European Perspectives on the Nuclear Deal with Iran

January 23, 2014

On January 23rd, 2014, the Arms Control Association and The Lugar Center hosted a second discussion on the nuclear deal with Iran featuring the views of key P5+1 European partners and their respective positions on the deal and the path forward.

Caroline Hurndall, Head of the Middle East Team at the British Embassy, presented her state’s policy with candor. The United Kingdom believes that the nuclear deal with Iran, while not comprehensive, is a solid start and the best way to test Iran’s true intentions with respect to their nuclear program. The deal does not signal planned détente with Iran, but Iran’s current regime also presents the best chance at negotiations in thirty-four years. Hurndall said it was her government’s view that the November 24 first phase agreement provides time for negotiations on the final phase agreement and the key now is the make sure that the P5+1 states negotiate the best possible comprehensive deal. To do that, there must be a common understanding that both sides will honor and sustain their commitments, there must be unity amongst the P5+1 states, there must be political space for both sides to negotiate a realistic outcome, and economic pressure on Iran must be maintained. The EU has put in place limited sanctions relief as set out by the Joint Plan of Action, but will continue to enforce all other sanctions.

Denis Chaibi, Head of the Political, Development, and Security section at the European Union (EU) Delegation to the United States shared details about the EU legislative process to adopt sanctions and to enforce them. He noted the important role played by EU Member States who have been trading partners with Iran in the past and who curtailed such activity to keep with EU policy and UN resolutions. He pointed out some of the expectations of the negotiating parties in the regular talks that will take place over the next six months to conclude a final agreement. He noted that the other P5+1 negotiating partners, including Russia and China, were convinced that negotiations were the best means to reach a shared objective of a nuclear weapons-free Iran.

Speakers:

● Caroline Hurndall, Head of the Middle East Team, British Embassy
● Denis Chaibi, Head of the Political, Development, and Security section, European Union Delegation to the United States
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