

Iran's Nuclear Chess Game

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Ali Larijani, who is the head of Iran's Supreme National Security Council responsible for nuclear discussions with the West, has called nuclear negotiations a "diplomatic chess." Perhaps he is implying that like a good chess player he plans a few moves ahead of his opponent. After receiving two sanctions, Larijani had taken the position that as long as the Security Council (SC) refuses to return Iran's case to the IAEA, Iran will not clarify nuclear ambiguities that have been reported by the Atomic Agency and will continue to reduce cooperation on many additional inspection activities that are not within the framework of the standard Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

The grand wizard of current US interventionist foreign policy, Dick Cheney and his cohorts such as Elliot Abrams, were eager to take advantage of this situation and rally up the support of the P5 members of the Security Council for a third and more damaging sanction against Iran. Although the War Party is very much in favor of a military outcome to the current debacle, there are some that prefer the continuation of sanctions to squeeze and isolate Iran even further and not risk another preemptive war in the Middle East with a far more devastating outcome.

However, Larijani's decision to clarify nuclear activities while under the Security Council sanctions has made grand wizard's job tougher to get a unanimous support for yet another sanction. That is probably one of the reasons why the war mongering rhetoric from the White House has reached a dangerous level: The opponent does not like Iran's latest chess move and wants to shake up the board. Bush's incendiary speech at the American Legion was a clear indication of Cheney's frustration with Iran and looking to find a way out of this juggernaut, by elevating it to a military confrontation. After all the only way Cheney can be assured that centrifuges will not continue to work after he leaves office is to have them destroyed - enrichment suspension is not good enough.

The result of Larijani's bold reversal move could not bear fruit unless both Javier Solana and Mohammad El Baradei were willing to engage Iran while US was pushing for more sanctions. El Baradei's recent balanced comments regarding Iran's case to the BBC and the New York Times are truly exemplary of a Nobel Peace laureate and if his actions prevent another illegal and immoral attack by the US, he should be fully recognized by UN for his efforts. The IAEA's latest report has several interesting points about their agreement with Iran for resolving existing concerns that are worth discussing:

1. The plutonium related concerns have all been satisfactorily addressed by Iran. Recall that plutonium is one of the key elements to make a nuclear bomb and also a byproduct of nuclear power reactor. Contrary to what US officials have been saying the IAEA does not

confirm existence of any plutonium reprocessing activities.

2. According to this agreement all the remaining concerns will be addressed sequentially. Namely once a concern has been fully resolved they will move on to the next one. This is a good move for Iran, since it will allow them to close a file before moving on to the next concern. The agreement schedule is as follows:

. Explain circumstances related to a more advanced centrifuge machine that is in the R&D phase

- Resolve equipment contamination at Tehran University
- Explain uranium metal design document which could be related to instructions for bomb making
- Explain Polonium 210 (Po 210) experimentation; this was used by Russia for their early nuclear bomb designs and for poisoning a former Russian agent in London and caused several death cases in Israel more than 40 years ago
- Provide details about a uranium mine near Bandar Abbas
- Explain the alleged military nature of Iran's nuclear program on a "laptop" that was given by a defector to the US

3. IAEA is expecting Iran to accept the highly intrusive Additional Protocols (AP). Not all the NPT members have accepted it. For instance, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Brazil have not ratified it yet. Once accepted AP will force the member country to, inter alia, allow spot inspection of non-declared nuclear sites.

4. Fuel Enrichment Plant (FEP) at Natanz which is the source of controversy with US has been running at a reduced capacity since the last IAEA report. The number of cascades has increased from 8 to 12, but they are running at one tenth of the capacity. Given the quality of Iranian engineers working on this project, it is most likely due to political reasons that anything else. The remaining 6 cascades are at different levels of preparation; and it is likely that this slow down will continue unless the third sanction is ratified. The Agency has also implemented a variety of safeguards at the FEP, including unannounced inspections.

5. IAEA has assigned a staggering 219 inspectors for Iran. This must be a record for this organization for inspecting any country in the past 50 years.

In spite of this, nothing can be achieved in an arena void of honor. The mainstream media in reporting this intricate 'chess game' has decided to champion the side of war and has given the truth a 'check mate'. Even 'reputable' papers such as The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, and Washington Post have all decided that serving a departing administration that has led the nation into one quagmire is of greater importance than loyalty to a nation consistent in its devotion to the flag. By violating the truth and misinforming the public about the IAEA's findings on Iran's cooperation with the Atomic Agency, the media's betrayal of the sons and daughters of a nation which goes to war to make possible the existence of the free media, is nothing short of treachery most brutally executed.

For deceit, we have others. An English Terrier that barked, and a French Poodle that bites. Mr. Blair and Mr. Sarkouzy have taken the war to the edge, waiting to push humanity into a

dark abyss where it will not be recovered. It will pass the gates of hell, Dante's inferno will no longer be a work of imagination – for us, it will be our experience, our doom. Will the papers, the media, be the trumpeters to this eternal hell that Mr. Cheney has in mind?

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