

The world powers and Iran signed an interim nuclear deal on Nov. 24, 2013, with plans to begin a new round of talks to reach a mutually agreed long-term comprehensive solution that would ensure Iran's nuclear program would be exclusively peaceful.

Compromise by all parties on the elements of the final comprehensive deal would be key to success. Former US Secretaries of State Henry Kissinger and George Shultz in an opinion piece for the *Wall Street Journal* on Dec. 2, 2013, outlined the three major tasks for American diplomacy right now: "To define a level of Iranian nuclear capacity limited to plausible civilian uses and to achieve safeguards that ensure that this level is not exceeded; to leave open the possibility of a genuinely constructive relationship with Iran; to design a Middle East policy adjusted to new circumstances".

Further statements by informed US figures suggest that in a final deal, the US will ask Iran to accept strict limitations on its nuclear program beyond the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Such measures include dismantling a significant portion of existing centrifuges and Low Enriched Uranium stockpiles (LEU); closure of Fordo, the second enrichment site near the city of Qom; elimination of the Arak heavy water research reactor; and intrusive inspections and monitoring that go beyond the NPT and its Additional Protocol.

Despite the negotiating parties committing to a deal based on the NPT, the fact is that the demands

Outlines of a compromise

A deal between Iran and the West seems possible | By Seyed Hossein Mousavian

addressed by the world powers to Iran go beyond the treaty, and most likely, as a member state of NPT, Iran would not accept to be singled-out and discriminated. A sustainable solution necessitates an end to the discrimination of Iran compared to other member states of the NPT. A realistic solution should distinguish between demands within the framework of NPT and those that go beyond it.

Demands based on the NPT can be agreed upon permanently. Based on the NPT and the international regulations, a member state would demonstrate the maximum level of transparency by implementing the Safeguard Agreement, Additional Protocol and Subsidiary Arrangement Code 3.1. These three arrangements are the maximum transparency measures the world powers can expect.

To be realistic, however, the EU3+3 and Iranian negotiators would have to deal with demands that go beyond the NPT. A sensible approach could be one of the following three scenarios.

First, measures beyond the NPT would only be implemented for a specified period as a confidence building measure.

Second, establishing an international consortium to oversee Iran's enrichment program as proposed by former Iranian President Ahmadinejad, who added that US companies could

be involved in building and engineering the program.

The third scenario envisages a broader initiative in which the world powers would look for a deal with Iran benefiting the region by creating a Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone (WMDFFZ).

Demand for nuclear energy is on the rise in the Middle East. Over the past five years, at least 13 countries in the region have announced plans to explore the adoption of nuclear energy. A major challenge to nuclear non-proliferation arises from



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the "Arab Awakening." The revolutionary transitions in the Middle East changed the priorities of regional leaders: instead of advancing the WMDFFZ initiative they now focus on domestic issues. Rising nationalism and populist sentiments, coupled with extremism and terrorism led by radical Salafists would definitely hamper progress towards WMDFFZ in the Middle East.

The Comprehensive Agreement with Iran, however, could become the platform for a broader agenda. It could alleviate present concerns over the nature of Iran's nuclear program and concurrently be recognized as a "model" to address future proliferation challenges in the region.

In this scenario, Iran would tacitly take the responsibility to lead the Middle East toward complete nonproliferation and elimination of all types of WMDs. The following reasons provide the justification as to why Iran is the only country with the potential, capacity and credibility to take this leadership role:

In 1974, Iran, followed by Egypt, was the first country to propose a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (NWFZ) in the Middle East that led to the 1974 UN General Assembly resolution.

Although the issue has been on the agenda for more than three decades, it has yet to be realized. In 1990, Egypt, followed by Iran, proposed a WMDFFZ in the Middle East. To this day, Iran has maintained its support for the zone.

As the biggest victim of chemical weapons, Iran has always sought a world free of the threat, production and use of weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons. Instead, history shows that the US and the West supported Saddam Hussein's use of chemical weapons during the

Iran-Iraq war, which killed and injured 100,000 Iranians.

Iran has pioneered banning all WMDs through the passing of a religious edict or fatwa. The Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei's fatwa declares the use of nuclear weapons and all other types of weapons of mass destruction are "haram" or forbidden – constituting a sin, being useless, costly, harmful and a serious threat to humanity.

Tehran has provided more than 5,000 man-days of inspections to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) since 2003, the most during the Agency's history, including access to facilities that have gone beyond the realm of the NPT for a decade.

Since 2004, Iran has proposed the adoption of the IAEA Additional Protocol and continuous on-site inspections at key facilities, limiting the expansion of Iran's enrichment program and a policy declaration of no reprocessing, immediately converting all enriched uranium to fuel rods. In return, Iran seeks recognition of its rights to enrichment and normalization of Iran's status under G8 export controls.

Iran has called for an "international consortium." Former Iranian President Ahmadinejad during his September 2005 speech at the United Nations stated "Iran is prepared to engage in serious partnership with private and public sectors

of countries in implementation of uranium enrichment program in Iran."

And last but not least, Iran has signed onto every WMD convention, such as the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in 1997; the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) in 1996; and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1970.

Within such context, the world powers and Iran can agree on six principles:

- No nuclear weapon in the Middle East.
 - A ban on production of plutonium and reprocessing in the Middle East.
 - Stopping the production of highly enriched uranium, with no enrichment beyond five percent in the Middle East.
 - No stockpiling beyond domestic needs for nuclear civilian use.
 - Establishment of a regional or international consortium for producing nuclear fuel.
 - Regional confidence-building and verification measures by creating a regional authority in charge of regulating nuclear development and verifying its peaceful nature in the region.
- This would be the best path to reach the "comprehensive package" deal on the Iranian nuclear dilemma. The next six months of diplomacy will be decisive and the world powers and Iran should be open to pursuing an agenda of long-term co-operation. Iran's nuclear deal has the potential to begin controlling fissile material in the Middle East and take meaningful steps toward a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. ■