

The Iran Nuclear File and the Sanctions Regime: What is the End-Game?

By [Kourosh Ziabari](#)

Global Research, October 24, 2013

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [IRAN: THE NEXT WAR?](#)

With the recommencement of nuclear talks between Iran and the six world powers, hopes have been revived that more than a decade of conflict and dispute between the two sides can finally come to an end and the concerns over the possible diversion of Iran's nuclear activities toward an atomic weapon will be completely allayed.

The international observers hailed the latest round of nuclear negotiations between Iran and the P5+1 (Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States) on October 15 and 16 in Geneva as constructive, calling it a step forward on the path of finding a conclusive and definite resolution for Iran's nuclear standoff.

The Iranian negotiators demanded that the contents of the talks remain undisclosed until an agreement is reached. Their demand sounds reasonable as it will prevent the mass media from spreading falsehood regarding the details of the agreement yet to be reached and also impede the efforts made by the extremist and neo-conservative elements in the Western governments to bring the negotiations to a dead-end.

During the talks, Iran presented a three-phased PowerPoint proposal in English language entitled "Closing Unnecessary Crisis, Opening New Horizons" which drew a roadmap for the future of the talks. According to the proposal, Iran would remove the concerns of the P5+1 group of world countries through confidence-building measures and increased transparency in its nuclear activities, and in return, the Western powers will offer incentives to Iran by lifting the unilateral and multilateral sanctions on a step-by-step basis.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif told the reporters following the conclusion of talks in Geneva that "the negotiations will be done in the negotiating room, and not in the press." He said that Iran is not after creating some kind of media hype over its proposal and rather takes a down-to-earth and practical approach toward the talks.

Iran's presentation was welcomed by the P5+1. According to Reuters, Michael Mann, the spokesman for EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton said Iran made a "very useful" presentation during the talks. Even the United States that usually expressed disappointment over the nuclear talks with Iran in the past couldn't hide its tacit satisfaction with the Iranian proposal. "The Iranian proposal was a new proposal with a level of seriousness and substance that we had not seen before," White House spokesman Jay Carney told reporters.

A senior U.S. State Department official also praised the negotiations, saying that "for the

first time, we had very detailed technical discussions”

The British Catherine Ashton who became the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy for the European Union in 2009 and took lead as the coordinator of P5+1 in talks with Iran also underlined her “cautious optimism” but “a real sense of determination” toward the new round of negotiations with Iran.

Since the details of the Iranian proposal didn't leak out and especially after Iran rejected the allegations made by the Israeli military intelligence website, Debka File, that had claimed to be possessing information on the contents of the proposal put forward by Iran, it's not sensible to make suggestions and gossips on what Iran has offered to the West, but what is clear is that Iran will be making reasonable compromises, in a balanced manner, which will not sacrifice its nuclear rights under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, but ease the tensions with the West, and this is something which seems to be completely logical and fair. On the other side, what the Iranian nation expects to be high on the agenda of the P5+1 is the complete removal of the economic sanctions that have caused serious damages to their lives.

The sanctions which were imposed upon Iran after the Islamic Revolution of 1979, especially following the escalation of controversy over Iran's nuclear program in the past decade, are so diverse and extensive that it's virtually impossible to elaborate on all of them in a single article, but it is worth alluding to some of them in passing. These sanctions have had such devastating impacts on the Iranian people that even a large number of American officials, think tanks and advocacy groups have called on the U.S. government and its European allies to freeze them.

As an instance, the banking sanctions, which disrupt and block Iran's access to international financing systems have prevented the Iranian companies from importing vital medicine for chronic disorders, and the Iranian patients suffering from different types of cancer, hemophilia, thalassemia, hepatitis, multiple sclerosis, diabetes and psychiatric disorders are struggling with dire conditions resulting from their inability to find medicine for their diseases.

According to a report released by the U.S. Department of Commerce on February 8, 2013, the exports of pharmaceutical products to Iran had decreased by half. This is while the United States claims that it doesn't block the exports of medicine to Iran and that it has issued some licenses for the sale of medical goods and foodstuff to Iran; however, there have been several reports of deaths as a result of the scarcity or shortage of foreign-produced medicine in Iran. Even those patients who can find the medicine they need should buy them at extremely higher prices than before, simply because they are being imported through intermediaries and third parties, and this is the direct, undeniable impact of the anti-Iran sanctions.

The U.S.-based news, analysis website Al-Monitor published a report on July 29, 2013, detailing the pain and suffering of the Iranian patients who are grappling with the problem of finding medicine for their diseases.

Hessam, a 27-year-old veterinary student with MS told Al-Monitor, “I have managed to buy Rebif every month, but the price has tripled over the past year.” He added, “Those who need to use other Western-made medicines, like Avonex and Betaferon, have been facing extremely serious problems buying them. Betaferon's price has risen from 980,000 rials

[\$40] to 16,000,000 rials [\$649] a box. You cannot find them even at this price at any drugstores.”

The insufficiency of medicine and pharmaceutical products in Iran as a result of the sanctions is a fact endorsed and confirmed by different outlets. Joy Gordon wrote in an article for the Foreign Policy on October 18, 2013 that the sanctions have complicated the health conditions of the Iranian patients and are leading to a kind of humanitarian crisis which the International Crisis Group has also verified in a detailed, 70-page report published in February 2013 about the consequences and impacts of the anti-Iran sanctions.

“The most effective medicines to treat cancer and AIDS, which are manufactured only by Western pharmaceutical companies, can no longer be gotten within Iran. Ordinary commerce, as a matter of necessity, is now deeply dependent on the international criminal network in order to function at all,” wrote Joy Gordon in the Foreign Policy’s “The Middle East Channel” blog.

Citing reports published by Iran’s major pharmacies, BBC Persian published a report on November 11, 2012 that a 350% increase in the price of imported medicine had taken place at that time, and the majority of experts and analysts attribute this surge in the medicine prices to the sanctions.

However, the human costs of the sanctions are not limited to the difficulties they create in terms of medical shortages for the ordinary people. The devaluation of Iran’s national currency, rial, as a result of the sanctions, has made it extremely difficult for thousands of Iranian students studying in the foreign universities to afford their tuition and accommodation fees. Their families in Iran cannot deposit into their accounts considerable amounts of financial assistance and many of such students have chosen to return to Iran to continue their education. The depreciation of rial has also made it quite unreachable for the Iranian citizens to travel abroad for personal purposes since the air fares have increased almost threefold in the past 3 years and many European carriers have stopped their flights to or from Iran.

At any rate, they are the ordinary Iranian citizens who bear the brunt of the sanctions against their country, and one of their major demands is the complete lifting of all the unilateral, multilateral and private sanctions. This demand was echoed in their election of Dr. Hassan Rouhani as the Iranian President who had promised to work toward persuading the West to lift all the sanctions.

Iran and the P5+1 are slated to meet once again on November 7 and 8. Before the main meeting, nuclear and sanctions experts from the two sides will hold technical meetings to reach a consensus over a systematic framework for putting into practice the agreements reached in the first meeting in Geneva.

It’s not in the interests of the six world powers to continue pushing for new sanctions, as some Republicans of the U.S. Congress did, or leaving the previous sanctions in place. It will not contribute to the course of negotiations positively and will simply add to the suffering and economic woes of the Iranian people and will further complicate the disputes.

The most rational decision which the United States and its European allies can take is to lift the sanctions for two reasons: first, to respect the demands of the Iranian people who feel it’s not righteous and justifiable to be under the pressure of unfair and cruel sanctions that

are violating their basic rights according to the Fourth Geneva Convention, and secondly because the lifting of the sanctions will be a great step on the path of striking a deal with Iran to close the nuclear dossier forever.

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © [Kourosh Ziabari](#), Global Research, 2013

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Kourosh Ziabari](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca