As the drumbeats for possible military action increase, this meeting explored possible technical and diplomatic solutions to the crisis over the Iranian nuclear program. Emphasis was on measures that might be acceptable to all sides in light of election year political realities in both Iran and the US.
SUMMARY

- There is an immediate need for creative diplomatic approaches to resolving issues around the Iranian nuclear file, based on mutual respect.
- A possible military attack on Iran could lead to disastrous implications for the people of the region.
- Current tensions are at an unsustainable point, and must be decreased to avoid a possible spiraling out of control of the situation before irreparable damage is done to the non-proliferation regime.
- Domestic political election-year realities in Iran and the US might preclude bold diplomatic moves at this time. However, there are a series of possible steps that could be taken (either directly or through indirect channels) which could decrease current tensions if the political will exists.
- There seems to be widespread private acceptance in DC that recognizes Iran’s right to enrich, under stringent safeguards, and an understanding that acknowledging this right will have to be part of any sort of deal, along with some sort of reassurance that the purpose of any deal is not regime change. However, it is difficult, if not impossible, in the US pre-election climate for this to be publicly stated, so creative approaches must be explored.
- Some suggestions are provided for pre-election steps that might be possible on page 11.
- The question of a framework agreement, and possible staging/sequencing of steps requires creative diplomacy and further exploration. Many solid proposals have been put forward in the past, and these could serve as a starting point (for example the August 2005 proposals).
- Special attention will be needed on issues related to Iran’s future enrichment. Various options are discussed on pages 8-9, and include options for possibly framing them as voluntary steps by Iran.
- There was disagreement over the effectiveness of sanctions. The complications (especially but not exclusively in the US) of lifting sanctions was noted, though some believed there is room for some sort of phased lifting of sanctions as part of a process, perhaps starting with those of the EU or other countries that can be lifted by administrative decision.
- Some believe strongly that Iran will have to “come clean” about prior weaponization activities as part of any deal, perhaps as part of a multi-stage process and with some sort of immunity, however others question the utility of possibly jeopardizing an urgently needed deal by focusing on the past.
- An initial deal on 20 percent enrichment, based on President Ahmadinejad’s September proposal, seems like a logical starting point, and could defuse the current concerns over the buried Fordow plant. As Fordow is driving Israel’s concerns about the “zone of immunity” this might be a priority to remove time pressures for the threatened military attack.
- However, if negotiations are unsuccessful, their failure could potentially guarantee an Israeli strike. Some believe it is essential to not negotiate unless there is some sort of exploratory work done ahead of time to ensure some modicum of success.
- There was consensus about the need to use this pre-election period to explore solutions and to reconnect with the Iranians. Track 2 and back channel communications will be increasingly important.
REPORT

On 23 February 2012, the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs convened a roundtable discussion on Iran in Washington, DC. Thirty-four leading current and former policy makers, scientists, and other experts met to discuss possible solutions to Iranian nuclear crisis. The focus was on exploring possible ways forward that might be acceptable to all sides. Without seeking to minimize important narratives, this report does not attempt to rehearse the history of how the current situation came about, but emphasizes options for moving forward. The meeting was composed primarily of Americans and as a result the report reflects this perspective. However, it builds upon recent related Pugwash meetings in Israel, Egypt, Ramallah, Gaza, and private discussions with Iranians and other relevant parties. As such, there was some effort made to present Iranian perspectives into discussion to provide a realistic appreciation for the complexities of the issues. As in all Pugwash meetings, there was no attempt to seek consensus, and in fact the sharing of diverse views was encouraged.

Iranian nuclear file, the IAEA, and the UN Security Council

At the core of the debate is the Iranian assertion of its right to enrichment for peaceful purposes under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. There are those in the West who emphasize this right belongs only to those States able to demonstrate their nuclear program is for peaceful purposes, and these voices say Iran’s program raises significant concerns.

The IAEA’s November report has been the basis for a great deal of the recent increased pressure for further sanctions (and possibly military action) against Iran. Contrary to practices under prior IAEA directors, this report relied heavily on intelligence provided to the IAEA by member states which was not independently verified by the IAEA itself. Iranians claim that the information about military activities has been faked. Others disagree, and say the Agency has acted within its mandate and believe that Iran must address the concerns raised.

Iranians question the US and the West’s willingness to resolve the outstanding issues through diplomatic means, given assassination of their nuclear scientists, facilities that have been blown up, sabotage, sanctions, the open debate between US and Israel about a military attack on Iran, Stuxnet, and the massive presence of US military power in the region.

Nevertheless, there have been two recent IAEA delegations to Iran. The delegations appeared to have reason to believe they would be provided with additional access to various sites, and were then denied access on the ground. Iran was not legally required to allow inspectors to access some military sites such as Parchin. However, some argued that in the current climate this reticence has added fuel to the arguments of those who question Iranian motives.

The USA holds as a marker Iran’s need to comply with its “international obligations.” The US includes in this related UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions. Iran, however, does not recognize the UNSC’s standing in this matter, since they say their program posed no threat to peace and according to the UN Charter.

This report was prepared by Pugwash Senior Program Coordinator Sandra Ionno Butcher, who has sole responsibility for the content (sibutcher@earthlink.net). The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of the rapporteur, the Pugwash Conferences or any of the sponsoring organizations. Pugwash appreciates the support for its Middle East project provided by the Norwegian MFA, the Carnegie Corporation, other funders and our national groups. The meeting was held according to Pugwash/Chatham House non-attribution rules. The substance reflected in this report attempts to aggregate the range of debate, and does not necessarily reflect the views of all participants.
Iran does, however, recognize the standing of the IAEA, as demonstrated in INF CIRC 153 and appears willing to respond to specific (rather than general) allegations. However, the IAEA’s decision to publish in its November report non-verified intelligence data from unspecified states has weakened the IAEA’s legitimacy in the eyes of Iran and others (though as previously mentioned, others in the West defend the report in all its aspects).

Fordow and the so-called “zone of immunity”

Further complicating this tense situation, Iran has stated its intention to enrich to 20 percent at the new underground Fordow site. Iran says it needs fuel for its research reactor, and that it must produce this fuel domestically since it has been unable to import the fuel. Critics question whether this is Iran’s true motive. When a country has the ability to enrich to 20 percent it is about 90 percent of the way to having done the work needed for a nuclear weapon. The fact that the Fordow site is buried underground has Israeli leaders pushing hard for preventive action (possibly of a military nature) before Iran completes this move and enters what has been termed the “zone of immunity.”

A nuclear weapons capable Iran?

Iran’s declaratory policy remains that nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction have no role in Iranian policy. The West has doubts about this, and thus the operative question is how to provide monitoring and inspection of their declared and existing facilities to ensure that is the case.

There was general consensus in the room that if Iran does not yet have the capability to build nuclear weapons, it is “almost there.” Nuclear weapons technology is now old technology, and it is “not so difficult” to achieve such a capability, in fact many countries have this capability. One participant termed it “impossible” to try to avoid Iran’s ability to become nuclear weapons capable. Others maintain the “world cannot live with Iran…ready to get the bomb.” In particular, it was noted, this would not be acceptable to Israel and that this might “set Israel off.” Others countered that it appears Israel may in fact be more willing to accept this reality than public statements might indicate.

There was disagreement in the room over interpretations as to whether or not a country has a right to conduct theoretical studies about weaponization while a member in good standing of the NPT (some point to the example of Sweden) and some noted this is in fact an area of disagreement within the IAEA and its Member States. The Iranian perspective is that whatever is not expressly forbidden in the NPT is allowed, and it was noted that this perspective must be acknowledged even if there is disagreement over this interpretation.

Some others point out that the NPT guarantees only extend to those countries pursuing peaceful nuclear programs, and that weaponization studies, even if they do not involve fissile materials, etc, prove a military intent.

Participants debated whether Member States are allowed under the NPT to conduct implosion experiments on

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2 INF CIRC/153, see especially paragraph 2, on the “Application of Safeguards,” The Agreement should provide for the Agency’s right and obligation to ensure that safeguards will be applied, in accordance with the terms of the Agreement, on all source or special fissile material in all peaceful nuclear activities within the territory of the State, under its jurisdiction or carried out under its control anywhere, for the exclusive purpose of verifying that such material is not diverted to nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Infircs/Others/infirc153.pdf

3 This language ironically is almost identical to language the US and UK use with respect to questions about the legality under the NPT of their nuclear sharing agreements. The treaty “deals only with what is prohibited, not with what is permitted.” See for example, Clark Clifford, Secretary of Defense letter to Secretary of State, regarding US interpretation of Articles I and II of the NPT and “Questions on the Draft Non-Proliferation Treaty Asked by US Allies Together With Answers Given by the United States,” available here: http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nukevault/ebb253/doc18.pdf. Also, Adrian Fisher, “Non-Proliferation Treaty”, Hearings Before the Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate, Executive H, 90-2, 18 and 20 February 1969, p.340.
a sphere that is not a nuclear device, by using U238 (as opposed to Pu239). One participant noted there is no consensus among Member States that physics experiments or nuclear safety experiments are banned, as a lot of the calculations are the same and noted that Poland conducted layered implosion experiments in the 1960s. It remains unclear where the agency’s inspection rights kick in. Some believe the IAEA understands it may lose on such legal questions in any form of arbitration. (Some pointed out ongoing research at the Carnegie Endowment, which is seeking to get the P5 to agree to a definition of what constitutes weaponization. However, there is as yet no agreement on this after two years.)

**No Iranian decision to weaponize…yet?**
Most agree that Iran has not yet taken a political decision to weaponize, and this is seen as providing a window of opportunity that may soon close.

Some believe that while Iran is still a member of the NPT it is “an open question” but highly unlikely Iran would risk the political fallout from Arabs and others from a decision to pursue a workable nuclear weapons program. From this perspective it is not in Iran’s interest to be caught again in violation of the NPT.

The question then becomes whether or not Iran will stay in the NPT. If they are attacked it is almost certain they will leave the NPT, especially if they are attacked by Israel (a nuclear armed non-NPT member). If the sanctions against Iran are severe enough, this might also precipitate their leaving the NPT.

The impact of Iran leaving the NPT is an unknown. Saudi Arabia has made noises about potentially pursuing a nuclear weapons capability if Iran were to acquire nuclear weapons. Restraint among other countries in the region might erode, and the long-term impact could be in fact a very unstable regional arms race (the UK Foreign Secretary Hague has recently warned of a possible new and less stable Cold War in the Middle East in this eventuality).

**Avoiding a military strike**
Israel’s strategic focus is Iran, which many in Israel believe to pose an “existential threat” to the State of Israel. As mentioned, Israeli leaders are promoting the option of a military strike (urging the US to take action given its better equipped military, but stating that they will go alone if need be). They say this must be done before Fordow goes operational and the Iranian program further moves underground (and potentially beyond Israel’s current technological capabilities to strike).

One participant noted that there is a different debate in the US and Israel. In the US, sanctions are seen as an alternative to war. In Israel there appears to be a belief that both sanctions and military action may be needed, since sanctions alone cannot reverse the program. This participant warned that the West won’t “win time” with additional sanctions, if they are done in a belief that they will stop Israel, as this has never been the case. From this perspective, Israel is taking a Machiavellian approach. They know that further sanctions
will not dissuade Iran, and may in fact push Iran further toward weaponization. Sanctions from this perspective are “a cynical box to be checked” before the world understands that an attack will be needed.

It is not clear from the Israeli side as to exactly what it would take for Israel to “take their finger off the trigger” and some thought that this should be further clarified. (Israel most likely will want some sort of guarantee that Iran is not weaponizing, and also that there is not some sort of device on the shelf that can be put into play at some point. Exactly how Iran would need to demonstrate this is less clear.)

Concern was expressed that the Iranians may think the talk of a possible military strike is like the “boy who cried wolf.” Some worry that Iran is dismissing the war talk as “bluster,” rather than understanding the threats are serious and not a bluff.

Israel would look at a “minimum meaningful attack,” most likely focused on Isfahan, Arak and Natanz. They see this as possible, since they believe they can overcome Iranian air defenses. It would not be a “big war” – there would be no invasion or leveling of Tehran, but an attack on 4-5 “choke point” facilities that would be attacked in a single night. It would be up to the Iranians then to decide to escalate. (Some are concerned that an Iranian response might lead to Israeli actions that would further deteriorate the conditions in Gaza and the West Bank.)

Others point out that bipartisan discussions saying that the impact of such an attack would be less than predicted are based on Israeli figures, and these assertions need to be challenged. Some in Israel, who believe Iran poses an existential threat to Israel, say they will accept whatever costs, even if they are high. One participant said there are many Israelis who believe that while the world always whines when Israel does something “sensible,” reactions have been limited when Israel has taken similar steps in the past. Someone else noted that Israel’s position in the region has changed since its prior experiences, and this new and emerging regional political reality is not insignificant. It is not known how some of Israel’s neighbors might react.

One participant pointed out that this sort of attack would only buy at most a “few years” and some think it would be even less. It was noted that any use of force could potentially lead to catastrophic loss of life on all sides, given the nature of the types of facilities that are likely to be targeted and also the likely response of Iran to such an attack. Others pointed out the ramifications would most likely include an Iranian decision to leave the NPT and would provide incentive for Iran to weaponize.

**Political and election year dimensions**

Trying to seek a way out of the current crisis is challenging. In the words of one participant, “2012 politics are tough.” This is true in the US, Iran, and Israel, and these dynamics and their limitations must be better understood on all sides. Perceived political imperatives and limitations combine with a deep lack of trust among all parties to create a very difficult environment for negotiations.

However, most believe that it is not realistic to wait until after the US election given the very real
possibility of war, so therefore some steps need to be taken in the short term. As one participant said, President Obama “needs to take risks for peace.” (The sobering example of the impact of waiting until the Iranian June 2009 elections was noted.) There was an expectation that the upcoming AIPAC conference may further increase the rhetorical pressures. The Senate resolution stating the US cannot contain a nuclear capable Iran and its reference to zero enrichment was considered unhelpful. The resolution is vague and nonbinding, but the concern is that it might lead to further related legislation.

Some believe that if he is reelected, President Obama’s administration might become more forthcoming in a second term. Others doubted this given the Congressional realities. The US Congress, for example, has become persuaded that Iran should not enrich. While the Obama administration may be divided on this point it is highly unlikely the Obama administration will make any move toward compromise during this election year. France and the UK likewise are opposed to Iran having any enrichment capability (France also is facing an election in May). One participant felt that Iran also needs to avoid knee-jerk reactions to various statements and to better understand the political processes in these different countries.

Questions were also raised as to the complicated domestic situation in Iran, and whether or not President Ahmadinejad “can deliver” during this election year in Iran. One participant said it is far from clear the IRGC (Sepah) is on board with negotiations. It was noted that think-tanks in Iran say the Supreme Leader is not against a deal, but that they distrust the intent, and believe the goal is to destroy Iran. So this points to the importance of reinforcing that the goal is not regime change (discussed further below).

The task on all sides is to work toward an environment more conducive to a negotiated agreement.

Options for negotiations

The Iranian’s recent offer to have a constructive dialogue was noted. Some queried whether the EU Representative Lady Ashton’s reply really held no pre-conditions, since her frame of reference was the UNSC resolution. Questions were raised as to what proposals negotiators can take with them to Istanbul, considering Iranian frames of reference as well those of the West. It was felt that it is important on all sides to test proposals before they are brought forward, to avoid discussing ideas that have no backing. This can be done in a variety of ways, including Track 2 settings and back channels.

1. **Review previously floated ideas** – There was general acknowledgement that many of the previous proposals (most of which date back prior to President Ahmadinejad’s time), would be “snatched up quickly” or “taken in a heartbeat” if they were presented today. However, Iran needs to be tested on this. It was noted that IAEA insert 648, 1 August 2005, contains a series of proposals from Iran that might be worth reviewing4. Some say Iranian officials have indicated these are now outmoded. If there were indications of room to revive some of these former proposals, some thought this might prove interesting to the Western side. There have been other ideas and in some cases concrete proposals floated in various Track 2 settings (including Pugwash), resulting from, as someone said, “deep discussions at the highest levels with the Iranian government.” There is a mutual understanding of vocabulary, technical awareness, and various options available. Some felt there are many good ideas floating around, but what is lacking is actual discussion at the official level.

2. **Engagement of senior figures** – The difficulty of engaging senior leaders in this process was noted. Most felt that the lack of high-level meetings between key figures is hampering the ability for forward

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movement on key issues. One participant noted, this “could change rapidly.” There are skilled diplomats who could meet in any number of capitals including Geneva and Vienna. This is a “matter of decision” by President Obama and its receptivity by Ayatollah Khamenei, should they decide to avert what many see as the very real possibility of war which could potentially be provoked by “lunatic groups” capable of practicing covert actions and assassinations. It was noted that the use of other diplomatic channels has been limited under Presidents Bush and Obama, as there was concern that having multiple channels could “muck up the picture,” especially given Iran’s relative lack of experience in this style of diplomacy. If the US changes this position and opens up various approaches, then there may need to be some public discussion of this to make clear it is legitimate.

3. **Further engage military voices** – It was suggested that the military on all sides might play an increased role in trying to create the space needed to walk political leaders back from the brink of war. Even people on Capitol Hill are aware that the rhetoric is cranked up too high, and many military leaders are concerned that this is taking more and more options off the table. Getting military voices out more may be a way to cool things down during the tense election period (it was also thought that perhaps European military voices could play an important role if they were amplified in the US).

4. **Sequencing** – Some pointed out the need to address sequencing issues, especially if one looks at pre- and post-election possibilities (discussed further below). It is not fully clear, for example, how things would move forward if there is the P5+1 framework, then interim measures and tracks (including with the IAEA). How would this all come together? The Russia plan floated last November included a phased lifting of sanctions and addressed a series of escalating measures. Some pointed out that this was rejected on both sides, and that it does not appear to be on the P5+1 agenda. Someone said the Russia proposal may have been good diplomacy but it was “naïve” and “practically unacceptable.” Others thought the points raised by the Russian proposal should be revisited.

5. **Agreed framework?** Some wondered if it is possible, drawing on lessons from the DPRK experience, to at least arrive at an agreed framework prior to the US election? Despite the political difficulties, some thought perhaps this might be needed, as Iran doesn’t want to engage in what might become a “slippery slope” due to its own domestic problems. Some felt the P5 (especially the Germans and French) might be able to give President Obama some “political cover” on the question of acknowledging Iran’s right to have enrichment activities under strict safeguards, (see separate section on enrichment below). The expert community has an important role to play here as well, to define better the safeguards available and their efficacy. However, some doubted the usefulness of the expert community, as it too is “controlled by political winds.” It is crucial for the Obama administration to convince Iran about the endgame, since if they don’t accept the endpoint, they won’t
engage on staging. (This is especially important given the role of Congress.)

6. Sanctions – US policy is that sanctions will be lifted when Iran comes into compliance with its international obligations. Realistically, however, some question whether the US can wait until Iran is a “Jeffersonian democracy,” and that it might need to find some phased way to lift them. One participant said the US has discussed in public “stages to an endpoint.” The EU, Japan, Korean sanctions could be lifted, another participant noted, by “administrative fiat” as opposed to more onerous and cumbersome processes for lifting US sanctions. (Someone pointed out that the NSC and others are aware of this difference.) There was some caution noted about the effectiveness of lifting EU sanctions, since they are all tied to the US, via US companies. While the President could provide waivers, this might also turn into a big political problem. Working out sanctions relief is a tricky issue, but there are examples from experiences with the DPRK and Libya.

7. Use Track 2 settings – Many, if not most of the participants, felt that given the very real possibility of war some progress needs to be made in the short-term, despite the election year dynamics. Track 2 settings might help to reduce the demonization on either side, perhaps by encouraging Iran to allow outsiders, especially Americans, to come to Iran to see the reality on the ground. There are successful examples of the importance of such trips from both the end of the Cold War and prior to the Nixon outreach to China.

8. Engaging on other regional issues. Someone pointed out it might be more useful to have some form of ongoing regional security dialogue with Iran and Iranian permanent involvement in regional security bodies than to have a Presidential statement on regime change or non-attack.

9. Push back on the media – the role of the media is a “serious component” in this issue, as many believe the media is adding unnecessary hype to the already complicated situation. Some felt it is imperative that the interviewers should be made aware of the danger of another Iraq-type situation.

Enrichment – a priority topic
As previously mentioned, perhaps the most important sticking point between Iran and the US and the West is over the question of continued Iranian enrichment activities. Several options emerged during the course of discussions.

1. Move beyond zero enrichment position – The first question that must be addressed is whether or not the US and other interested parties are prepared to accept a deal short of Iranian capitulation. If one assumes the answer is yes, that it is possible to envision a settlement short of Iran surrendering its nuclear program, then there is, according to one participant, “space to work in” to find terms acceptable to the US and also to Iran. (Acknowledgement of Iran’s right to 3.5 percent enrichment is, according to one participant, “unequivocal” from the Iranian side). Someone commented that this commitment to zero enrichment has become a “fake debate
among the chattering class” and that 90 percent of the people in DC understand the need to recognize Iran’s right to enrichment. Some say it would be a mistake for the US to not acknowledge this “unspoken consensus” as part of a broader gesture, and it would be a significant policy statement if they would take this step.

2. **Frame any move as a voluntary not obligatory step for Iran** – It was pointed out that any move to try to get Iran to suspend enrichment must be suggested as a voluntary step on the Iranian side or it will not be acceptable. A formal acknowledgement of Iran’s right to enrich might create an environment more conducive to their surrendering this right voluntarily, perhaps with a phased approach to reducing sanctions. Others questioned this approach.

3. **Specific uses of enrichment** – Some felt that linking any percentage of enrichment (including up to 20 percent) to a deal may not work. It might be more productive to encapsulate in some formula Iranian rights to enrichment, and to promote their obligation to explain they do not want a weapon (reinforcing statements from their Supreme Leader). However, it might be possible to craft a proposal focused on the purpose of the enrichment. If Iran wants fuel for x purpose, it should be proportional to the use, and immediately used. (This changes the dynamic from showing distrust to indicating the West takes Iran seriously on its stated need for civilian nuclear purposes.)

4. **Stop twenty percent enrichment (Fordow)** – Some see it as a “no-brainer” to address this first, as it is this the most immediate concern and a possible starting point for serious negotiations. In September 2011, Iranian President Ahmadinejad at the UN that Iran would stop pursuing 20 percent enrichment, and this was reinforced by Foreign Minister Salehi. However, the West basically dismissed this proposal. One participant termed this non-responsiveness ‘inexplicable.’ (Some say the US administration had apparently come to the conclusion that a swap deal is not big enough.) The only public US statement on this appeared to be from the State Department spokeswoman, who suggested if it were a real offer, Iran should bring it to the IAEA. (Another participant pointed out the reason for this referral to the IAEA was probably because the so-called “swap deal” or “Tehran Research Reactor (TRR) deal” had originally been brokered with the IAEA.) Someone said President Obama could defend this politically, “if he had any guts.” The question was posed, if the Iranians agree to stop 20 percent reprocessing and shut Fordow, what could they expect in return or might it perhaps be considered as a first step or part of a phased approach?

5. **No further stockpiling** – Iran has stockpiled several years’ worth of 20 percent enriched uranium, and some believe it could continue its indigenous fuel development program while halting the further build-up of additional 20 percent enriched uranium.

6. **Five percent cap** – Capping enrichment at five percent remains another possible option for discussion. It could include no stockpiling provision.

7. **Suspend enrichment for maintenance** – It was suggested Iran might “take a leaf from CERN” and schedule maintenance for a period of time (six months to a year) to allow time for negotiations to move forward, and as a trust-building step.

**Additional options**
Many various options surfaced during the discussions drawing in particular on recent studies underway by Frank von Hippel and his colleagues at Princeton’s Woodrow Wilson School, David Albright of ISIS, and some
work at Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. As mentioned, Pugwash also has held a series of related meetings. This section highlights various ideas, without an attempt at delving into them in depth. The goal of exploring such options, according to one participant, is to seek “objective guarantees” that acknowledge Iranian rights and maximize the space and time between their program and weapons production of HEU on a large scale.

1. Accept Iran’s right to enrich, under tight constraints, with extra transparency (an “Additional Protocol Plus”), at least for an interim period.

2. Pursue a verifiable ceiling on uranium hexafluoride or limiting feedstock.

3. Freeze on centrifuges – some are concerned that focusing on Fordow is not enough, and that a freeze on centrifuges might be more effective. Some IAEA reports, they say, indicate that piping and pumps in Qom could be capable of more P1s, and more centrifuges, so that it might be important to freeze installations there as well.

4. Discuss Arak reactor – This reactor, which by some estimates might produce enough plutonium each year for a couple of bombs, is “coming down the road” as noted by one participant. Iran has in past offered not to reprocess, and this should be locked in. One participant noted that the Arak design is not a good one. It could be redesigned to make it a better research reactor, producing less plutonium. (The EU offered a light water reactor proposal, this is not off the table. This might be higher powered, and fueled by 20 percent enriched uranium, and not producing as much plutonium.)

5. “Coming clean” – There are those who believe strongly that any element of a deal with Iran must include Iran “coming clean” about its weaponization activities, and that this might need to be pursued in “freeze for freeze proposals.” Some say perhaps an amnesty must be part of such a process, as some in Iran may fear some might use any such statements to promote an escalation of additional sanctions or it might be a ploy to bring more punishment. Others say the Iranian side will never take such a step and expose itself politically, so it is not useful to raise this at this time. Others point out that in 2003, Iran was willing to admit to certain prior practices. One participant questioned whether it was useful “to impede forward movement to clarify an historical point”. If the main concern is to make sure there is no weaponization activity now, some queried whether it really matters so much about activities in the 1980s, etc. The IAEA, it was pointed out, was not exhaustive in its exploration of prior activities of South Korea and Egypt, for example. Those who believe this is of critical importance say “coming clean” gets to the heart of the main Israeli concern is that Iran might have something “on the shelf” that could be “rolled out” and say this would not be the IAEA investigating, but merely verifying “after they come clean.” Someone else noted that the “packaging” of such a request is very important, it may only be possible at the very end of a phased approach. The P5 would first need to agree exactly what it means by “weaponization.” Some wondered if there is any precedent for obtaining an iron-clad agreement that if they come clean on past activity there will be no extra penalty. One participant claimed he has never found that the world didn’t “rejoice” with “tremendous relief” when a country made the decision to “come clean.”

6. Regime survival – some indicated that in order to get Iran to negotiate seriously, it may be necessary for the West to acknowledge that its intent is not to overthrow the Iranian regime. It was noted that this may not be palatable to all within the Obama administration, especially during the election campaign. It was noted that if President Obama were to give a statement there will be no attack
and no regime change, and this did not yield results because it was not done at the right time, then the President will have “wasted chips.” (Someone pointed out that such a move doesn’t need to be conveyed publicly, but others questioned if this would be enough, as Iran will still look at the differentiation between actions and words.)

7. Explore additional confidence building measures. Further information is needed as to what incentives might be of interest to Iran. For example, following examples of South Africa and Brazil, it might not need to freeze permanently, or to kill a centrifuge program. Find ways to buy LEU more cheaply on the market. Perhaps further work on an incidents-at-sea agreement might be useful at this time, especially given recent US-Iranian cooperation during crises.

8. Let Iran explore costs/benefits of civilian nuclear activity on its own. Does it make economic, ecological sense? Do they really want a potential Fukushima in Bushehr? These questions can be injected into discussions, though it is of course their decision on the costs-benefits of a civilian program.

9. Take advantage of opportunity to constructively discuss a Nuclear Weapons (or WMD) Free Zone – The chances for a regional NWFZ or WMDFZ seem “slim” at the moment. One participant noted the US has not said much publicly about this, perhaps because it is “too toxic” for Iran and Israel to sit together. Others pointed out that it is possible to create alternate environments for Iranians and Israelis to meet under different umbrellas. The proposed 2012 conference (to be held in Helsinki, most likely toward the end of the year) is on the international calendar. With some further diplomatic creativity, it might prove a useful umbrella for discussions. Some felt pressures to force all parties to agree a statement, or too much pressure to have all seats filled might detract from taking best advantage of the opportunity the forum provides. But the meeting provides an opportunity to start a process that could have long-term benefits.

What is possible to achieve before the US elections? Some specific ideas emerged as to possible steps that could be taken prior to the US election. While most acknowledge it is better to have no negotiations than to have negotiations that fail, the timing is such that this might not be possible. For example, if there are negotiations underway, it would be very difficult for Israel to attack. (The stakes are high, however, as the flip side is that Israel would have best case scenario for attacking if negotiations are tried in 2012 and fail.) These include:

1. Win-win early steps are critical, including steps that would be beneficial to Iran.

2. Increase outreach confidentially and carefully via back channel and Track 2, to prepare for post-election phase.
3. Use military and other experts to better educate public and create further political space, emphasizing perhaps the serious consequences and risks of war (for people and also for the NPT regime and future proliferation risks).

4. Attempt to reassure Israel that Iran is not an existential threat. (This may include further open discussion on the Iranian side about its military and foreign policies, and a clearer rebuttal of some prior statements of concern to the Israelis emphasizing the goal of all states living in peace together in the region.)

5. Make clear that any country that takes an autonomous step toward military action is acting alone and the decision will not be supported.

6. Explore the short-term possibility to get agreement on 20 percent (perhaps if EU oil embargo can be postponed)? Or, perhaps “just do it” and not limit to constrictions of official negotiations?

7. Engage more Arabs or other trusted parties in the discussions (Turkey, Brazil, League of Arab States)?

8. Take advantage of items already on diplomatic calendar for side meetings (preparations for 2012 WMDFZ conference in Helsinki, invite Iran as observer to nuclear security summit, etc)?

**Conclusion**
Participants were concerned about the current status of the Iranian nuclear file. There are many possible ways forward to decrease tension and to arrive at significant steps that would create increased security for all parties. Political will is needed at this critical time.

Pugwash remains committed to continuing to explore these options.
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