

Panel: Will Iran Go Nuclear? (Grand Ballroom III)

Date/Time: Tuesday, February 19, 2013 / 15:30-16:45

Talking Points for: Nasser Saghafi-Ameri, Former Diplomat, Independent Research Scholar

Is Iran's nuclear program peaceful?

The answer to that question by Iranian officials is an affirmative yes; supported by the following points:

- 1- Iran is pursuing a peaceful nuclear program for the last five decades and the controversy created around its enrichment program is political without any legal basis. In fact Iran's nuclear activities, including enrichment of uranium, are within the framework of the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).
- 2- There have been attempts in the past to portray Iran's nuclear program as fearsome. Some in Israel have tried to capitalize on this issue for their political agenda and claimed that Iran's nuclear program is an "existential threat" to Israel while many Israeli leaders have disputed that perception.
- 3- Although the IAEA reports under Mr. Amano have become utterly politicized, and the agency has seized unjustly the role of enforcer of the United Nations Security Council resolutions, the position that is not bestowed upon it according to the Statute of the IAEA. However, successive IAEA reports, following more than 2,000 man/hour inspections have indicated that there is no evidence that Iran has diverted any material for a nuclear weapons program. And even more important is a report by the Agency in September 2012 that indicates; much of Iran's uranium stockpile has been converted into a form that would be very difficult to use in a nuclear weapon program. Indeed that step by Iran should be appreciated as a trust building measure.
- 4- Regarding the debatable demand by the IAEA to visit the military complex in Parchin, the fact of the matter is that according to Iran's Safeguards Agreement the agency has no authority to visit this military site, unless permitted to do so by Iran within a separate agreement. Iran's Safeguards Agreement with the agency clearly stipulates that the IAEA inspectors can only visit those sites that have been declared by Iran as being nuclear, and Parchin is not one of them.
- 5- The NPT has come to an important crossroad. The trust that was decisive in the inception of the NPT, as any other international treaty, is prone to be critically damaged if full rights for development of peaceful nuclear programs including the complete nuclear fuel cycle, is denied to any NPT signatory state. After all, that constituted part of a bargain that brought the NPT into existence. Attempts by some

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states headed by the US, in the context of a political agenda against Iran, and under the guise of nuclear non proliferation, may irreversibly damage the NPT.

- 6- Iran has called in the past for a peaceful solution for its nuclear program. It has shown readiness to remove any ambiguity in its nuclear activities, and to provide assurances over the peaceful nature of its nuclear program. Iranians perceive that the nuclear file has been politicized. President Ahmadinejad is quoted as saying that issue is “Not legal or technical. The problem is between the U.S. and Iran.” Thus, the UNSC's entry in the case has only complicated a technical issue, and should be stopped. Indeed with political will a peaceful solution can be found for this problem.

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