



## **Policy Memo**

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The Iranian nuclear issue is one of the topics where in principle positions of Russia and the United States are very close. We as well as the US are against the disruption of the non-proliferation regime. Iran possessing nuclear weapons is not acceptable for Russia as it is a threat to our national security.

Our common goal is to ensure strict compliance by Iran with the requirements of the international law. That is why we have always been strong opponents of the unilateral sanctions which by nature contribute to pushing the Iranian nuclear issue out of the margins of the international law.

The key aspect in this process is to reestablish working relations between Iran and the United States. The Russian Federation has always been supportive of that. Of course, it goes without saying that our American partners should keep us and other members of P5+1 group informed in a substantive way with regard to their contacts with Iran and its results.

Taking into account that the first stage of the settlement of the Iranian nuclear issues is about lifting the western unilateral sanctions in exchange for the reciprocal measures on the part of Iran, Russia's role at this stage, as a non-party to any of those unilateral sanctions, is to provide for necessary conditions for successful formulating packaged mutual arrangements on the basis of step-by-step and reciprocity approach. By putting forward relevant compromise proposals we in a certain way play a role as a bridge for rapprochement between the US and Iran as well as within the P5+1 group itself. The second task which is not less important is to ensure effective verification

role of the IAEA in accordance with the arrangements reached between P5+1 and Iran based on the constructive relations with the Iranian side. Today we can see that the Agency acts exactly in this way.

As for the role of third states and groups of states in this context, there is no single answer. The role of France, Great Britain, Germany, China and the European Union is well defined and consists of contributing to the settlement of the Iranian nuclear issue within the framework of P5+1 process.

I don't see at this moment any tangible added value of direct engagement into the process of finding solution to the Iranian nuclear issue by the states of the Middle East and Asian-Pacific region. A number of these countries could only introduce additional problems which have nothing to do with the agenda of the negotiating process. In essence non-proliferation is primary responsibility of the five Nuclear-Weapon States, though this is something which ought not to be always said publicly.

This is a different matter that countries not parties to P5+1 group should be kept informed about the way of resolving the existing problems. One of the most acute tasks today is to define the format of such debriefings. The IAEA is the most suitable place for this purpose. The preferred option for the sake of confidence-building is for P5+1 and Iran to jointly inform the IAEA Member-States. This practice has already been put in place on the 13 January when P5+1 and Iran jointly conveyed the technical understanding agreed upon in Geneva with proposals on the monitoring activities by the Agency of the implementation by Iran of its obligations.

Discussion on the Iranian nuclear issue is projected on the current IAEA agenda. It is well known that the Iranian case came out of the Agency's context. In many respects it was due to the fact that the IAEA and its Member-States lacked clear understanding of how the safeguards nonproliferation system should effectively function. Mechanisms of remote verification in Iran got broken and it became clear that the only way out is to clarify all the suspicions on the spot in the country. Therefore, any adjustment of the of the IAEA nonproliferation safeguard system should be based on

the principles that are crystal-clear to all Member-States, objective factors and transparent sources. “Naming and shaming” approach should be excluded especially as business interests and competition could be a part of this process.

Serious negative consequences for five Nuclear-Weapon States may follow if nuclear powers together with the IAEA push too hard on Iran on the stage of implementation of the verification activities. The same already happened in the past with regard to Argentina, South Africa, and Brazil. Today these countries take the lead as antinuclear radicals who aim at declaring even the possession of nuclear weapons as crime against humanity.

At the current stage a lot depends on the United States and on its internal situation. This factor together with the position of the Iranian conservatives could undermine the process of normalization of relations between US and Iran. There is ample force on both sides interested in preserving the *status quo* of pre-Geneva arrangements. My forecast with regard to the success of the P5+1 and Tehran efforts is 50/50. We need to act promptly, avoiding any ambiguities.

Let’s, however, follow the optimistic scenario under which the process of settlement of the Iranian nuclear issue will go on despite of all possible complications. In this context it is important for P5+1 to understand the ideology of the Iranian approach towards its nuclear programme. We can witness the sacramental character of the nuclear programme for the Iranian society. In their argumentation the Iranians virtually bound together the sovereignty of the state itself with their right for uranium enrichment. Therefore, all future work with Iran should be conducted with clear understanding in mind that Tehran will not renounce its right for enrichment. There is a positive side of this sacramental nature of the Iranian nuclear programme as it ensures scientific and technological progress of the country preventing it from falling into the darkness of the Middle Ages. P5+1 should move away from its current defensive or more precisely restrictive policy with regard to Iran towards offensive policy aimed at engaging Iran into joint nuclear activities for peaceful purposes. The most effective way to proceed towards this goal is to act preemptively ahead of the

Iranian expectations forcing Iran to be more proactive in clarifying nuclear issues. It is obvious that this course should be based on the step-by-step and reciprocity approach. As far as the issue of UNSC sanctions relief is concerned, it is important to bear in mind that an appropriate opportunity for that could be the IAEA conclusion that there is no undeclared nuclear material and undeclared nuclear activities on the territory of Iran, the so called "broader conclusion" (in case of South Africa it took IAEA 7 years to reach a "broader conclusion"). There will be no reason to keep these sanctions in place after reaching a "broader conclusion" with respect to Iran. In this context, unlike unilateral national sanctions, the step-by-step approach could be irrelevant. If Iran meets all the requirements in nuclear sphere then there will be no more need in keeping UNSC sanctions regime against Iran and it could be lifted all in one time. At the same time it will be difficult for Iran to accept a lingering UNSC sanctions regime until such a final settlement of the Iranian nuclear issues is reached. In this context it is important to keep in mind that UNSC resolutions allow for cooperation with Iran on a wide range of issues, including in the sphere of construction of light-water reactors. Let me remind you of positive experience of international cooperation with Iran in nuclear field which is represented by the first and sole nuclear power plant in Iran in Bushehr. It clearly shows that if everything is done in due and right way non-proliferation concerns are not an issue.

When all sanctions are lifted we will be able to talk about joint Russian-US nuclear projects in Iran. One can perceive some opportunities for it.

Of course such ideas as inviting Iran to attend Nuclear Security Summits, more actively engaging it into the process of establishing in the Middle East of a WMD-free zone, urging Iran to ratify CTBT or sign Convention on Nuclear Safety all go along the lines of the proposed proactive approach towards Tehran and will play a positive role. The main problem is that positive decisions with regard to these issues depend not so much on Iran but on other factors.