

MEMMO

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While the World Talks, Iran Enriches; More Pressure Needed

After two rounds of negotiations, Tehran continues to reject demands by the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council and Germany (P5+1) to suspend higher-level enrichment and transfer outside of the country its stockpile of 20-percent enriched uranium. Iran has taken advantage of the talks to advance its nuclear program and cleanse a suspected nuclear site. If any hope remains to persuade Tehran to come into compliance with its obligations, the international community must dramatically step up pressure on Iran. Tehran cannot be allowed to exploit yet another round of talks to advance its nuclear weapons pursuit.

Talks with Iran produced no tangible results as Tehran rejected the P5+1 offer, including the provision of fuel for a medical reactor.

- The series of talks held in Baghdad produced no tangible results as Iran continued its refusal to comply with U.N. Security Council obligations to suspend enrichment and allow access to suspect nuclear sites. The sides did agree to continue the talks on June 18 in Moscow.
- Iran continues to reject any agreement that would require it to suspend enrichment, a requirement the Security Council has imposed in six resolutions. “We have no reason to retreat from producing the 20 percent, because we need 20 percent uranium just as much to meet our needs,” Fereydoon Abbasi, the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, said after the talks.
- The P5+1 had extended an offer to provide Iran with nuclear fuel for a medical reactor and spare parts for civilian aircraft in return for Iran shipping its stockpile of 20-percent enriched uranium outside of the country, suspending further enrichment to this level and ceasing activity at Fordow, the once-secret nuclear facility built into a mountain.
- Iran also failed to come to an agreement with the IAEA to allow for inspection of suspect nuclear sites and access to information and individuals associated with the nuclear program.
- The lack of a deal has prevented the IAEA from visiting the Parchin facility, where Iran is believed to have carried out experiments on nuclear explosives. Satellite images indicate that Iran has been working to cleanse the site by removing buildings and soil.



The IAEA believes it has satellite imagery of Iran conducting clean-up work at a military site used in nuclear explosive tests.

While Iran and the P5+1 engaged in two rounds of negotiations, Tehran has advanced its nuclear capabilities.

- Iran increased its quantity of uranium enriched to the 20-percent level by more than a third in the three month period ending May 13, according to a new report of the IAEA. Enrichment to this level represents 80 percent of the work needed to produce fissile material for the core of a weapon.

- Iran’s stockpile of this higher enriched uranium now exceeds the quantity it imported in 1988 and has used to operate a research reactor to produce medical isotopes for more than 20 years.
- Iran also continues to increase its stockpile of low enriched uranium with production rates increasing by more than a third compared to the previous three month period.
- Traces of uranium enriched to 27 percent—a level undeclared to the IAEA—were recently found by inspectors at the Fordow enrichment facility.
- The higher enrichment level is likely due to an improved design for the configuration of Iran’s centrifuges. The new design could make “faster and more efficient” the time Iran would need to break out and produce weapons grade uranium, according to an analysis by the Institute for Science and International Security.

America must make clear that it will act to prevent Iran from achieving the capability to build a nuclear weapon at a time of its choosing.

- In any negotiations, the United States must make clear that it will prevent Iran from developing or acquiring nuclear weapons and that Iran will not be allowed to acquire the capability to quickly produce a nuclear weapon at a time of its choosing.
- At a minimum, any deal to ease sanctions should require Iran to verifiably suspend all enrichment activity, ship out all uranium enriched beyond low levels and cooperate with inspectors.
- The United States also must continue to reject any policy that seeks to contain a nuclear Iran. President Obama has rejected this approach, citing the dangers allowing a nuclear Iran would pose to U.S. security. “Iran’s leaders should understand that I do not have a policy of containment; I have a policy to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon,” the president said.
- At the same time, the president has reiterated that the United States will take all steps—including military action if needed—to prevent Iran from going nuclear.

Enforcement of crippling economic sanctions must be accelerated to prevent Tehran from achieving a nuclear weapons capability.

- On a daily basis, Iran is feeling the harsh impact of sanctions enacted by the United States and its allies. As a result of intensifying economic pressure, Iran faces a drop in oil exports, skyrocketing inflation, rising unemployment and significant damage to the value of its currency.
- However, as the IAEA’s latest report clearly demonstrates, Iran has yet to suspend its nuclear program. Time is running out to prevent Iran from obtaining sufficient quantities of higher enriched uranium to facilitate a quick breakout to produce a nuclear weapon.
- The United States must immediately sanction any bank continuing to conduct significant financial transactions with designated Iranian banks, any companies working in Iran’s energy sector or providing Iran refined petroleum, and any shipping firms utilizing sanctioned ports under the control of Iran’s Revolutionary Guard.
- The United States must also enforce sanctions targeting the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), and penalize any foreign financial institution conducting significant transactions with the CBI. The United States must also continue to press buyers of Iranian oil to look elsewhere for supplies.
- Congress should also finalize sanctions legislation overwhelmingly passed in both houses. The measures would enshrine in law for the first time that it is U.S. policy to prevent Iran from acquiring or developing nuclear weapons, and would sharply tighten the enforcement of existing sanctions law.