

Diplomats: Expert Nuke Iran Talks of Limited Use

GEORGE JAHN, Associated Press



VIENNA (AP) — Both sides benefited from a meeting of technical experts from Iran and six world powers focused on proposals to end the standoff over Tehran's controversial nuclear program, but the talks will not necessarily contribute to resolving the stalemate, diplomats said Thursday.

Speaking a day after the end of the Istanbul meeting, two diplomats familiar with the talks were at pains to emphasize they were not negotiations meant to overcome divisions that have stymied recent high-level talks.

Instead, they said, experts went into the technical nitty-gritty of what each side was bringing to the table at the more senior meetings. They said it was now up to officials at those higher levels to decide whether that more detailed knowledge could serve as the springboard for a new attempt to resolve differences.

Both of the diplomats come from Western nations and both demanded anonymity because they were not authorized to divulge details of the confidential meetings.

One of them cited Ali Ashgar Soltanieh, an Iranian official at the meeting, as saying "I now understand the other side's position better," as the talks ended after a

Diplomats: Expert Nuke Iran Talks of Limited Use

Published on Chem.Info (<http://www.chem.info>)

session that began Tuesday and stretched into early Wednesday.

He said the six nations on the other side of the table also came away "with a better understanding of what Iran's position was but that does not mean the two sides will come closer to agreement."

The last high-level meeting ended June 19 in Moscow. It and previous ones have foundered because Iran is not ready to consider demands that it curtail some uranium enrichment — a possible pathway to nuclear arms — unless the six recognize its right to enrich for what it says are purely peaceful purposes.

The six — The United States, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany — are offering to ease restrictions on airplane parts for Iran's outmoded, mostly U.S.-produced civilian fleet and technical help with aspects of Iran's nuclear program that cannot be used for military purposes.

They want Tehran to stop enriching to a level just steps away from the purity needed to arm a nuclear missile and to shut down an underground plant where such work is taking place.

Iran in turn says that its right to enrich is enshrined in the nuclear nonproliferation treaty — and therefore sees demands to curtail higher enrichment as contravening international law. It says it needs to enrich to that level to power a research reactor and make medical isotopes.

It also refuses to shutter the underground facility, which it has fortified in anticipation of possible attack. Israel has warned of possible air strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities and the United States has said all options are on the table should negotiations fail to bring Tehran to compromise.

The EU, U.S. and other nations suspect Iran's nuclear program is aimed at developing atomic weapons. Iran denies this.

The Moscow talks agreed on little else but convening the Istanbul experts meeting, to be followed by talks between Iran's No. 2 nuclear negotiator Ali Bagheri and Helga Schmid, a deputy to EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton, in charge of convening the high-level negotiations.

An EU statement on the Istanbul talks said the experts had met with the Iranian team, and "provided further detail of the ... proposal given to Iran in Baghdad (while) Iran shared further detail of their proposal; and the experts explored positions on a number of technical subjects."

Iran is already under four sets of U.N. sanctions and measures levied by the U.S and tried unsuccessfully to use the Moscow talks to get the sanctions eased.

An EU ban on Iranian oil came into full effect July 1, adding to U.S.-led sanctions on Iranian crude and further cutting into exports of OPEC's second-largest producer.

Diplomats: Expert Nuke Iran Talks of Limited Use

Published on Chem.Info (<http://www.chem.info>)

Source URL (retrieved on 01/25/2015 - 6:42pm):

http://www.chem.info/news/2012/07/diplomats-expert-nuke-iran-talks-limited-use?cmpid=related_content