The First Phase Nuclear Deal with Iran and Next Steps

December 9, 2013

On December 9, 2013, The Lugar Center and Arms Control Association hosted a discussion evaluating the November 24 nuclear deal with Iran. Bob Einhorn, Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution and former State Department Special Advisor for Nonproliferation and Arms Control, was involved in the negotiations with Iran from 2009 to May 2013. He examined the deal in the context of the current international environment: it's not perfect, but it is the best we can do given the circumstances. Iran is not going to give up its nuclear energy program. The next best option, therefore, is to stop the clock and “freeze” its current program until a comprehensive agreement can be reached.

Chris Griffin, Executive Director of the Foreign Policy Initiative and former Legislative Director for Senator Joseph Lieberman, recognized the merits of the Administration’s agenda, but disagreed with its end-state. For Griffin, a perfect, comprehensive deal would ban all Iranian enrichment and reprocessing. Its practical needs for nuclear energy are minuscule, and the number of current Iranian centrifuges dwarfs the number needed. This deal does nothing to address Iran’s other activities in the Middle East, such as its support for Hezbollah and other terrorist organizations. Griffin further argued that the deal sets a dangerous precedent and could lead to proliferation in the Middle East. And finally, the deal only imposes a modest freeze with reversible steps.

The speakers agreed that the United States should quickly adopt a credible, and public, response to any future Iranian breakout attempt.

Speakers:

- Robert Einhorn, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution
- Christopher Griffin, Executive Director, Foreign Policy Initiative