


## Iran Nuclear Brief: Options for a Diplomatic Solution

- [Policy White Papers](#)

**By Kelsey Davenport**  
**January 2013**



**ACA**  
THE ARMS CONTROL  
ASSOCIATION

### Iran Nuclear Brief

*Analysis from the "Solving the Iranian Nuclear Puzzle" Briefing Series*

---

BY KELSEY DAVENPORT  
JANUARY 9, 2013

## Options for a Diplomatic Solution to the Iranian Nuclear Challenge

Since President Barack Obama took office four years ago, diplomats from the P5+1 group of states (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States and Germany) and Iran have engaged in renewed but intermittent discussions aimed at resolving concerns about Iran's nuclear program. So far, however, the two sides have been unable to reach an agreement that would bridge the differences between the proposals<sup>1</sup> that have been exchanged during the talks.

With high-level political negotiations between Iran and the P5+1 likely to resume soon, negotiators will need to consider new variations on their earlier diplomatic proposals if they are to make progress to resolve the concerns about Iran's growing nuclear capabilities and nuclear weapons potential.

There is still time for diplomacy, but both sides need to move with greater urgency toward a lasting solution. Iran apparently has not made a strategic decision to pursue nuclear weapons and does not yet have the necessary ingredients for an effective nuclear bomb. However, as the latest International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) quarterly report makes clear, its uranium enrichment capabilities are improving and its stockpile of enriched uranium is growing.<sup>2</sup> Negotiators cannot afford to rely only on proposals that failed to gain traction during the three rounds of talks held last year.

---

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- There is still time for Iran and the P5+1 to negotiate a resolution to disputes over Iran's controversial nuclear program, but both sides must exercise greater flexibility.
- A number of alternative options, including short-term confidence-building measures and more comprehensive approaches, could break the current impasse:
  - Measures that address the most urgent concerns—particularly Iran's accumulation of 20% enriched uranium—would build trust and buy time.
  - A compromise package could be developed based on the existing proposals presented by both sides during the 2012 negotiations and past efforts to negotiate a resolution.
  - Iran and the P5+1 could negotiate a resolution to the nuclear crisis within a larger set of issues.
- Iranian cooperation with the IAEA investigation on the possible military dimensions of Tehran's nuclear activities would accelerate progress in the P5+1 talks.
- Neither sanctions nor a military strike can prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon; only a diplomacy-centered approach can resolve international concerns over Iran's nuclear program.

Arms Control Association | 1515 S. Street, NW, Ste. 110, Washington, D.C. 20005 | 202-462-1230

[Download PDF](#)

Since President Barack Obama took office four years ago, diplomats from the P5+1 group of states (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States and Germany) and Iran have engaged in renewed but intermittent discussions aimed at resolving concerns about Iran's nuclear program. So far, however, the two sides have been unable to reach an agreement that would bridge the differences between the proposals that have been exchanged during the talks.

With high-level political negotiations between Iran and the P5+1 likely to resume soon, negotiators will need to consider new variations on their earlier diplomatic proposals if they are to make progress to resolve the concerns about Iran's growing nuclear capabilities and nuclear weapons potential.

There is still time for diplomacy, but both sides need to move with greater urgency toward a lasting solution. If each side provides slightly more flexibility and creativity, it may be possible to bridge the

## Iran Nuclear Brief: Options for a Diplomatic Solution

Published on Arms Control Association (<https://www.armscontrol.org>)

---

gaps and reach a resolution that addresses the most urgent proliferation risks posed by Iran's nuclear program, as well as Iran's desire to continue some nuclear activities and begin to remove elements of the severe sanctions regime that has been put in place.

Presentations from earlier briefings in the ACA "Solving the Iranian Nuclear Puzzle" series are available from the ACA [here](#).

- [Kelsey Davenport](#)
- [Iran](#)

**Source URL:** <https://www.armscontrol.org/policy-white-papers/2013-01/iran-nuclear-brief-options-diplomatic-solution>