



The Sabra Report

Major Progress Made in Nuclear Talks Between US and Iran

Amos Harel, Haaretz, June 7th, 2023

Recap:

America is nearing a deal to reduce Iranian sanctions in exchange for Iran slowing down its nuclear program. Following decades of annihilation threats from the Islamic Republic, Israel opposes any deal that allows Iran to maintain its nuclear capabilities.

The Context:

- ✧ Under the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Iran agreed to limit its uranium enrichment to 3.67%, the purity needed to run nuclear power plants, in exchange for sanction relief. Since the US unilaterally withdrew from the deal in 2018, Iran has enriched uranium up to 60% and its uranium stockpile has grown tenfold [1].
- ✧ Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu doubled down on his threats against Iran saying Israel is “committed to acting against the Iranian nuclear program [2].” Israel is believed to have conducted operations against Iran’s nuclear program including assassinations of senior scientists and cyberattacks against nuclear facilities [3]. In a rare moment of unity, opposition leader Benny Gantz echoed Netanyahu’s sentiment saying, “as always in these matters, all of Israel’s leadership and people will unite.” [4]
- ✧ The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) closed two investigations into Iran's nuclear program this week and drastically reduced the monitoring equipment installed at Iranian nuclear sites. Israel expressed frustration with the IAEA’s lax enforcement saying it could lead to Iran further obtaining dangerous nuclear material [5]. This week, Iran claimed to have created a hypersonic missile that no defense system can intercept [6], a clear reference to Israel's multi-layered air defense system [7].
- ✧ Although Israel has previously succeeded in destroying the Iraqi and Syrian nuclear programs, destroying Iran’s nuclear program without American support will be difficult. Iran’s nuclear facilities are scattered across the country and over 1,000 miles from Israeli Air Force bases [8].

Conversation Points:

- ✧ Can the Iranian nuclear issue be resolved without creating chaos in the Middle East?
- ✧ Will Israel strike Iran without US support?
- ✧ What incentive did Iran have to abide by the JCPOA following America’s withdrawal?
- ✧ What will guarantee Israel’s safety in the event a deal is struck?
- ✧ Will an agreement reduce the danger posed by Iran if their malicious intent remains?

Notes:

1. [On The Brink: Unpacking Israel’s Unilateral Strike Threat Against Iran](#), Keren Setton, Jerusalem Post, June 7th, 2023
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. [All Of Israel Would Unite To Support Strike On Iran - Gantz](#), Lahav Harkov, Jerusalem Post, June 5th, 2023.
5. [Israel Calls Out Nuclear Watchdog, Accuses Them Of Making 'Extremely Dangerous' Deal With Iran](#), Anders Hagstrom & Yonat Friling | Fox News, June 7th, 2023.
6. [Iran Unveils Claimed Hypersonic Missile, Says It Is Able To Evade All Air Defenses](#), Jon Gambrell, Times Of Israel, June 6th, 2023.
7. [Assessment: Cabinet Will Approve Strike On Iran If Netanyahu Seeks It](#), Israel National News, June 7th, 2023
8. [On The Brink: Unpacking Israel’s Unilateral Strike Threat Against Iran](#), Keren Setton, Jerusalem Post, June 7th, 2023

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