Iranian Nuclear Showdown

January 18, 2006
9:00am-10:00am EST

Jennifer Linker: This is Jennifer Linker at the Carnegie Endowment. If you're just joining us, we're about to start our conference call. This is a press briefing on the Iranian Nuclear Showdown with Non-Proliferation experts Pierre Goldschmidt and George Perkovich.

The conference call will be held from 9:00 a.m. until approximately 10:00 a.m. Eastern Standard Time.

The conference call is also being recorded. And after the conference call, I will be able to email out instructions on how to access that recording. Eventually, we hope to have a transcript within 48 hours.

Just a couple of key commands, you can mute your own line by pressing star-6 and un-mute by pressing star-7. And I'd appreciate if everyone would mute their conference line so we don't get noise interference when we begin.

We will begin momentarily in about two minutes.

((Crosstalk))

Jennifer Linker: Okay, let me welcome everyone to this conference call once again.

My name is Jennifer Linker. I am the Communications Manager here at Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington DC.

On the call we will have two of Carnegie's experts on nuclear non-proliferation in Iran.

Pierre Goldschmidt is a visiting scholar based in Brussels. He's the former Deputy Director General, and Head of the Department of Safeguards at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

He's written several analytical papers proposing constructive and pragmatic solutions to address the weaknesses of the non-proliferation regime.

As moderator, we have George Perkovich, who is vice president for studies at the Carnegie Endowment. He's written extensively on and traveled to Iran.

I just want to remind everyone that this is being recorded. Access to that recording, I will have to send you a pass code after the conference is over. And if you'd like to access that and I haven't emailed it to you, you can email me directly at jlinker@carnegieendowment.org.

Useful command for you is star-6, to mute your lines, so we can't hear your noise on the other end. Please use it when you're not speaking. To un-mute, press star-7, and that allows us to hear your question.

George Perkovich will open, followed by Pierre Goldschmidt, and then we'll take your questions.

When you give your questions, please identify your name and your organization.

And let's begin.

George Perkovich: Thanks. Good morning or afternoon, whatever the case may be, depending on where you're calling from.

I'm just going to introduce Pierre very quickly, but also just want to remind you that once Pierre has done a five-minute kind of update or - and briefing, we will open to questions. And please, when you ask a question, state your name and your affiliation so that both Pierre and I, but also your colleagues, know where you're working from.

Pierre, will you do us a favor since so much is happening so quickly on this story over the last week, maybe give us a five-minute update on what are the outstanding questions that the IAEA inspectors still have regarding Iran?

And then talk about based on your experience, do you think the matter will be referred to the UN Security Council at what is now being called a Special Meeting of the IAEA for February 2? And then I think we should just open to questions after that.

Pierre Goldschmidt: Okay. Good morning, George. Do you hear me?

George Perkovich: Yes. We hear you great here, yeah.

Pierre Goldschmidt: Okay.

Well, to answer your question there are quite a number of outstanding questions that have been reported by the IAEA Secretariat to its Board of Governors, and I will try to mention just a few.

First of all, the Agency has still to understand why in 1985, in the middle of the war with Iraq, Iran decided to launch a uranium centrifuge enrichment

program when at the time it had no short or medium term need to fuel any nuclear power plant.

And as of to date, three years after the discovery of Iran's undeclared program, the Agency has not yet been able to verify the correctness and completeness of Iran's statements concerning the chronology of its centrifuge enrichment program.

For instance, Iran has acknowledged that in addition to the documents and components for the so-called P1 centrifuges, it has received in 1995 blueprints for the design of more advanced P2 centrifuges. And quite astonishingly, however, Iran claims that between 1995 and 2002, which is a period of seven years, it did nothing, not even R&D work based on those P2 designs.

Well, the Agency is still trying to verify whether this is indeed the case or not.

Another major issue is about contamination. It is related to the origin of low-enriched and high-enriched uranium particle contamination found at various locations in Iran which could not be explained on the basis of the indigenous activities declared by Iran.

Iran claims that all these contaminations are due to the fact that centrifuge components, covertly imported through intermediaries during the 80s and 90s, were themselves contaminated.

However, the Agency has still not been able to draw a definitive conclusion with respect to all of the contamination -- to some, but not all, and in particularly not for some low-enriched uranium contamination.

Also, it was reported very recently that contrary to what could have been expected, environmental samples recently collected at the location in another member state where the centrifuge components had been stored, well, did not indicate any trace of contamination, and this has to be still explained.

The Agency also does not have a clear understanding of the activities carried out by the Physics Research Center which depends from the Iranian Ministry of Defense when it was located at the Lavizan-Shian site. As you know, this site was completely razed and all equipment and buildings removed just few months before IAEA inspectors could visit the site.

The Agency has not been able to interview the individuals working at this Physics Research Center and those who were involved in efforts to acquire dual use material and equipment related to uranium conversion and enrichment. And this is again a very troubling issue.

The Agency is still assessing other aspects of Iran's past nuclear programs, including statements made about plutonium research, about the Gchine uranium mine, and about Iran's activities involving Polonium-210.

And finally, last November the IAEA reported that it was - that it had found documents related to the casting and machining of enriched uranium metal into hemispherical form, which has absolutely no peaceful use but can be used for some type of nuclear weapons.

And I think I will stop there.

George Perkovich: Pierre, that's a great exposition, in many ways condensed a couple of hundred pages of IAEA reports and about three years of chronology there. So that was very helpful.

Let me just for a minute elaborate on one of the points because I don't think it has been reported or I haven't seen reporting of it, and you made a general allusion to it, I learned about this on my own and so perhaps can say a little more, which is this question of samples of centrifuges that in Iran were contaminated with uranium particles, but then when the inspectors went to the place where they were stored which is an unnamed country by the IAEA but which I know is Dubai, and did environmental sampling in the storage facility, there were no isotopes found in the facility.

And this was surprising because the expectation would be that if the machines in Iran were contaminated and they had been in the facility in Dubai, the facility in Dubai should have had some of this contamination as well. And so this is raising questions about the overall story that's being told.

Is that a fair representation of that bit you alluded to, Pierre?

Pierre Goldschmidt: Yes, that's correct. Yes. That's correct.

George Perkovich: Why don't we stop right now and take questions on what Pierre presented thus far which kind of more on the investigation on ongoing question? And then we can segue as people want into, you know, what's coming next, what's happening in the Agency, what might happen at the Security Council.

Any questions?

Woman: Okay.

Man: One clarification.

Can we use the name of Dubai? Was that…

George Perkovich: As far as I'm concerned, since I have access to no classified or IAEA record and Pierre didn't tell me this, I got it on my own someplace else, as far I'm concerned, you can. But it's not coming from Pierre, it's coming from me.

Pierre Goldschmidt: I have said nothing that you wouldn't find in the Board reports.

Man: Okay.

Michael Glenzer: Michael Glenzer with Exchange/Monitor Publications.

In the past, Director-General El-Baradei has been very cautious with how these reports are termed, but there has been sort of a sense of a mood change I guess that El-Baradei is getting more frustrated, or at least seems to lay off.

What are those (unintelligible) information that was just detailed is the most (unintelligible) evidence that is causing us that sort of shift in perspective?

George Perkovich: Did you hear that, Pierre?

Pierre Goldschmidt: I didn't get the question.

George Perkovich: Okay, it was basically - he was - the question was noting that El-Baradei, Director-General El-Baradei seems more frustrated in his - you know, has more energy, is little less diplomatic in his recent statements on Iran.

Pierre Goldschmidt: Yes.

George Perkovich: So the question was asking, what of the issues that you cited, the evidence that you cited, is there any particular piece in there that may be causing El-Baradei to grow more frustrated or is it something else that's leading to his, for lack of a better word, his tougher language over the last week?

Pierre Goldschmidt: Well, I think -- it would be for him to speak of course -- but I think he's disappointed by the fact that - he's a great believer in negotiation and diplomacy. And of course Iran has made the life almost impossible by restarting enrichment activities -- conversion and enrichment activities. And by doing that, they are jeopardizing the negotiation, at least with the EU3, and they have also rejected the attempt of Russia to find a solution to guarantee fuel supply to Iran and others.

So they don't seem to be interested in dialogue and constructive solutions. And of course that's very frustrating because if they are not ready to do that and if the Agency after three years can still not resolve all those outstanding questions, then of course frustration comes, and we'll come to that later -- from the fact that the Agency and El-Baradei and his inspectors don't have enough authority to go to the bottom line of all those outstanding questions.

George Perkovich: Other questions?

Howard LaFranchi: Howard LaFranchi with Christian Science Monitor.

The points you raised there, I noted, I mean even the first question goes all the way back to 1985. And I'm just wondering how long would it take to sort of get to the bottom of these issues, and I guess -- I'm trying to get an idea of what might happen at this meeting on February 2. I mean these issues are very complex, and on the other hand we're talking about El-Baradei, among others, that's sort of losing patience.

How long would it take to really get to the bottom of these issues, and what's likely to happen about them at the February 2 meeting?

Pierre Goldschmidt: Well, if you're asking how long it would take to resolve all the outstanding issues, well, I think with the existing authority of the IAEA inspectors, it could take forever. And I don't think time is in anyway helping the inspectors, because the more time goes, the more difficult it will be to reconstruct the past history of the Iranians' undeclared activities.

So it has become urgent and essential for the IAEA in this specific case of Iran and its behavior and in non-compliance too to have expanded authority. I think that's essential, and without that -- and Iran has demonstrated, you know, the Board has urged Iran, I don't know how many times, probably half a dozen times in their resolutions, you know, to be more transparent and cooperative with the IAEA. But that has absolutely no legal value. I mean they can ask and ask and ask again, but the inspectors, when they are going in the field, they can do nothing with that, they don't have the authority.

So only the UN Security Council can give the IAEA that authority. And clearly this has nothing to do with sanctions.

Howard LaFranchi: So would you - would that come in a (unintelligible) that would be - then the Board recognizing that would then, even if that were they're limited goal, then they would presumably move to send this to the Security Council just to get that expanded authority?

Pierre Goldschmidt: Yes. Yes, I think, at this stage, I see no alternative -- I see no alternative. I think it is important to request the UN Security Council to provide the IAEA

with extended authority, and of course, in parallel, to request Iran to suspend its enrichment-related activities. These are the two fundamental needs today.

George Perkovich: Yes.

Okay, speak up and say who you are and then your question and name.

Joni Jaje: My name is Joni Jaje based with NHK, it's a Japanese news network.

Can you just reiterate the end of that answer, I'm sorry -- and kind of what - exactly what in your mind the UN needs to do to help the situation?

Pierre Goldschmidt: What was that?

Joni Jaje: To make it more progressive.

Can you reiterate the end of that answer and tell me exactly what you think the UN would have to do next to make the situation progressive?

Pierre Goldschmidt: Yes.

Well, first of all, let me say something.

I'm struck by the tendency of the international community to only react to crisis and by its difficulty to draw the lessons from previous crises in order to diminish the chances that they could reoccur.

And so, generally speaking, I try to stand back and to find out what could reasonably be done to improve and consolidate the non-proliferation regime but not to link it to a specific case.

So I find it quite embarrassing and uncomfortable to now come to have to solve one specific case which is Iran.

This being said, I also think it's important to keep in mind that in 2004, in the case of Libya, Libya was referred - was also found to be non-compliant, and within two weeks after the Board report, Iran was referred - was reported to the Security Council for information purpose only.

((Crosstalk))

Pierre Goldschmidt: Pardon?

George Perkovich: You said Iran, but you meant Libya…

Pierre Goldschmidt: I meant Libya -- for information purpose only, because Libya was fully cooperating with the international community. In the case of Iran, clearly this is not the case.

So the minimum for me is, again, to report to the Security Council to get, first, to request Iran to immediately resume the suspension of all enrichment-related activities. And second, to provide the IAEA with a significantly increased verification mandate and authority. And once more, this has nothing to do with sanctions.

Carol Giacomo: Carol Giacomo from Reuters.

Can you tell me at what point you believe we reach a critical phase with Iran. I mean there have been reports of US National Intelligence estimate that, you know, they won't get the - they may not get the bomb for another decade. But

there a lot of other experts who suggest that a critical sort of point of no return could come much sooner when they actually start producing their own fuel.

What's your sense of where the critical point is?

Pierre Goldschmidt: Well, frankly, I don't like to speculate on those things because I don't think it helps very much, and I would leave that to others. I'm trying to define and find out what is necessary to progress in this crisis with Iran.

And frankly, I think there is one essential condition. It is for the international community to show that there is a massive support for the European and Russian diplomatic initiatives and for reporting Iran to the UN Security Council.

But as I said, at this stage, not for sanctions, I think that's what's necessary, that Iran feels that there is a strong, massive support of the international community and that they are not able to as they are trying and very cleverly trying to divide the international community, they are trying to divide China and Russia and the rest and between the Europeans and the US and everything.

And they've done that extremely well, but - and that's, if they feel they can continue like that and get away without repercussion, then they have the cake and eat it. And if they feel they can have that, then I think everyone will lose.

Elaine Sciolino: If I could follow up…

George Perkovich: Sure, Carol.

Elaine Sciolino: This is - if I could follow up the question from my very dear friend Carol Giacomo. This is Elaine Sciolino from The New York Times.

Mr. Goldschmidt, you talked about that Iran is very cleverly trying to divide the international community. Could you address, first of all, Iran's negotiating behavior from your long years of experience dealing with Iran? And secondly, whether you have seen a shift in their negotiating behavior now that they have changed their nuclear team under their new president?

Pierre Goldschmidt: Yes. Well, I think, you know, Iran - the game chess - chess game I mean was invented by the Iranians, so they are extremely good players, and I always have felt that they are playing three steps in advance of anyone else. So I admire them very much for that.

It is clear that the last three years and the delays during the last three years had been to the advantage in my mind of Iran. And they have continued to make progress, as they have published themselves, you know, and recognized themselves, they have continued to improve their conversion process and enrichment process. So they didn't really lose much time.

The critical point is now, I mean, once they have UF6 and once they can master the enrichment technology, well, the door is open for any other use of this capacity. And I think that's why today everyone considers that it's time to make sure that there is no undeclared nuclear material and activity in the country and that everything is for exclusively peaceful purposes. But that's very difficult to prove.

George Perkovich: Elaine, this is George Perkovich.

Just - I'll try a little answer to your question which is just based on interactions with some of the new negotiators and a lot of the old negotiators who were replaced in the last few months, and also things that, you know, that Iranians say and the President of Iran says, which is that over the last few months what you see is a view that Iran was either mistaken to engage in the suspension and the negotiations or at least was way too accommodating, and that President Ahmadinejad and perhaps others have a view that the way the world works is you act tough, you make clear what your bottom lines are and you pursue it and you don't act as if other people (adhere) the strength or the will to stop you and you create facts on the ground and eventually the rest of the world has to adapt to this.

So I was told for example that President Ahmadinejad was in New York for the UN Summit in September. He was - he turned to one of his agents and said, you know, these Europeans are like barking dogs, if you kicked them they'll run away.

Pierre Goldschmidt: Right.

George Perkovich: And if that - that actually - whether he said that or not, I don't know, I was told by an Iranian he did.

Elaine Sciolino: Uh-huh.

George Perkovich: But in any case, the behavior since then suggests that logic.

So, you know, in August, which was prior to the alleged statement, you know, they resumed their operation in Isfahan.

But since then and the resumption of this uranium enrichment work over the last week, that is clearly a form of kicking the dog and assuming the dog is going to run away.

Pierre Goldschmidt: Yeah.

George Perkovich: …if that was a mistake, but because, well, finally you kicked a dog enough and either, you know, the dog actually turns around and bites or, you know, the master of the dog goes and gets a gun and act but that may take a while.

But I think there has been a shift over the last few months in Iran's negotiating behavior.

Pierre Goldschmidt: Yes. Obviously there has been a shift at least in the negotiation tactic.

Now, you have to - the Iranians are very legalistic in their approach to the whole issue. And one has to remember that the suspension of the activities, they have repeatedly and rightfully so said, "This was on a voluntary non-legally-binding basis".

So really by restarting, they are not violating anything except of course the agreements with EU3. But from a non-proliferation point of view and IAEA as a body, they are not violating anything.

And it's the same with the Additional Protocol. They have signed the Additional Protocol to the Safeguards Agreement but they didn't ratify and they just, in the meantime, agreed on a voluntary basis to implement it. Now again this is not legally-binding.

And so they are very clever. They are not in new breaches of Safeguards Agreement. And this is why it is necessary, and they are forcing the issue, to report to the Security Council because only the Security Council can give - can make those commitments binding.

The Security Council can give - improve the authority under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter to the IAEA and request suspension.

So that's very important, because they are very careful about the legal aspect, and they are using that to convince the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) that it's the neocolonialist countries that are trying to impose things which are against the Article 4 of the NPT and that it is - well, you know, and on developing countries, and they are trying to make a case and convince the NAM.

And what is important is to tell the NAM, reassure every country that anything which is requested now in this specific case is because they have been found in noncompliance and it would not apply to any other state not found in noncompliance.

George Perkovich: Pierre, a question here in the office.

Babak Yektafar: Mr. Goldschmidt, this is Babak Yektafar with Washington Prism online magazine.

I guess you've kind of started answering the question I was going to ask you a little towards the end. And that is, you've mentioned a great deal about a lack of authority on behalf of IAEA and that Iranians have maintained, and that's also what I keep hearing when I visit, that they're being picked on.

Is there anything, immediate remedies so to speak, that you can think of that would come up with some sort of a consensus among these countries who are negotiating with Iran -- to come up with a set of rules that would also include countries like North Korea and so on and so forth, that would at least eliminate this claim that Iran is having, that they're just being singled out and they're being picked on?

Pierre Goldschmidt: Yes, absolutely. Absolutely. That's exactly my point.

I think the UN Security Council should adopt a generic resolution saying that when the IAEA has found the country to be in noncompliance and if the IAEA requests more verification authority, the UN Security Council would immediately, under a Chapter 7 resolution, provide this authority, additional authority, to the Agency. I think that's the solution.

And this would not be case specific and it would apply for North Korea, it would apply in the case of Iran.

George Perkovich: This is George Perkovich again. I just want to add to that, and I think Pierre's idea is very important and right on.

But one of the things that Iran has effectively done over of the last three years is shift the focus and make people forget that all of this got started because they are noncompliant with their obligations.

So they're not being picked on in the sense that no one is going out to countries that are in full compliance with their obligation.

Pierre Goldschmidt: Yes.

George Perkovich: Iran was found in noncompliance with its obligations and that's what has generated this action. And so - but the negotiation somehow shifted to, you know, is the world going to give Iran enough? Is Iran getting enough in, you know, in a bargain or so on? And it shifted away from the fact that Iran was found noncompliant, still has not answered questions that the IAEA has. In many ways, the burden of this whole exercise is properly on Iran but somehow it's been shifted.

Pierre Goldschmidt: Yes.

And if I may add one more thing, is, also no one has really learned the lessons from North Korea withdrawing from the NPT. And here again, it is a legal right to withdraw from the NPT in some circumstances.

And some in Iran have threatened the IAEA or the international community to withdraw from the NPT if there is any sanction against Iran. Now, what are we doing with that?

That would mean that all the material, the nuclear material, that the nuclear facilities would no more be - would not be anymore under Safeguards if Iran withdraws from the NPT. And there are ways to cope with that, at least from a legal point of view.

And I don't know whether in practice it would change much, but it is important from the legal point of view, every facility, all declared facility, whether there is nuclear material or facilities as such, like enrichment plants in Iran should be covered by, and this is a little technical, by in INFCIRC/66-type Safeguards Agreement, which are the type of Safeguards Agreement that you have in the non-NPT countries like Israel, India, and Pakistan, because those never end.

Those - as long as there is material that needs to be safeguarded, would remain under IAEA Safeguards legally even if Iran withdraws from the NPT.

So I'm amazed to see that those very obvious logical steps are not taken.

I don't know whether that was clear because it's a little technical. But most of the people I've talked to do not realize that Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement ends if a country withdraws from the NPT.

George Perkovich: Other questions?

Dave Ruppe: Yes. Dave Ruppe with Global Security Newswire.

I'm sorry, maybe this was discussed, I just came on. But would it be within Iran's right to withdraw from the NPT citing sanctions or would they have to cite some sort of a security threat that warrants it?

Pierre Goldschmidt: No, they would have to cite a security threat.

Dave Ruppe: But has anyone in Iran made that sort of a claim so far?

Pierre Goldschmidt: Well, no - they - no. I don't think they have. But then we will not know until they notify their withdrawal, if they intend to do so. But…

George Perkovich: This is George again. Let me add also.

I'm not a lawyer. My understanding from international lawyers is that there's some kind of a common practice and common legal understanding that one cannot withdraw from a treaty in order to escape the consequences of having

violated the treaty. And that withdrawal under those conditions would not be recognized.

So under the scenario that you're talking about, the only basis for withdrawal that would somehow be recognized is this material change in the security circumstances of a country, and there's a negotiating record on the NPT on this, but you can't get caught, be under investigation, and then say, "Well, fine, I'm out of the treaty, therefore I don't care about your little investigation or what happens." No. It's applicable for those violations even if you try to withdraw.

Dave Ruppe: Right. And I guess they try to make the claim that, you know, regardless of these other questions, they have a security threat that warrants it.

George Perkovich: They don't actually make that claim. And this is very…

((Crosstalk))

George Perkovich: Well, no, this is very important too.

You have to remember, Iranian officials insist they don't want nuclear weapons and that this is entirely a peaceful program. So they are not out making claims, you know, "Here's why we need nuclear weapons. We have security threats and so on and so forth," because they're insisting they don't want nuclear weapons and this isn't about nuclear weapons, it's entirely peaceful. So you don't get that articulation of a security rationale.

Dave Ruppe: Right, okay.

Pierre Goldschmidt: Yes, I have here the text exactly; I just tried to get it.

You know, the Article 10 of the NPT says, each party shall, in exercising its national sovereignty, has the right to withdraw from the treaty if it decides, it decides, that extraordinary events related to subject matter of this treaty have jeopardized the supreme interest of its country.

Dave Ruppe: I mean obviously a country that's going to that, before they make such a declaration, is going to pretend like they don't have a nuclear program and then, you know, all of a sudden they're going to say, "Well, maybe we should have one after all."

Pierre Goldschmidt: Well, that's exactly what the DPRK did, North Korea.

George Perkovich: I mean I think this is highly unlikely in the case of Iran and very different in that way.

Iran still wants cooperation. It still wants nuclear proliferation. That would be impossible if it withdrew from the treaty.

Pierre Goldschmidt: Sure…

George Perkovich: It would be abandoned by everybody. So I don't think this is…

Dave Ruppe: That's a good point.

George Perkovich: …a useful, kind of line of pursuit right now.

I think - let me just add something to -- again I don't know that I've seen written about, but there's partly a structural problem, and Pierre's, you know, one of the great experts to be able to address this.

There's no fifth amendment in the IAEA or NPT process. In other words, you can't answer questions without incriminating yourself.

And part of the problem, it seems to me, and it'd be great to get Pierre to comment on this, is this whole issue for example about the P2 centrifuges that he alluded to where Iran got a design in 1995, claims that it's done absolutely nothing with it until 2002, and this gap is a mystery that the IAEA can't solve and therefore keep - helps keep the dossiers open.

Well, one of the questions that arise is the following.

If in order to answer those questions Iran would in essence has to admit certain activities that were done by military organizations which admission would then be admitting that it's program is not entirely peaceful, in other words we're guilty as charged, they can't ever provide that information, because there's not - there's no amnesty, there' no fifth amendment, so it solves the question, they're guilty.

And so…

Pierre Goldschmidt: Well…

George Perkovich: There's a structural question here which is to say at some point, does the interest - the international interest in having the mysteries all resolved lead you to say, okay, your past sins are forgiven and we can move forward, or do we not do that?

But it seems to me this is an issue that's worth addressing.

Pierre Goldschmidt: Yes. But I think we have a precedent with Libya. And Libya clearly admitted that they had a nuclear weapons program, you know. And they allowed the IAEA to verify and have access to all places and people. And they even agreed to withdraw from the country all the sensitive equipment and nuclear materials.

So, clearly, the level of cooperation was such that although they were in noncompliance or although they admitted having a nuclear weapon program, there has been no sanction on the country, there had been only benefits.

So I mean you are right in a way. But on the other hand, if Iran suddenly says, okay, okay, now we've changed our policy, we - here is everything, if it's the case, and of course we're all speculating here that they do have something which has not been proven and demonstrated yet, but if they were to admit now a lot of - give more information, incriminating information, I think - and if the IAEA and the international community would be convinced that this is now all, I think the consequences would be positive and not negative -- absolutely convinced of that.

George Perkovich: Other questions?

Any other questions out there in telephone land?

Pierre Goldschmidt: No, not for me.

Woman: I guess not.

Michael Glenzer: This is Michael Glenzer…

George Perkovich: Okay, we got one more here. Hang on.

Michael Glenzer: This is Michael Glenzer, Exchange/Monitor Publications again.

I'm wondering where the Russian proposal stands right now with all the talk in the international community about getting a lot of (unintelligible) this proposal has gotten sidelined from the press reports.

What's going on, to what it's ironic? That thing, is it still out there and what are the details of the proposal as it stands at this point?

Pierre Goldschmidt: To whom - who should answer that one?

George Perkovich: Go ahead, Pierre, if you have a sense on the Russian proposal, where it stands.

Pierre Goldschmidt: Well, I don't really know more than what I read in the media.

I think the Russians as many others are still hoping for a negotiated solution, so their proposal is still on the table. But Iran has so far shown very little interest for that, as well they have - they didn't show much interest for other type of fuel supply guarantees or anything else that the Europeans had proposed.

But it's still on the table, and if they change their mind, I think the negotiation process can start again. But not if, they don't suspend, and I think the Russians have been clear about that, the condition is that they suspend all enrichment-related activity immediately.

Do you have any other perspective on that?

George Perkovich: No. I - my own sense is that, just what you said. Other questions?

Well, then I - we'll close.

I want to thank all of you for joining, but especially Pierre Goldschmidt. I think you understand why we're so happy to have him as a visiting scholar at Carnegie Endowment. He's got a fount of information and one of the more rigorous analytic minds I've ever encountered. So it's a pleasure to work with Pierre.

And he's also available through Jennifer here at the Endowment, you know, for follow-on and other questions.

Thank you for joining us.

Pierre Goldschmidt: It's a pleasure.

George Perkovich: And, Jennifer is there anything else to close?

Jennifer Linker: Yes. This is Jennifer Linker from the Carnegie Endowment. Let me just make two points.

We will - we have recorded this conference, and as far as I understand it, it will be available five to ten minutes after the conference closes.

In order to access it, you will need a pass code that I will email out to all participants. If you don't receive it from me, please email me at jlinker@carnegieendowment.org.

Following the recording, in about 24 to 48 hours, we will have a written transcript available; everything will be up on our Web site at www.carnegieendowment.org.

And I thank everyone for joining.

Pierre Goldschmidt: Thank you.

Woman: Thank you.

Pierre Goldschmidt: Okay.

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