

Iran's Position on Nuclear Controversy

H.E. Ambassador Dr. Ali Soltanieh is the permanent representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in Vienna. Muriel Mirak Weissbach interviewed him at the Berlin conference of the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt on March 28.

EIR: Your Excellency, the focus of the conference here in Berlin has been on the nuclear issue. My magazine *EIR* and the LaRouche movement it represents, believe that the nuclear issue has nothing to do with the conflict, and that it is being used as a pretext for a policy of what Deputy Minister Mohammadi called “permanent war.” We believe this fact has to be put on the table. What is your view?

Soltanieh: I have to agree with you that, for the last 30 years, almost, there have been on different occasions, different issues that have been raised as pretexts to put pressure on Iran. The U.S. has a hidden—or it has even announced it—an agenda of regime change, but they are looking to convince others, like the Europeans, to join. The Europeans should be aware of the fact, and be careful that they are not dragged into a situation where I’m sure the European friends will not have the same opinion.

Therefore, we expect the Europeans to be careful about the fact that, regarding the nuclear issue, though both sides were not fully satisfied, we have been negotiating for three years. Iran gave a positive response, by suspending for three years all enrichment activities. Iran accepted, and was the only country implementing an additional protocol, prior to ratification in Parliament. We were responding positively to the good intentions of our European friends.

Now these achievements have been taken hostage by the American unilateral policy. Therefore, there is expectation that now the European friends be careful that the multilateral diplomacy not be weakened more. The IAEA and its secretary general, who have won the Nobel Peace Prize, should not be further weakened. This issue, calling the UN Security Council to “reinforce” the authority of the IAEA, is misleading the attention of the international community away from the fact that when it goes to the Security Council, it means the dimensions of these purely technical matters will be changed into security matters, and the other items of the U.S. agenda will be highlighted. And now the U.S. is running the show and the Europeans have almost nothing to say there.



D. Calma/IAEA

Ambassador Soltanieh: “We cannot compromise on our inalienable right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy.”

EIR: So you propose to return to the IAEA as the proper forum?

Soltanieh: I am proposing it, and I expect that our European friends will spare no effort to put this back on the right track, namely to the IAEA. And Iran assures that we will fully cooperate with the IAEA and also with European friends, to negotiate the ways and means whereby the whole international community will be assured that our nuclear activities will be exclusively for peaceful purposes.

The only thing is, we cannot compromise on our inalienable right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We don’t want the others to come and say that they are “recognizing” this right. The right is already envisaged in the NPT. The only thing is to apply this right, under international surveillance, of course.

EIR: A proposal by the International Crisis Group was presented here. Do you think this could be the basis for making progress?

Soltanieh: As long as Iran’s rights to enrichment and application of its right to enrichment are not excluded, initiatives are welcome. As our President said, at the UN General Assembly, any initiative for enrichment would be welcome and would be studied. For example, the Russian proposal: We said, in principle we agree. Of course, there are various dimensions, legal, technical, and financial dimensions that have to be thoroughly studied. Of course we understand, it shows a good intention on the part of the ICG; they are trying to find perhaps a solution in this crisis. But, of course, there are many things that have to be studied carefully, in this respect.

The only thing is, the issue of R&D for enrichment, is irreversible, because we paid a heavy price for it, and we cannot deprive our scientists of it. But, as I said, if the issue is back on the right track, in the IAEA, things would be different and we can discuss it, excluding the issue of R&D, which should be continued, as I said, under IAEA surveillance.