal works as a cartoonist for The Economist

