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Fact Sheet

The Joint Plan of Action – An Interim Agreement by Iran, the United States, China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom and the European Union

On November 24, 2013 Iran and the P5+1 countries (the United States, France, the United Kingdom, Russia, China, Germany and the European Union) agreed to a Joint Plan of Action (JPOA) and on January 20, 2014 the JPOA entered into effect. The JPOA is a negotiated agreement between the P5+1 and Iran in which Iran agrees to suspend or alter its nuclear activities for six months in exchange for limited relief from economic sanctions. During this six-month period, the parties are pursuing what they refer to as “a mutually-agreed long-term comprehensive solution that would ensure Iran’s nuclear programme will be exclusively peaceful.”

The diplomatic effort that produced the JPOA and the on-going talks began following the election of Hassan Rouhani as Iran’s President in the summer of 2013. President Rouhani had campaigned on a platform of reform and promising renewed engagement with the outside world and the west. The talks and interim agreement have been championed by President Rouhani as a first step in fulfilling his campaign pledges. Constraining its nuclear program, even in exchange for sanctions relief, remains political controversial inside Iran.

The JPOA is intended to be in force for only six months, and took several weeks to implement given the complex nature of the arrangements it requires. The current JPOA will expire on July 20, 2014 unless extended by the parties, something that many officials in Washington believe likely. It is possible that negotiators could complete a comprehensive settlement before July 20. If instead the JPA is extended, it remains to be seen if it will remain in its current form or if a new modified interim agreement will take its place.

Iran and the P-5+1 all have commitments they must follow under the JPOA. To date, all parties - including the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) tasked with monitoring Iran’s compliance with its nuclear obligations under the JPAO – report that the agreement is being effectively implemented.

Iran

Under the terms of the JPA, Iran must suspend many of its nuclear activities, and modify its infrastructure, stockpiles and engagement with the International Atomic Energy Agency. The overall affect of these steps will be that Iran will be no closer to being able to produce a nuclear weapon under the JPOA than it was when it entered into force, and in fact a number of steps Iran has agreed to implement will delay Iran's ability to produce a nuclear weapon should it choose to do so.

Under the JPOA, Iran agreed to:

- Convert one-half of its stockpile of 20 % enriched uranium material to oxide and dilute the other half to no more than 5% enrichment level. Both of these steps - conversion to oxide and dilution - can be reversed but doing so would be observable by IAEA monitoring;
 - Iran further agreed to disconnect the enrichment gas feed lines making re-enrichment of the diluted material to levels higher than 5% harder to immediately achieve. While again this step is reversible, it would be easily observed by IAEA monitoring;
- Not enrich any material to above 5% U-235 content;
- Convert any uranium newly enriched to 5% U-235 over to oxide, making it not directly ready for further enrichment;
- Not make any further advances of its activities at the Natanz Fuel Enrichment Plant, Fordow, or the Arak IR-40 reactor;
- Not locate any new uranium enrichment facilities; and
- Not reprocess spent fuel or construct any facilities for the reprocessing of spent fuel.

In addition, Iran agreed to provide enhanced access to the International Atomic Energy Agency above and beyond that required under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, including providing the IAEA daily access to key sites and additional design information about as yet incomplete IR-40 nuclear reactor; and managed access to help the IAEA further understand Iran's centrifuge production capabilities past and present.

If faithfully implemented, the JPOA all but freezes Iran's nuclear activities and will provide previously unavailable information about Iran's planned nuclear reactor at Arak and its centrifuge production capabilities. It will also delay, albeit slightly, any ability for Iran to break out of the current nuclear arrangement and quickly build a nuclear weapon. James Clapper, the Director of National Intelligence, told the U.S Congress in January 2014, "We assess that if Iran fully implements the Joint Plan, it will temporarily halt the expansion of its enrichment program, eliminate its production and stockpile of 20-percent enriched uranium in a form suitable for further enrichment, and provide additional transparency into its existing and planned nuclear facilities. This transparency would provide earlier warning of a breakout using these facilities."

P5+1 Parties

In exchange for these changes to its nuclear activities, the P-5+1 have agreed to temporarily relieve the unprecedented sanctions that have been imposed on Iran due to its nuclear activities and violations of international agreements. The steps agreed to by the P-5+1 include, according to the White House Fact Sheet released on November 23, 2013:

“Specifically the P5+1 has committed to:

- Not impose new nuclear-related sanctions for six months, if Iran abides by its commitments under this deal, to the extent permissible within their political systems.
- Suspend certain sanctions on gold and precious metals, Iran’s auto sector, and Iran’s petrochemical exports, potentially providing Iran approximately \$1.5 billion in revenue.
- License safety-related repairs and inspections inside Iran for certain Iranian airlines.
- Allow purchases of Iranian oil to remain at their currently significantly reduced levels – levels that are 60% less than two years ago. \$4.2 billion from these sales will be allowed to be transferred in installments if, and as, Iran fulfills its commitments.
- Allow \$400 million in governmental tuition assistance to be transferred from restricted Iranian funds directly to recognized educational institutions in third countries to defray the tuition costs of Iranian students.”

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