

VEILED THREATS AGAINST IRAN: Stalemate of Iran Nuclear Talks in Baghdad

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Previous nuclear talks failed. On April 14 and 15, another round convened.

Istanbul hosted so-called P5+1 countries. They include the five permanent Security Council members – America, Russia, China, Britain, and France – plus Germany.

Iran participated in good faith. Its delegation came with little hope hardline Western views would soften. On April 14, both sides agreed to more talks in Baghdad on May 23.

At issue isn't Iran's nuclear program. Tehran's a Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) signatory. It complies fully with provisions. No evidence suggests otherwise. Nonetheless, bogus accusations persist.

Iran won't relinquish its legal rights. Washington remains hardline and obstructionist. An unnamed US official called May 23 talks "very difficult."

Both sides continued on Thursday. A possible Geneva June round was discussed. On May 24, the [Washington Post](#) headlined "Iran nuclear talks continue on second day," saying:

Talks resumed Thursday "amid fading hopes that these latest negotiations would help ease tensions over Tehran's disputed nuclear program."

As explained above and numerous previous times, Iran's program complies fully with international law obligations. Washington's the problem, not Tehran.

"Iran rejected" P5+1 proposals, said the Post. Thursday talks won't likely resolve things. They center on Iran's legitimate right to pursue a peaceful nuclear program. Washington wants it denied. No sovereign country should yield to that type pressure.

Iran justifiably rejected proposals it called "outdated, not comprehensive and unbalanced. There is no balance, and there is nothing to get in return. What we heard in Istanbul was more interesting....We believe the reason P5+1 is not able to reach a result is America."

According to former Iranian chief nuclear negotiator Hossein Mousavian:

“The world powers are asking Iran for diamonds, in the form of ceasing to enrich uranium to 20%, and all they are offering in return is peanuts, in the form of spare parts for Iranian airline planes.”

A member of the Iranian delegation added:

“The American delegation says on the one hand that they want to reach a fast agreement through negotiations, but on the other hand they are continuing to impose unilateral sanctions on Iran.”

An unnamed Israel official said:

“We will hear about what was discussed, and then respond accordingly.”

P5+1 demands include halting uranium enrichment to 20%. It's needed to produce medical isotopes. Weapons grade uranium requires close to 90% enrichment. Scoundrel media reports don't explain it or that Iran's program is peaceful.

Washington also wants its Fordo plant closed. It's deep underground within a mountain for protection against US and/or Israeli attacks.

Iran alone faces unreasonable demands. Dozens of other nations with commercial nuclear operations have no such restrictions. Tehran calls this unacceptable. It's also offered nothing in return.

Chief negotiator Saeed Jalili wants sanctions lifted in return for negotiating in good faith, cooperating with IAEA inspectors, and complying fully with NPT provisions.

Iran's [Judiciary Chief](#) Ayatollah Sadeq Amoli Larijani rejected proposals restricting Tehran's legitimate enrichment rights, saying:

“(A)uthorities of the Islamic Iran will never retreat from the country's natural and inalienable rights. Our people and officials are in consensus over nuclear advancement. Our team of negotiators will never make a deal over nuclear enrichment.”

Iran's IAEA permanent envoy, Ali Asghar Soltaniyeh, reiterated Tehran's position. It won't compromise its legitimate rights, nor should it.

Iran countered with a five-point proposal. Details weren't disclosed. It includes recognizing Tehran's legitimate nuclear program and discussing Syria's insurgency. Damascus is a key Tehran ally. Western-generated violence justifies concern. Together with responsible Western nations is an appropriate forum to raise it.

Washington flatly refused. Nor will it yield on other unreasonable demands. Stalemate looks likely. Tehran will be blamed. Fingers point the wrong way. Diplomatic breakthrough hopes fade.

Resolution's not possible without willing partners. Iran has none in Baghdad. What's next remains to be seen. More talks won't reverse this round's failure. Expect more heated rhetoric.

On May 23, Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said Western power is declining. "No matter their propaganda, they are being weakened and destroyed."

"The Iranian nation is hopeful of the future. And the horizon of the future is smiling toward the Iranians."

Optimism isn't easy with Washington remaining hardline. It negotiates one way. It's all take and no give.

Extremist groups like the [Foundation for Defense of Democracy](#) (FDD) make things harder. Its president, Clifford May, headlined a Scripps Howard News Service article "What Iran's Rulers Want," saying:

"It's no longer possible to pretend we don't know the intentions of Iran's rulers." They want Israel destroyed, he claims.

A spurious Ayatollah Ali Khamenei comment alleged he said "Israel must be burned to the ground and made to disappear from the face of the Earth."

According to former Spanish prime minister Jose Maria Aznar, he and other Iranian officials want Israel destroyed "through military force."

May claims Tehran is "committed to war, genocide and developing nuclear weapons." Other spurious accusations were made. He included the longstanding canard about Iran being "the world's leading sponsor of terrorism." Another claimed it "violate(s) the most fundamental tenets of international law."

When supportive facts don't exist, extremists like May invent them. Op-ed space in major broadsheets publish them.

The Washington Post featured [FDD's Mark Dubowitz and Reuel Marc Gerecht's](#) commentary headlined "An Underwhelming Approach to Iran's Nuclear Ambitions," saying:

Given Iran's "advanced nuclear program....the West appears poised (again) to take the easy way out." Both writers favor force, not diplomacy. They want Tehran's uranium enrichment entirely prohibited.

"A new red line at 20 percent enrichment (leaves Israel) two options: strike or give up."

"For those who fear another conflagration in the Middle East, that ought to be a compelling reason to hang tough in Baghdad. Odds are, however, we won't."

According to the hawkish American Enterprise Institute (AEI):

"Any outcome that does not include the verifiable dismantling of Iran's nuclear program and the removal of all nuclear material – at any level – will allow Iran to retain the ability to acquire nuclear weapons fuel in short order."

[AEI's Iran section](#) features this and similar comments in articles and reports like:

"The new deal with Iran"

"A Regional Reality Check about Iran as the P5+1 Meet"

"Iran's nuclear weapons fuel production capability"

"Iran, sanctions, and what can Congress do?"

"Iran Guards Corps Fears Attack by Israel, fears Hezbollah will be the spark"

"Congress and Iran"

"Stop giving Iran a pass."

Others follow variations on the same theme. Syria is also targeted.

AEI was influential ahead of Washington attacking Iraq. It's pushing war now against Tehran and Damascus. It's ties to top administration and congressional leaders makes more conflict likely.

[Congressional neocon extremist Senators](#) John McCain (R. AR), Lindsey Graham (R. SC), and Joe Lieberman (I. CT) need no convincing. Their Wednesday Wall Street Journal op-ed said:

“Given the Iranian regime’s long-standing pattern of deceptive and illicit conduct, we believe that it cannot be trusted to maintain enrichment or reprocessing activities on its territory for the foreseeable future – at least until the international community has been fully convinced that Iran has decided to abandon any nuclear- weapons ambitions.”

“We are very far from that point,” they added. The so-called “three Amigos” and other like-minded congressional hawks believe military action against Iran and Syria is the only viable option.

Israeli hard-liners concur. They’re coordinating with Obama officials on Iranian and Syrian policy. The tail perhaps wags the dog. It wouldn’t be the first time.

It’s no coincidence that Defense Minister Ehud Barak visited Washington last week. He came mainly to discuss Iran ahead of the P5+1 talks. An Israeli delegation didn’t participate. America represented Tel Aviv’s interests.

Both nations prefer conflict, not compromise or conciliation. Peace isn’t an option. Capitulation’s demanded. If not forthcoming, expect war. Influential hawks in both countries urge it. So does the Israeli lobby.

Earlier scenarios repeat. They include baseless accusations, fearmongering, scoundrel media headlines claiming nonexistent threats, op-ed contributors pushing war, and, at times, false flags launching them.

At issue isn’t Tehran’s nuclear program. It’s unchallenged US hegemony. Other nations besides Iran and Syria are targeted.

A rage to fight dominates Washington policy. One war follows another. Empires that overreach eventually self-destruct. America’s no exception.

Living by the sword doesn’t work. Today’s destructive weapons threaten everyone, not just nations using them.

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<http://www.progressiveradionetwork.com/the-progressive-news-hour>.

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