

## **How likely is successful dialogue with Iran?**

The principles which could govern any future dialogue with Iran may be summarized by the following points:

First: The Iranians will show interest in any invitation for talks, as they will be keen to display their interest in a diplomatic settlement. They believe that no invitation for talks should be rejected as this could negatively reflect on their image. Iran wishes to appear as a party that seeks a diplomatic solution to the controversy surrounding the Iranian nuclear program.

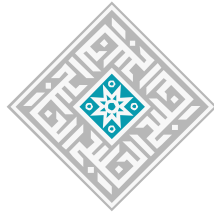
Second: The Iranians will be ready to talk to the EU and other nations or international organizations, but Tehran's real interest lies in direct talks with the United States as they believe that talks with the US will be the key for changing the international community's attitude towards Iran. They believe that any negotiations without direct involvement of the US will not bring the necessary results.

Third: The Iranians are well known for their tactics of involving their opponents in prolonged and endless negotiations with limited outcome. These tactics include the bringing up of multiple issues, shifting of priorities, making linkages, and in general having an unfocused approach to the negotiations.

Fourth: The Iranian negotiation style is based on the strategy of offering concessions in 'installments.' A major breakthrough in negotiations cannot be obtained in one session.

Fifth: The Iranian strategy of agreeing to a dialogue might have other objectives apart from a genuine desire to seek a negotiated settlement. Negotiation tactics could be used for one of the following:

A: Winning time to allow their national nuclear program to progress towards 'establishing new realities on the ground.' In any military nuclear program, time is a major factor and the objective of the government is to provide Iranian scientists the time they need to place the program at a 'point of no return' where Iran is either on the verge of securing a nuclear military capability, or on the verge of producing a



nuclear weapon. Such progress is likely to change the nature of any future negotiation by strengthening the position of Iran.

B: To show the Iranian public that the government is doing everything possible to defuse the conflict and avoid confrontation. The responsibility for the failure to achieve a diplomatic solution will be placed at the door of the Western countries or 'the enemies of Iran.'

C: Negotiation tactics could be used to test and explore the other parties' options – in particular, the credibility and seriousness of the military option.

## **Conclusion**

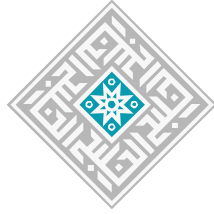
Negotiations with Iran do not have any realistic chance of success without effective and credible pressure. Diplomatic efforts must be accompanied by the threat of punishment – either non-military (economic, financial, diplomatic sanctions) or a credible threat of the use of force.

Negotiations with Iran do not have any realistic chance of success without a show of unity by all parties concerned, especially the major powers. The Iranians believe they can play on the disunity and disagreement among the major powers. Furthermore, such disunity, if it becomes evident, will reduce the negative impact of any action directed against Iran.

Negotiations with Iran do not have any realistic chance of success if they are aimed at forcing the government to abandon its nuclear program. Any dialogue must focus on the specific and clearly defined objective of preventing the militarization of the program. This could include offering international help to the state's civilian nuclear program as a 'sweetener.'

## **Success with Iran?**

Understanding the negotiation technique of Iran is important. Such understanding is however not a guarantee that negotiations or talks with the Iranian will be successful. Here, the outlook is not positive. Given the current Iranian position and statements that have been forthcoming, it is unlikely that the current Iranian leadership will negotiate seriously until they reached the threshold of a nuclear bomb break-out capability. Everything until that point is simply stalling,



delaying, etc. Even if the current government agrees to some deal, they could still renege claiming that in the aftermath of the deal additional demands from the West were forced on them or they could obstruct verification measures similar to the weapons inspections Iraq went through. The current regime is already losing legitimacy and its nuclear program and anti-US/Western slogans are the few measures it has left on which to continue its fight for survival. If they give this up, what will be left? If the US would end of caving in to Iranian demands, this might be too good for the present government to pass up but this is not going to happen. Therefore, the chances for real success for dialogue with the Khomeini/Ahmadinejad regime is very limited.