

Iran

WORKING GROUP

After Baghdad

30/05/2012

- Neither side was willing to shift its red lines about enrichment and sanctions.
- There were divisions amongst the P5+1.
- After the talks, Iran has hardened its stance on its right to enrichment.

Baghdad talks: the outcome

26/05/2012

A positive outcome was that “in Baghdad, the Iranians, for the first time said, **‘we are ready to discuss with you the proposals put on the table’**”, in reference to the P5+1 “first-step package” that addresses the major concerns about uranium enrichment. [[Read](#)]

24/05/2012

After Istanbul, Iran felt “in a position of power”. Using the IAEA visit as a bargaining chip, **its expectations before Baghdad were inflated**. It has to reckon that a “freeze for a freeze”, with Iran taking the first step, is the only possible outcome. [[Read](#)]

25-27/05/2012

The talks were “**a complete failure**”, according to an Iranian diplomat. Western demands were “too far beyond Iran’s red lines”, specially the reluctance to recognize Iran’s right to enrichment in exchange for halting production [[Read](#)]. This may be the reason behind Iran’s tough statements, with its nuclear chief “reversing the country’s previous statements [and saying] that the country **would not halt** its production of higher-grade uranium”. [[Read](#)]

26/05/2012

The P5+1 proposals are seen as non-reciprocal: Iran **can’t accept “to give diamonds in return for peanuts”**. Iran should be given recognition of its rights to enrichment under the NPT, gradual lifting of sanctions and the normalization of the Iranian nuclear file at the IAEA and UNSC. [[Read](#)]

P5+1 divided

26/05/2012

Strong differences among the P5+1 members were reported to have almost ruined the Baghdad negotiations. The final statement divided the different parties, with some pushing for a tougher version. A conciliatory text put a temporary end to the disagreement. [[Read](#)]

No gaps between Israel and USA

26/05/2012

A U.S. official close to the talks spoke under the condition of anonymity. “We are the ones who are pressuring ourselves because we see a nuclear Iran as a real danger to global security, and not because of Israel”. Collaboration was said to be very high: “We updated the Israelis in detail before we updated our own government”. [[Read](#)]

Is Iran buying time?

22/05/2012

And if it is, who benefits? “Khamenei faces a critical choice in the months ahead: make a compromise to lessen tensions(...), or maintain a status quo that may set in motion the demise of his regime”. The sanctions are undermining Iran at home so much that its strategy of buying time may prove wrong: “Time, ultimately, is on the side of the United States, and not that of Khamenei’s regime”. [[Read](#)]

Who?

Laura Rozen is an investigative freelance reporter.

Mark Fitzpatrick is the director of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Programme at the IISS.

Scott Petterson and **Thomas Erdbrink** are journalists specialized in Iran and the Middle East.

Hossein Mousavian is former spokesman for Iran’s nuclear negotiators.

Laura Rozen is an investigative freelance reporter.

Barak Ravid is the diplomatic correspondent for Haaretz newspaper.

Alireza Nader is a senior policy analyst at the RAND Corporation.

The Source

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

The National is a UAE government-owned English-language daily newspaper published in Abu Dhabi.

New York Times and **Christian Science Monitor** are leading USA newspapers.

Tehran Bureau is an independent source of news and commentary about Iran.

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

Haaretz is a leading Israeli newspaper.

Rand Corporation is a global policy think tank which advises the United States Armed Forces. It is partially financed by the U.S. government.

Meanwhile, in Persia...

25-27/05/2012

Iran announced it is going to build a new nuclear plant in 2014 [\[Read\]](#) while diplomats told AP that the IAEA has found traces of uranium enriched to **higher levels than previous** ones near Fordow [\[Read\]](#). However, according to experts, this “is an embarrassment for Iran but not a sign of Iran moving to higher enrichments”. [\[Read\]](#)

24/05/2012

International sanctions are **having an effect on Iranian power-sharing**: they’re emboldening the Revolutionary Guards’ stance by creating space for its economic arm to “conquer” the oil industry. Thus, “the generation of current and former IRGC members coming to power in Iran is **not afraid of sanctions or isolation** because these were the exact conditions under which they were forged”. [\[Read\]](#)

23/05/2012

Iran’s economy seems to be doing better than some believe, and “it remains to be seen” whether **the sanctions’ bite will impact negotiations**. Iran’s government, like other governments under sanctions, may find ways of shielding itself from the worst economic effects. [\[Read\]](#)

28/05/2012

Iranian **media reactions to the talks** are a mix of frustration and triumphalism, but all remark that Iran resisted an unfair proposal by the West. Kayhan, the hardline newspaper whose director is considered to be close to Khamenei, even suggests that “if the negotiations are to continue along this path (...) then our presence in Moscow will only help the enemy’s need for negotiations and, therefore, **it is better not to participate**”. [\[Read\]](#)

25/05/2012

Reformist voices express similar opinions. Iran **won’t abandon the right to enrich uranium** granted by the NPT membership. So, if “the West continues to not acknowledge Iran’s rights under the NPT, Iran has no choice but to reconsider its membership in that treaty”. This would open the door to a security crisis in a region with two regional powers non-signatories of the treaty [\[Read\]](#).

Who?

Barbara Slavin is a senior diplomatic reporter.

Hassan Hakimian is director of the London Middle East Institute and an economics expert.

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

Sadegh Kharrazi is a reformist and former diplomat in the Khatami government.

The Source

Radio Free Europe is a broadcaster funded by the U.S. Congress.
Haaretz
AlMonitor

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

CFR is an American nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization, publisher, and think tank.

Tehran Bureau is an independent source of news and commentary about Iran.

Iranian Diplomacy is an online magazine directed by reformist Sadegh Kharrazi.

Additional Reading

Institute for Science and International Security
ISIS Analysis of IAEA Iran Safeguards Report [\[Read\]](#)

Reuters
Factbox: Iran’s Fordow Plant [\[Read\]](#)