



# There's Common Ground For Final Nuclear Deal, Ex-Iranian Diplomat Says

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Morning Edition

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Steve Inskeep talks to former Iranian nuclear negotiator Seyed Hossein Mousavian, who is now with Princeton University's Program on Science and Global Security.

STEVE INSKEEP, HOST:

We've been listening to stories from a country where the United States and Iran are on opposite sides. Elsewhere in the region's conflicts, the U.S. and Iran support the same side. And, of course, the U.S. and Iran have agreed on the framework of a deal over Iran's nuclear program. They're trying to finalize that deal by this summer. Our next guest believes the two countries are closer than many people realize, or at least that they should be. Seyed Hossein Mousavian used to be a nuclear negotiator for Iran. He then fell out of favor for a time. He left the country. He now teaches at Princeton University, but he remains in touch with old colleagues at home. When we sat down yesterday here in Washington, we heard a very different perspective on what the Iran nuclear deal means. Many Americans have focused on their profound distrust of Iran. Hossein Mousavian sees ways the two nations can work together.

SEYED HOSSEIN MOUSAVIAN: Look at the Middle East today. Iran and the U.S., they have been supporting the same governments in Baghdad, in Iraq and in Kabul, Afghanistan. We are in the same boat, fighting ISIS. The healthy transport of energy,

export of an energy from the region, this is really the common interest for - to industrial countries, including the U.S., and for Iran. We have a lot of common interests. Therefore, we can cooperate on what we believe this is the same threat and we have no difference, like ISIS al-Qaida. And we can negotiate about the other parts.

INSKEEP: Let me ask about a couple of details of this nuclear deal. Many Americans are asking what happens as the deal begins to expire. Ten years from now, essential provision goes away; others last 15, 20, 25 years. What is your understanding, based on what you've learned, of what Iran will be allowed to do with its nuclear program 10, 12, 14, 15 years from now?

MOUSAVIAN: Even if after 15 years, 10 years, 20 years, 25 years, the deal is over, the most intrusive inspections are permanent in this deal.

INSKEEP: In other words, the world should still know what it is that Iran is doing.

MOUSAVIAN: I mean forever, Iran would be among the most transparent nations on the nuclear program. Even after the period of limits are removed, like 10, 15,,20 years, if there is the highest level of verification system, there should be no worry.

INSKEEP: Granting that there will be inspections, is it your understanding that 10 or 15 years from now, Iran can ramp up its enrichment of uranium, which it is going to be limiting in the first few years under this deal?

MOUSAVIAN: They agreed in Joint Plan of Action 2013 that Iran would be entitled to have enrichment for its practical needs. All ambiguities are removed. Highest level of verification is in force, and Iran only would have its fuel for the real practical domestic needs.

INSKEEP: So if Iran has a peaceful nuclear reactor, it could be enriching uranium to use in that reactor. Inspectors would know about it. And that, effectively, would be the limit of it.

MOUSAVIAN: Yes.

INSKEEP: Do you think it's still possible that Iran's government could walk away from this deal?

MOUSAVIAN: If the principles agreed in Lausanne, April 2, 2015, if the P5+1, the world powers, would be committed to those principles, Iranians would never walk out.

INSKEEP: Is it too late for both sides to back away?

MOUSAVIAN: I believe this is too late. My understanding is that the nuclear talks have already reached to no-return point.

INSKEEP: In one of our earlier conversations, you said that in returning to Iran for a little while you noticed a tremendous hope for change - not just hope for change in Iran's relations with the world, but also hope for social change within the country. Do you think that after the signing of a nuclear deal, there could be a time of social change inside Iran?

MOUSAVIAN: You know, Steve, I have explained in details 35 years of Iranian history after revolution. I have explained in my book, "Iran and the U.S." Whenever the West pushes more, sanctions more, threatens more, Iranian domestic situation becomes more radical. Whenever the West is more flexible, more friendly, Iranian domestic situation become more moderate. I have explained many, many, many evidences, documents, events and history of 35 years. This is the principle. It really depends to the West.

INSKEEP: Hossein Mousavian, thank you very much for taking the time.

MOUSAVIAN: Thank you very much, Steve. Thank you.

INSKEEP: He's a former Iranian diplomat. He's now at Princeton University's program on science and global security.

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