

Iran's Nuclear Talks: Theater of the Absurd

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For the umpteenth time, Iran and the P5+1 are holding talks to 'resolve' the impasse in dealing with Iran's nuclear program. And for the umpteenth time, the absurdity of these meetings is reflected in the futile, repetitious, meaningless dialogue amidst threats and ultimatums. Feigned smiles and optimism add to the theatrics. While theatrics are part and parcel of US foreign policy, surely one must wonder why the rest participate in this absurd political drama.

The current negotiations, as with past talks, place a great deal of emphasis on Iran's enrichment activities giving the impression that enrichment is at the crux of the matter. It is, as far as Iran goes, but this is not the whole narrative. There is far more at stake in the outcome of these talks – America's power to shape and implement international treaties according to its whim.

Leading up to the latest round of negotiations, Undersecretary of State Wendy Sherman claimed that ““... it has always been the U.S. position that that article IV of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty does not speak about the right of enrichment at all [and] doesn't speak to enrichment, period.” (Eminent scholars have successfully argued that [Iran has the right to enrich uranium](#) under the Treaty). This has not always been America's 'position'.

There is clear indication of a direct correlation between America's 'position' on Article IV and the degree to which a nation is willing to comply with American demands. In this case, during the rule of the Shah, one of America's pet dictators, Iran had the right not recognized today. During the administration of President Ford [National Security Decision Memorandum \(NSDM\) 292, dated April 22, 1975](#), stated that the U.S. shall “Permit U.S. materials to be fabricated into fuel in Iran for use in its own reactors and for pass-through to third countries with whom we have Agreement.”

A year later, the United States went from giving its permission to enrich to demanding that Iran do so. [In NSDM 324, dated April 20, 1976](#), President Ford authorized the U.S. negotiating team to “Seek a strong political commitment from Iran to pursue the multinational/binational reprocessing plant concept, according the U.S. the opportunity to participate in the project.” The United States was looking to make a profit from Iran's nuclear enrichment activities.

However, the 1979 Iranian Revolution put an end to American plans and aspirations. Iranians sent a clear message: Iran would no longer seek America's “permission” to declare its rights under international treaties. Iran's insistence on reclaiming its sovereignty led to a decision by the United States to stop Iran's nuclear program in its tracks (and overthrow the regime). It failed.

These negotiations are not about Iran, but they are centered on Iran. The outcome of these talks is equally important to all countries, specifically to Russia and China –and to a lesser degree, Europe. For the first time since the end of the Cold War, there is a perception of a shift away from the unipolar world. At this fateful juncture, should America prevail in hijacking international law to suit its policies of the day (dictated by Israel), then all nations will be subjugated – including Russia and China.

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