

# *Iran*

WORKING GROUP

## KEY ISSUES

05/07/2012

- The most recent negotiations were downgraded to a technical level, in part to avoid a breakdown.
- Iran thinks it can withstand the sanctions.
- Regional events, especially in Syria, may weaken Iran's stance.

# Nuclear Negotiations

24/06/2012

“There is an important difference between the 2009 and 2012 versions of the negotiations. This time round, **neither side is in a hurry to declare the process dead**”. For the West, this may be due to the upcoming US elections and a recent fall in oil prices. Iran’s interests are more difficult to assess: it may be that “Iran’s leaders are hoping that President Obama will be re-elected and he will award them for their cooperation in keeping the show on the road” [\[Read\]](#).

**Peter Jenkins** was Britain’s permanent representative to the IAEA.

**LobeLog** is an International Press Service blog on foreign policy.

26/06/2012

“The United States and its allies made demands that would have been practically impossible for any government to accept”. **The P5+1 has disguised as “concessions” what are rights** by international law (spare parts for aviation, nuclear enrichment). However, “the main goals that Iran wanted to achieve in the nuclear negotiations were also unrealistic”. Iran insisted on discussing sanctions and attempted to bargain on Syria and Bahrain instead. [\[Read\]](#).

**Muhammad Sahimi** is professor at the University of Southern California, a columnist for Tehran Bureau and contributes regularly to other Internet and print media.

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

18/06/2012

In Moscow, Iranian negotiators agreed to clarify their positions through a powerpoint presentation and a step-by-step approach. **“The new technology and clarity simply revealed the gulf** between Iran and its negotiating partners”. “The bottom line is that Iran has clearly rejected the deal it is being offered and is instead demanding the right to enrich uranium and the lifting of sanctions in return for cooperating with the IAEA and halting 20% enrichment” [\[Read\]](#).

**Julian Borger** is the Guardian’s diplomatic editor. He was previously a correspondent in the US and the Middle East.

**The Guardian** is a leading UK newspaper.

02/07/2012

**“The linkage between Iran’s nuclear program and the upheaval in Syria cannot be overstated”**. The Iranian elite has two options: either to wage an aggressive campaign on all fronts, which is costly and perilous and “could pave the way to topple the government”, or to make a “strategic retreat” to preserve itself [\[Read\]](#).

**Alon Ben-Meir** is an expert on Middle East politics and affairs, specializing in peace negotiations.

02/07/2012

**The prospects of a negotiated solution are not as bleak as they appear**. “In retrospect, the diplomatic process has followed a logical path: gradually moving from stagnation and no dialogue to a clearer understanding of the other side’s perspectives”. Understanding does not mean agreement, but “while common ground on political issues is extremely narrow, if not non-existent, there is room for maneuver in the technical realm” [\[Read\]](#).

**Ali Vaez** is the International Crisis Group’s senior Iran analyst.

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

# Russia

Vladimir Putin warned Israel against the idea of attacking Iran: “Look at what happened to the Americans in Afghanistan and in Iraq. I told Obama the same thing”, said the visiting president said in a meeting with his Israeli counterpart [\[Read\]](#), while the Russian Foreign Ministry warned against ultimatums to Iran [\[Read\]](#).

**Yedioth Ahronot** and **Washington Post** are leading Israel and U.S. newspapers, respectively.

## The Parchin Files

02/07/2012

ISIS released an update of its June 20 report claiming evidence that **Iran is “sanitizing” the Parchin military complex**. Accordingly, new satellite imagery is said to show further activity, including earth removal to clean up the Iranian military site that the U.N. nuclear watchdog wants to inspect [\[Read\]](#).

**David Albright** is a physicist and founder and President of the ISIS.

**ISIS** is an U.S. think-tank dedicated to informing the public about science and policy issues affecting international security.

## Iran: Domestic Views

24/06/2012

“**The Arab revolutions have created a new kind of rivalry at both regional and trans-regional levels** and a new political-security bloc. They have also redefined forces and led to the formation of a new coalition between Iran, Russia and China opposing the United States, the EU, Saudi Arabia, Israel and Qatar. Here, Turkey stands somewhere in the middle.” [\[Read\]](#)

**Kayhan Barzegar** is Head of the Department of Political Science and International Relations at the Science and Research Branch of the Islamic Azad University.

**Russia in Global Affairs** is an international relations magazine.

25-4/07

The Revolutionary Guards escalated their rethoric by stating they are ready for war: “The IRGC (...)has identified a radius called the radius of deterrence that encompasses all of the enemy’s strategic interests. **In case of battle, we can manage the war at any level**” [\[Read\]](#). After missile wargames, a commander stated that Iran could attack the 35 bases the USA has around Iran as well as Israeli soil [\[Read\]](#).

**Insidelran** is an informative webpage offering insights on Iran. **Fars** is an Iranian news agency linked to the Revolutionary Guards.

03/07/2012

“The perception in Tehran is that **the West has little left to unilaterally target**” and, in the long run, can’t afford to keep the oil embargo or start a war. With deep foreign exchange reserves and a public debt of less than 10% GDP, “the Iranian leadership feels it is in a sound position to fight a long economic war” [\[Read\]](#).

**Mohammad Ali Shabani** is a Tehran-based political analyst.

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

## Turkey

07/05/2012

“Turkey has in recent weeks sent a number of signals that **it may no longer value good relations with Iran** as much as it values those with its other regional and global partners.” Regardless of which route Turkey pursues, the ongoing conflict in Syria is certain to continue to severely strain the two countries’ relationship [\[Read\]](#).

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

## The Region

26/06/2012

**The rising Iraqi oil sector is putting a strain on Iran**, in spite of the good relations between Baghdad and Tehran. Iraq’s once-battered oil sector is further eclipsing production in Iran, relieving pressure on world oil markets and facilitating the imposition of draconian new sanctions on Iran. [\[Read\]](#)

**Barbara Slavin** is a journalist and senior fellow at the Atlantic Council’s South Asia Center.

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

# Additional Reading

## Not-So-Crazy in Tehran

23 June 2012. A short documentary follows the Op-Ed columnist Nicholas D. Kristof as he travels across the country talking to ordinary citizens about their lives and the effectiveness of American sanctions. [\[Read\]](#)

## Iranian Nuclear Progress

16 June 2012. A visual presentation of Iranian nuclear progress from 2008 to 2012, as well as hostile acts (resolutions, attacks, assassinations) aimed at stopping it. [\[Read\]](#)

## The P5+1, Iran and the Perils of Nuclear Brinkmanship

15 June 2012. This briefing examines the diplomatic rollercoaster, from the rush of optimism that followed the April session in Istanbul to the pessimism resulting from last month's Baghdad talks, and proposes a pragmatic way forward. Washington and Brussels seem to be counting on sanctions to force Iran to compromise. Tehran appears to be banking on a re-elected President Obama displaying more flexibility and an economically-incapacitated Europe fearing the adverse consequences of tougher sanctions. None of this is likely. If prospects for a deal fade, mutual escalation is more probable – as well as pressure by Israel in favor of a military strike [\[Read\]](#).

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

**International Crisis Group** is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation committed to preventing and resolving deadly conflict.

## Take a Break...

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