

# *Iran*

WORKING GROUP

- The Istanbul round was positive in reducing some distrust.
- Arab public opinion does not believe Iran poses a threat to the Arab world.

# Nuclear Negotiations

How did the first round of negotiations held in Istanbul go? Most of the on-the-scene reporters, like Scott Petterson, talk of “the most **positive atmosphere** in nearly a decade” [\[Read\]](#). However, Laura Rozen claims to have a scoop based on internal sources: accordingly, “the atmosphere had grown **extremely strained and tense**” and eventually “came back from verge of collapse”. It also gives some insight about Ashton’s role and the different P5+1 positions. [\[Read\]](#)

Three Carnegie investigators propose **6 benchmark points** in order to determine, from now on, whether Iran talks are working. They also mark the deadline: “by the end of June, new sanctions will go into effect, making it even more painful for Iran to negotiate under pressure.” [\[Read\]](#)

After the Istanbul negotiations, there is **growing confidence on a negotiated solution**, writes J. Ignatius [\[Read\]](#), while Akiva Eldar argues that such a positive outcome would be a “**pyrrhic**” victory for Netanyahu’s government, which has grown dependent on the nuclear threat to avoid internal and external criticism. [\[Read\]](#)

Muhammad Sahimi analyzes the main leaked U.S. demands to Iran. He argues that such a starting point **will probably fail** because “it appears that what will be demanded of the Islamic Republic (...) is tantamount to capitulation” and proposes an alternative path based on a trade-off: ending of sanctions for full implementation of the IAEA additional protocols and limiting uranium enrichment to 19,75%. [\[Read\]](#)

**Scott Peterson** is a journalist and author of “Let the swords encircle me: Iran- A journey behind the Headlines”.  
**Laura Rozen** is an investigative freelance reporter.

**G. Perkovich** is Carnegie’s Vice President for studies.  
**M. Hibs, A. Levite** are associates of the Nuclear Policy Program.

**David Ignatius** is a columnist for the Washington Post.  
**Akiva Eldar** is the chief political columnist and an editorial writer for Haaretz.

**Muhammad Sahimi** is the NIOC (National Iranian Oil Company) Chair at the University of Southern California, and a known pro-Green movement reformist .

**Christian Science Monitor** is a USA-based international newspaper.  
**AlMonitor** is an online daily which “seeks to introduce a global audience to the Middle East in its own words” .

**Carnegie** is a “private, nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing cooperation between nations” .

**Washington Post** and **Haaretz** are leading newspapers in the USA and Israel, respectively.

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

# Sanctions

Were the European oil embargo to finally be enforced in July, Iran would find marine insurance as **its most insurmountable challenge**. All trade, mainly Asian, would be highly affected because **all** the maritime insurance companies are European-based and therefore subject to sanctions. “The bottleneck is insurance. If that’s not settled, we will no longer be able to transport oil”, said one Japanese buyer”. Sovereign guarantees or EU exemptions are the only solutions. [\[Read\]](#)

**Reuters** is a leading international news agency which also provides analysis and commentary. It is based in the U.K.

# Iran: Domestic Views

Hashemi Rafsanjani **openly criticized Iran’s official foreign policy** and advocated for negotiations with USA and better relations with Saudi Arabia in an interview with the Iranian “International Studies Journal”. This comes as a surprise because of the existent taboo on these two issues and the weight of the political figure. [\[Read\]](#)

These statements have sparked controversy in Iran. For some reactions of the conservative press that have been translated into English, you can consult Rooz [\[Read\]](#) and the response of an IRCG general which is considered by IranPolitik as a semi-official response because of the author and the timing. [\[Read\]](#)

Iran should **accept to cooperate** in order to return the nuclear dossier from the UN’s Security Council to the IAEA. However, because of the many countries involved, the negotiations are likely to include more issues (Syria, Hormuz, a free-WMD region, trafficking, etc...) which could make negotiations derail. [\[Read\]](#)

**Hashemi Rafsanjani**, ex-President of Iran (1989-1997) and Chairman of the Expediency Council of Iran.

**Sadegh Rabbani** is the former First Deputy of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran.

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

**Rooz** is an independent and reformist daily.  
**IranPolitik** is a political analysis project. Its authors want to remain anonymous.

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

# Israel

**Israel shouldn't make any concession.** Playing on the idea of Iran as an irrational player ("madness"), Netanyahu is credited here for convincing the West of the Iranian threat. "There is no need or reason to grant Iran any kind of space and accept its demand for Israel not to attack during the negotiations". [\[Read\]](#)

Akiva Eldar advocates for a **regional and comprehensive solution.** He writes that "a Madrid-like international conference could pave the way to a long-term regional peace and put an end to the Middle East nuclear race". The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty Conference to be held next December is proposed here as a good platform. He also despises Obama for "[tailoring] his agenda to his reelection campaign". [\[Read\]](#)

Benny Gantz said to Israeli press that the Israeli Defence Forces are **ready to strike** Iran nuclear facilities and cope with the rocket threat from Lebanon and Gaza. Gantz also acknowledged that special operations beyond Israel's borders have increased. [\[Read\]](#)

**Hanoch Daum** is an Israeli journalist and author of "Mind the Road".

**Akiva Eldar** is the chief political columnist and an editorial writer for Haaretz. His columns also appear regularly in the Ha'aretz-Herald Tribune edition.

**Benny Gantz** is Chief of Staff of the Israel Defence Forces (IDF).

**Yedioth Ahronoth** is an Israeli daily newspaper. Since the 1970s, it has been the most widely circulated paper in Israel.

**The National Interest** international relations magazine defends a realist point of view but "seeks to provide a space for vigorous debate and exchange".

**Yedioth Ahronoth** is the most circulated Israeli daily newspaper.

# USA

**Can the presidential race influence the negotiations?** IISS's Andrew Parasiliti, using polling data, argues that Mitt Romney may try to take advantage of the Iranian issue (the only one in which he could outmaneuver Obama) by taking a more hawkish position. [\[Read\]](#)

Leading journalist Seymour Hersh analyzes the **existing gap** between the available intelligence on Iran's actual nuclear capabilities and intentions and the political assessments made in the USA. [\[Read\]](#)

J.Risen writes the CIA is looking for intelligence in the public statements of Ali Khamenei, who is said to be **directly shaping Iran's positions** in the negotiations [\[Read\]](#). However, Juan Cole reacted to the article by dismissing the **relevance of taqiyya** as an explanation of a supposedly deceptive attitude by Khamenei. [\[Read\]](#)

**Andrew Parasiliti** is Executive Director of IISS-US and Corresponding Director of IISS-Middle East.

**Seymour Hersh** is a Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative journalist.

**Ali Khamenei**, ex-President of Iran (1981-1989) and Supreme Leader (1989-today) of Iran. Successor of Khomeini.

**IISS** is a UK-based think-tank on global security, political risk and military conflict.

**New Yorker** is an American magazine known for its high quality standards.

**New York Times** is a leading USA newspaper. **Juan Cole** is a renowned scholar and pundit specialized in Shi'a Islam.

# European Union

The European Union consensus regarding negotiations is presently **tougher than it was before**, specially on sanctions. So, Iranian policymakers should know that "European officials' views are somewhere in the middle between America's caution and Israel's alarm" and shouldn't expect Europe to act as a counter-weight. [\[Read\]](#)

**G.Abdo** is Director of the Iran Program at The Middle East Institute. **S.Graefe** is Director for Foreign & Security Policy at the Heinrich Boëll Stiftung.

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

# The Region

A recent Doha Institute survey (pop:16,000 from 12 countries, error: 3.5%, see [here](#)) found out that the vast majority of the Arab public does **not believe that Iran poses a threat** to the security of the Arab homeland. Nadim R. Rouhana weighs in the survey and warns against misreading Arab public opinion. [\[Read\]](#)

**Nadim N. Rouhana**, is professor of international affairs and conflict studies in Haifa, Israel.

**Doha Institute** is an independent research institute. Its most renowned program is the Arab Public Opinion's surveys.

There is **no reason** why a regional nuclear arms race would be the necessary outcome of a nuclear Iran. Cook weighs in by underlining “the significant difference between desiring nukes and the actual capacity to acquire them” before assessing the **lack of capacities** and willingness of Turkey, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. [\[Read\]](#)

### Who?

**Steven A. Cook** is a Fellow for Middle Eastern Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations.

### The Source

**Foreign Policy** is a U.S. magazine of global politics, economics, and ideas. It is edited by the Washington Post's media group.

## Turkey

Because of its more pro-Western stance, Turkey is risking “not only the outcome of the long-running dispute with Tehran, but, also, “Turkey’s long-running attempt to **serve as a regional peace broker**”. [\[Read\]](#)

The Turkish stance can be interpreted in **terms of security**: “Turkey is now seeking to contain a rapidly deteriorating regional security situation (...) Given this, Turkey’s main objective now is to prevent a military intervention against Iran.” [\[Read\]](#)

**Dorian Jones** is a freelance reporter based in Istanbul.

**EurasiaNet** is an information and analysis web by the Open Society Institute.

**Sinan Ulgen** is Chairman of the Turkish think-tank EDAM.

**Your Middle East** is an independent digital newspaper based in Sweden.

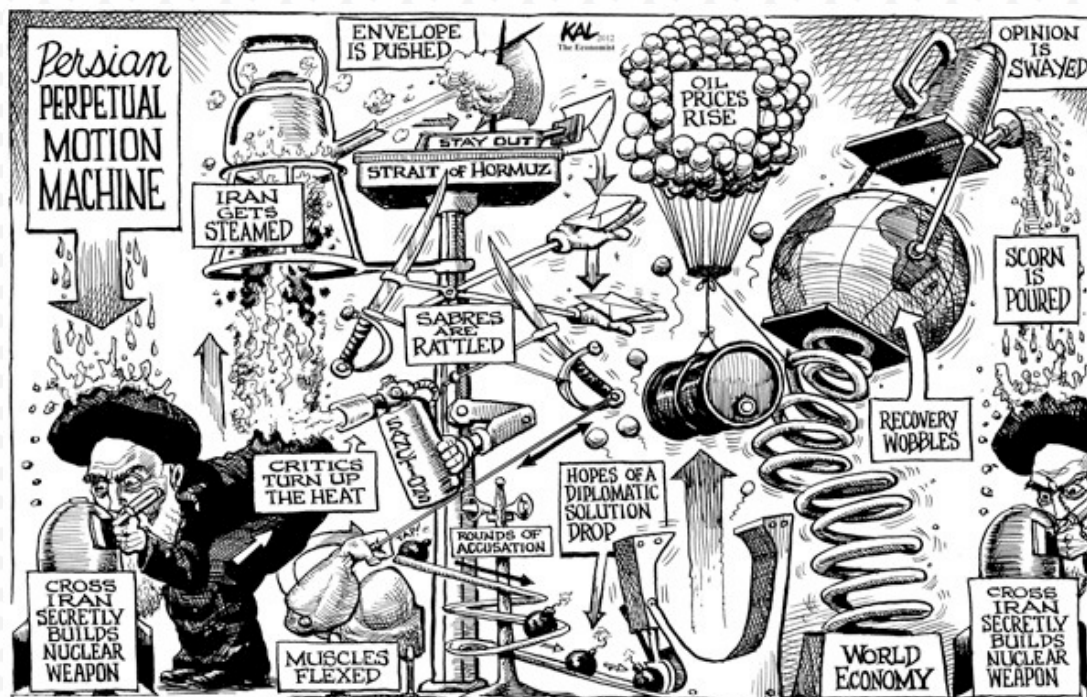
## Russia

Jorisch argues that Moscow is **actually helping solve** the Iran problem by discrete and almost unnoticed actions (such as the closing of the accounts of Iranian diplomats in Moscow). The Kremlin’s motivation would be its own economic problems and the perception of growing risks. [\[Read\]](#)

**Avi Jorisch** is founder of the Red Cell Intelligence Group, a USA consulting firm that specializes in national security issues.

**Moscow Times** is an English-language daily newspaper published in Moscow.

## Take a break...



**Kal** works as a cartoonist for The Economist.