



FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT ON IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM

The tensions between Iran and Western countries, especially with US started to rise in 2003. Since then, Western countries and US have tried to dismantle the Iran's nuclear program (INP), insisting that in the framework of the INP, Tehran could conduct studies on nuclear weapons. Despite the fact that Iranian high-level authorities officially denied any activity in the nuclear weapon design, the Western countries and US initiated the nuclear talks in P5+1 Group (US, UK, France, Germany, Russia, China and Germany).

From the beginning of the negotiations, the US and the EU have coordinated their policies on the Iran's nuclear program issue. In this sense, Western countries and the US established common goals for dismantling of the INP. Firstly, Europe and the US wanted to force Iran to stop any uranium enrichment activities, so the world community could be sure that the INP would be used only for peaceful purposes. Secondly, the US and Europe sought for providing full access for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to Iranian nuclear facilities, especially, to the heavy water research reactor in Arak and uranium enrichment facility center in Fordo. Finally, by Washington and Brussels, Iran was obliged to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty additional protocol, which would guarantee that Iran would never produce weapons of mass destruction by assuming obligations within the framework of the international law. On the other hand, Iran insisted on mentioning its right to provide the uranium enrichment activities and conduct nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Since the parties were not successful in reaching mutual beneficial agreement on the INP issue for a long period of time,

western members of the P5+1 Group have implemented economic sanctions against Iran. International sanctions regime established by the Western countries and the US heavily affected both Iranian financial infrastructure (especially, after Iran was removed from the SWIFT system) and trade balance of the country, which was suffering from the lack of investments after the ban on imports of crude oil, petroleum products and natural gas.

After years of high-ranked inflation, lack of the budget funds and substantial reduction of public spending for social programs, Iranian government has to come up with a new way of solution to the economic problems caused by the sanctions and make concessions on the nuclear program. Therefore, in November 2014, the P5+1 Group and Iran have agreed on an overarching political framework agreement, which would be signed till March 31, 2015. They have also announced that in order to prepare the final agreement and finalize all technical details, the nuclear talks would be extended till June 30, 2015.

Despite the delay, the parties managed to reach the framework agreement on April 2, 2015, after diligent negotiations in Lausanne, Switzerland. In the political framework agreement, the parties have agreed on the following:

- Iran will reduce the number of centrifuges by 1.5 times. In this sense, the amount will reduce from 19000 to 6104 but over the next 10 years only 5060 of these will be allowed to enrich uranium;
- Iran will not enrich uranium more than 3,67% percent for 15 years;
- Iran will not build a new enrichment facility for 15 years.
- Iran's breakout timeline (time that it would take for Iran to acquire adequate

fissile material for one weapon) will be extended from 2-3 months to at least one year and this duration will be relevant for 10 years.

- Iran's Fordo facility center will not enrich uranium at least for 15 years and also will be transformed into a research center and will work for peaceful purposes.

- Iran will carry out uranium enrichment activities only at Natanz and remove 1000 pieces of second generation centrifuges under the supervision of the IAEA for 10 years.

- The IAEA will have regular access to all nuclear facilities in Iran including Natanz and Fordo.

- Iran will cut its stockpile of about 22,000 pounds of low-enriched uranium to 661 pounds for the next 15 years.

- Iran has agreed to re-design and rebuild a heavy water research reactor in Arak, based on a project agreed by the P5+1 Group, which will not produce weapons grade plutonium, and which will support peaceful nuclear research and radioisotope production.

- In case of violating any provision, sanctions will be re-engaged immediately.

The news about the agreement have positive impact on the Iranian citizens. Iranian Foreign Minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif stated that the greatest achievement of Iran's uranium enrichment program is officially recognized and it was the first step in nuclear deal. Mohammad Javad Zarif also emphasized that another important point of the agreement was that the world countries have been convinced that Iran does not produce nuclear weapons. The agreement will help the Iranian economy to be positively affected and to grow.

Politics, Foreign Affairs and Security

- President of Georgia Giorgi Margvelashvili has met with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Poland, Denmark and Sweden on their joint visit to Tbilisi. During the meeting high-ranked officials expressed their support towards the country as it moved towards European and Euro-Atlantic integration.
- The Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan Erlan Idrissov stated that in response to the letter of the Syrian opposition members, who have officially requested the President Nursultan Nazarbayev to mediate future political settlement talks, Kazakhstan was ready to provide a platform for Syrian talks in Astana.
- Heads of the Kazakh and Russian Defense Ministers signed an agreement, according to which Russia would reduce the leased territories of its military object in Kazakhstan by 1.6 million hectares. The parties agreed that unused territories of the Sary-Shagan anti-ballistic missile testing range, Taysoygan and Zhamantau testing ranges would be transferred back to Kazakhstan.
- A delegation of experts from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) headed by IAEA Deputy Director General Tero has arrived in Tehran to hold technical talks with Iranian officials. The IAEA team held one-day expert meeting with its Iranian colleagues discussing the technical aspects of the framework agreement implementation.
- The Defense Ministry of Azerbaijan announced that a group of 35 Azerbaijani soldiers, who were serving under the NATO-led "Resolute Support" noncombatant mission launched in Afghanistan has left for Afghanistan on a rotating basis.
- The United Nations Security Council passed resolution to impose arms embargo and blacklist Houthi leader. The 15-member Council passed the resolution with 14 countries voting in favor with Russia - abstaining.
- The press-service of the Southern Military District of Russia announced that Russia's Caspian flotilla would hold a joint exercise with the naval forces of Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan. It was also stated that the crews of missile and gun boats "Grad Sviyazhsk", "Uglich", "Volgodonsk" and "Makhachkala", as well as support ships, were already in the process of preparations for patrol mission in the Caspian Sea.
- Russia has started supplying Su-30SM fighter aircrafts to Kazakhstan.

Economy, Finance and Energy

- Turkey launched the construction of its first nuclear power plant. The nuclear power station in Akkuyu in Mersin province on the shores of the Mediterranean would be built by Russia's nuclear agency Rosatom.
- The Milli Majlis of Azerbaijan has ratified a Production Sharing Agreement on holding joint geological exploration work on potentially promising structures located on the shallow part around the Absheron peninsula in the Azerbaijani sector of the Caspian Sea. The contract has been signed between State Oil Company of Azerbaijan and British Petroleum.
- The Energy Ministry of Kazakhstan announced its plans to drill the first exploration well at "Satpayev" large oil-bearing structure located in the northern part of the shelf of the Caspian Sea in 2015. Also the Ministry stated that Kazakhstan's government adopted a decree "On signing a contract for combined exploration and production at "Abay" and "Isatay" sites located in the Kazakh sector of the Caspian Sea" in 2015.
- A South Korean consortium led by Hyundai Engineering Co. and LG International Co. signed agreements with Turkmenistan worth \$4.8 billion. The consortium inked a \$940 million deal with Turkmenistan to modernize the Central Asian country's oil refinery infrastructure.
- Kazakhstan and Turkey signed 19 commercial agreements worth over

\$800 million at a joint Business Forum held during the President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan's visit to Astana. On the sidelines of the visit Kazakhstan and Turkey formed a list of 23 joint business projects worth more than \$2.8 billion as part of the joint economic program "New Synergy".

- The Asian Development Bank announced that it would allocate grants worth \$4.1 million to Azerbaijan for the development of energy, transport, finance, education, water area, as well as public administration in 2015-2017.
- The chairman of the Committee on Statistics of Kazakhstan Alikhan Smailov stated that for 5 years the turnover of Kazakhstan with the Customs Union countries increased by 53%.

Society and Culture

- The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) launched the Russian classes for oralmans in East Kazakhstan. According to UNDP, the courses are unique, as the instructors themselves were once oralmans.
- Kyrgyzstan started introducing drip irrigation on the country's farmland. Installation of a drip irrigation system has begun in the Kemin, the Kara-Su and the Kadamjai districts of Kyrgyzstan.
- Chairman of the Senate Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and the permanent representative of the UNDP in Kazakhstan Stephen Tull discussed issues on creation of UN Regional Hub in Kazakhstan.
- Tajik authorities have banned the hajj, the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca, for citizens younger than 35.
- During the visit of the working group of companies' leaders from Kazakh National Welfare Fund Samruk-Kazyna to the USA, the chairman Umirzak Shukkeyev announced that the Fund would intend to establish a subsidiary company Samruk Innovation in the Silicon Valley.