

Some Observations on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action for the Iran Nuclear Issue

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On July 14, 2015, after long and arduous negotiations, Iran and the six countries (the United States, Britain, France, Russia, China and Germany) finally reached an agreement on comprehensive solution to the Iran nuclear issue -- "*Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action*" (JCPOA), the crisis-prone Iran nuclear issue finally meets a comprehensive peace settlement. The Iran nuclear issue is not merely a legal and technical issue, but more a political one, and over the years has been a hot issue in international relations, concerns to the maintenance of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime as well as regional security and stability. Under the circumstances that poor political mutual trust and even hostility exist among the key players, the conclusion of an agreement is undoubtedly a historic achievement, which brings this rare difficult problem to solution. On the other hand, whether inside the United States or Iran, the agreement has met with respective domestic criticism, or internationally, there are some questioning voices. Whether it is a good deal, or a bad deal? Whether the agreement can be implemented smoothly? This paper, in combination with the background of the Iran nuclear issue, intends to do some discussions on the core contents of the agreement and the future prospects for its implementation.

I. A Brief Review of the Iran Nuclear Issue

Iran's nuclear facilities were founded in the 1950s, nuclear research centers, research reactors, nuclear power plants, uranium enrichment and reprocessing facilities were established with support of the United States and Western countries. Iran signed the NPT as

early as 1968, and signed a safeguard agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to put its nuclear facilities under the IAEA safeguards in 1970. In 1979, after the Iranian Islamic Revolution overthrew the pro-Western Pahlavi regime, Iranian cooperation with the West was interrupted. The Iran nuclear program immediately became a "problem", the United States also begun frequently accusing Iran of developing nuclear weapons under the disguise of peaceful use of nuclear energy, and applied unilateral sanctions against Iran. In 2002, there is media report that Iran is secretly building two nuclear facilities (Natanz underground uranium enrichment facility and Arak heavy water plant). Then the IAEA investigated into the Iran's nuclear activities, and identified Iran as a signatory to NPT "systematically" breached its safeguards obligations, and failed to report to the IAEA the related facilities, nuclear materials and uranium enrichment activities. Meanwhile, the IAEA also found out that Iran is engaged in a large amount of military-related nuclear activities, and requested that a series of issues need to be clarified by Iran.¹ To show the peaceful nature of its nuclear program, Iran gave certain coordination to the IAEA investigation, had suspend its uranium enrichment activities, and conducted several rounds of negotiations with the EU, and signed an additional safeguards protocol with the IAEA to show a flexible attitude. But Iran always insists on its right to peaceful use of nuclear energy, and refuses to give up uranium enrichment program. In 2005 coming to power, the hardliner Iranian leader Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had the uranium conversion activities restarted and the nuclear

fuel research work resumed, resulting in the IAEA report of Iran's violations to the UN Security Council in February 2006. The UN Security Council then passed Resolution 1696, demanding Iran to terminate all activities related to uranium enrichment in the fixed time. But Iran insists that its uranium enrichment program is matter of its national energy security, a natural and inalienable right to peaceful use of nuclear energy, and will only continue and expand. In order to force Iran to yield, the U.S.-led Western countries imposed the most brutal sanctions on Iran known in history. From 2006 to 2010, the UN Security Council passed 6 sanction Resolutions, placing the embargo on uranium enrichment, heavy water reactors and ballistic missile-related material, technology and equipment, freezing assets of persons and entities related to Iran nuclear program and ballistic missile program.² In addition, the United States and the European Union applied more severe sanctions on Iran outside of the UN framework, covering finance, energy, aviation, automobile, personnel, and other areas; almost exhausting all means in addition to the military ones; causing serious blows to Iran's economic and social development, Iranian currency devaluation, rising unemployment rate, trade disruption, dropping fiscal revenues, and humanitarian crisis and social unrest. In the meantime, there were incidents such as the Iran science and technology personnel assassinated and nuclear facilities attacked by Stuxnet virus. But Iran's nuclear program is not stopped, a complete fuel cycle system including mining, smelting, conversion, enrichment and so on is set up instead. The total number of the centrifuges for uranium enrichment was up to 19480 units, of which 1008 units are a new generation of centrifuge, 3.5% enriched uranium was 7154 kg, 20% enriched uranium was 196 kg.³ According to Western estimates, on this basis, to get enough nuclear materials needed to manufacture a nuclear weapon, Iran only needs 2 to 3 months time, this is also known as the "Breakout Time".⁴

After taking office, the Obama Administration tries to have dialogue with Iran. By solving the three detained Americans who strayed into Iran, and established secret contact channel with Iran through the Oman Government. Meanwhile, Iran in the severe domestic and international situation also had to calm down and reassess the achievement and loss of its nuclear program. Iran moderate Rouhani is elected president that enables Iran's policy adjustment. On November 24, 2013, Iran and the six countries reached a temporary agreement

--"Joint Action Plan", as a result, Iran freezes its uranium enrichment activities and nuclear material stock and stops advancing its nuclear activities at its Natanz and Fordow enrichment plants and the Arak heavy water reactor. The United States and the European Union partly lift sanctions against Iran, while unfolding 6-month negotiations on the arrangements for a comprehensive settlement. After two postponements, the six countries and Iran finally reached an agreement to comprehensively resolve the Iran nuclear issue on July 14, 2015 - Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

II. The Basic Contents of the Plan

The Plan includes a main part and five annexes totaled 150 pages, the core of which is to restrain Iran's ability to acquire enough weapons grade nuclear materials, and ensure Plan's effective implementation. The Plan's main part provides the principal rights and obligations of the parties concerned, involving nuclear activities, sanction lifting, Iran's civil nuclear cooperation, safeguards, entry into force and implementation, etc.. The specific parameters, requirements and procedural arrangements are specified in the annexes. The summary is the following:

1. limiting the number of centrifuges: Within 10 years, Iran will keep the total number 5060 units of the first generation centrifuge (IR-1) in total of 30 cascades installed at Natanz enrichment plant; cannot manufacture and assemble other centrifuges, and outdated centrifuges are only replaced with the original types.

2. limiting the number of enrichment plants: Enrichment activities can only be carried out at the Natanz enrichment plant. Convert the Fordow enrichment plant to Nuclear Physics Research Center, conduct no enrichment and R & D activities and retain no nuclear material; and carry out international cooperation within the specified scope. Keep six cascades of 1044 units of IR-I centrifuges, of which two modified cascades are for isotope production.

3. limiting nuclear R & D activities: The agreement does not prohibit Iran's R & D on uranium enrichment, but the R & D activities can not lead to an increase of the enriched uranium quantity. Within 10 years R & D is limited to only IR-4, IR-6, IR-8 three type centrifuges, and cannot engage in isotope separation techniques for the purpose of enriching uranium; the IR-6, IR-8 centrifuges manufacturing begins after 8 years, test only be carried out after 8.5 years, and cannot exceed the agreed quantity.

4. limiting the enriched uranium stock:

Within 15 years, Iran will maintain 300 kg of 3.67% enriched uranium stock, sell the excess amount to international buyers in exchange for natural uranium, or dilute it to the level of natural uranium. Enriched uranium between 5% - 20% concentration is required to convert into fuel for the use of Tehran research reactor.

5. limiting the Plutonium production capacity:

Arak reactor is to be re-designed and renovated according to the agreed program, and uses fuel of 3.67% abundance. The purpose of the reactor is limited to research on the peaceful use of nuclear energy and the production of medical isotopes. In the reactor operational expectancy, the spent fuel should be shipped out of Iran. Within 15 years, adding no new heavy water reactor and heavy water. In 15 years time, Iran is not engaged in, nor in the future intends to engage in spent fuel reprocessing, nor R&D activities that can lead to the reprocessing capacity building.

6. Strict monitoring and transparency measures: The Plan requires Iran to ratify the additional protocol, and to temporarily apply it before ratification. Iran agrees to have IAEA residents in Iran to implement safeguards measures; have all "yellow cakes" produced by uranium mines under control for 25 years, and the centrifuge rotors under control for 20 years; and establish a mechanism to ensure the IAEA to quickly move into a suspicious site in 15 years. The Plan also calls for Iran before October 15 to complete the execution of the "roadmap to clarify the past and current important matters" reached with the IAEA, solve the issues listed in the IAEA Report GOV/2011/65, including the possible military aspect of Iran's nuclear activities.

7. The sanctions lifting: In return, after the Plan passed by the UN Security Council and Iranian compliance with the Plan confirmed by the IAEA, resolutions targeted at Iran nuclear issue will be terminated.⁵ After confirmation, the United States and the European Union will also lift all relevant sanctions and restrictions. Annex 2 details the measures taken by the United Nations, the United States and the European Union in various related fields.

III. A compromise under high degree of difference

Based on suspicions, the U.S.-led Western countries view the Iran's nuclear materials production capacity as developing nuclear weapons capability, will have the estimate on Iran's nuclear

materials production capacity as an important basis to judge when Iran will have nuclear weapons, and for a long time refuse to accept any Iran uranium enrichment activities. Its highest goal is to completely eliminate the ability of Iran's uranium enrichment. While, Iran insists on, like other non-nuclear states, having the inalienable right to peaceful use of nuclear energy including the development of uranium enrichment program. The two sides exhibited irreconcilable contradictions on the uranium issue. However, the parties concerned have to make a compromise due to the political reality.

1. The parties concerned lower down their objectives

The agreed JCPOA shows that the United States lowers down its highest goal instead of eliminating Iran's uranium enrichment capability, only reduces and limits Iran's ability to enrich uranium, and extends Iran's "breakout time" (enough time to produce fissile material for a nuclear weapon) to a acceptable level. In accordance with recognized standards, to make an atomic bomb requires 27kg of 90% enriched uranium.⁶ The United States is convinced that based on the scale specified by the current agreement, the "breakout time" will be at least a year Iran needs, and this process is almost difficult to conceal, so the United States and the West will have enough time to respond. Previously, the "breakout time" was only two to three months.⁷ Iran, also under the harsh political realities, backed out from the position adhering to enjoy the same right to peaceful use of nuclear energy as other non-nuclear nations under the NPT, turned to accept strict limits on its enriched uranium scale, level and stock, and accept the IAEA long-term strict extraordinary safeguards. Although Iran retains some of its capacity to enrich uranium, it is only a symbolic reflection of the so-called right to peaceful use of nuclear energy, which is far from commercial scale.

2. Taking proper care for the positions of the parties concerned

Compromise also means taking care for the positions of the parties concerned, so it is inevitable that each makes its own statement: one party states principles, the other party states exceptions; one party tries to impose limit, the other party tries to counter restrictions. The entire JCPOA can witness obvious signs of bargaining.

Though the restrictions on Iran's nuclear capability is the general spirit of the agreement, when coming to its uranium enrichment program,

vision for the Iran's future is mentioned, i.e. Iran envisions that this JCPOA will allow it to move forward with an exclusively peaceful, indigenous commercial program, in line with scientific and economic considerations, and with a view to building confidence and encouraging international cooperation, at a reasonable pace, and with exclusively peaceful purposes, consistent with international nonproliferation.⁸ It seems that at first glance it is a completely normal agreement without any restriction, but at the same time compliance with the parameters restrictions provided by the agreement is emphasized. The Plan strictly limits Iranian uranium enrichment level, ability and scale, which reflects the will of the United States and the West; but the Plan does not require these extra centrifuges removed, which is obviously to take care of the Iran's demands; although these extra centrifuges remain, they are not in operation and put under IAEA strict safeguards, which also reflects the U.S. and Western counter-balance. The JCPOA provides strict restrictions on Iran, however, these restrictions are a time limit: limit the number of centrifuges for 10 years, development of new centrifuge for 10 years, the stockpile of enriched uranium for 15 years; the reprocessing for 15 years, and the IAEA safeguards for 25 years. And, the JCPOA emphasizes its implementation will enable Iran to fully enjoy the right to peaceful use of nuclear energy, especially the Iranian nuclear program will be treated in the same manner as that of any other non-nuclear state party to the NPT, the six countries cannot impose discriminatory policies and procedures against Iran.⁹ Although the JCPOA strictly limits the ability of Iran's uranium enrichment, yet allows Iran engaged in R & D activities in enriched uranium; while allowing to carry out R & D activities, it puts limits on models--IR-4, IR-5, IR-6 and IR-8 – and cannot lead to the increase of enriched uranium quantity, and testing activities can only be done after 8.5 years. Although the JCPOA strictly restrains the reprocessing ability, yet the medical and industrial isotope production is exceptional.¹⁰ Numerous similar wording cases can be found in this agreement

3. The art of wording employed

To exercise strict restrictions and supervision over Iran, the JCPOA is bound to involve the state sovereignty, rights and dignity of Iran. The wording of the provision is carefully designed, so that Iran can fulfill the obligations and also show its own sense of limitation. For example, in the spent fuel reprocessing, the agreement reads that Iran

"intends" to ship spent fuel produced by all the power and research reactors now and in the future out of the country for reprocessing; Iran is "not prepared" to engage in spent fuel reprocessing and reprocessing facilities construction.¹¹

Certainly, because of severe mistrust, the JCPOA and its annexes detail provisions of the related parameters, concept, time table, procedures and measures, and used quantitative enumerated expressions to minimize ambiguity, and to prevent disputes that may arise in the implementation. For example, on sanctions lifting, there are detailed provisions of sanctions lifting in areas such as finance, trade and other relevant areas and the responsibility undertaken by the European Union and the United States, the purpose of which is to avoid future frictions on nuclear-related sanctions. On civil nuclear energy cooperation, there are the detailed provisions of responsibilities and obligations of the six countries for light water reactor and research reactor construction and Arak reactor modernization, and all other related civil nuclear energy cooperation projects in order to prevent these normal activities from being viewed as nuclear proliferation and banned in the future. On safeguards: there are detailed provisions of verification objects, measures and procedures; in addition to the routine verification measures, the agreement also stipulates special procedures to conduct challenge inspections into the undeclared projects and military sites.¹²

In summary, for both sides, the JCPOA is adherence to principles and compromise of political reality, is a balance between a short-term goal and the long-term plan, and is also eclecticism between reducing real ability and maintaining potential possibility. These compromises are essential for reaching an agreement, but also will postpone contradictions to the future. If there is lack of compromise spirit in the future implementation process, a controversy will be inevitable.

IV. A Good Deal or Bad deal?

The signing of the JCPOA has been widely praised by the international opinion, and is considered a successful example of a diplomatic effort to solve a complex international issue. In the JCPOA, both sides have successful adherences and compromises, there is no loser. In view of the United States, for more than 10 years, despite continuous overweighting the sanctions against Iran, Iran's nuclear program was in constant development, especially the uranium enrichment scale continued to expand, and its level enhanced unceasingly. Just

taking the number of centrifuges in operation, which grew to 10000 units at the peak from 164 units in the period of George W. Bush Administration, and the installed centrifuges were as high as 19000 units. The agreement enables the United States for the first time to freeze and reverse Iran nuclear program; limits its scale of the enriched uranium, makes it unable in short time to obtain needed fissile materials to build a nuclear weapon; limits its ability to get plutonium through reprocessing and blocks another way for it to develop nuclear weapons. More importantly, the JCPOA establishes a set of extraordinary transparency and oversight mechanisms. The United States believes that in this case the possibility of a secret nuclear weapons R&D program in Iran is almost zero.¹³

For Iran, signing of the JCPOA is a major diplomatic victory, and shows the ability of Iran in the games play with major powers in the whole negotiation process. Iran does not only succeeded in forcing the West to recognize its right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, also makes Iran uranium enrichment and related R & D activities legitimate from being sanctioned, and wins the initiative for future development of peaceful use of nuclear energy. With the lifting of sanctions gradually, Iran will re-enter mainstream of the international community, which will create a better environment for its economic and social development. For the rest of the world, signing of the JCPOA is to eliminate insecure factors in regional security, and economic cooperation and trade with Iran can also be carried out normally.

However, from the negotiations to the conclusion of the deal, whether it is in the United States, or Iran, or Israel and some other Gulf countries, there are some noises. U.S. 47 Congressmen on March 9th sent a letter to the Iran leader saying that the U.S. next president will not recognize the JCPOA. After the framework agreement is reached, the U.S. Congress passed the Iran JCPOA Review Bill, demanding the JCPOA submitted to the Congress for review for a period of 60 days; some Congressmen insist on additional conditions.¹⁴ Internationally, Israel is the anti-deal vanguard, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu criticized the deal a "historical mistake", and he even personally addressed the U.S. Congress in attempt to influence the outcome of the vote.

Domestically, the Plan met with strong opposition in both sides, especially in the United States, the positions between the Republican-dominated Congress and the White

House are entirely different from each other. The main objections from the Congress include:

1. Restrictions are temporary, 10 or 15 years later, all the restrictions on Iran and the ability will no longer exist.
2. Uranium enrichment facilities are not removed, but temporarily concentrated and put under the IAEA supervision.
3. There is no limit on nuclear R&D activities, and even no limit on the new type of centrifuge R&D.
4. Inspections into military sites and non-declared projects, international inspectors can enter upon a request after 24 days, only to leave Iran the opportunity to eliminate evidence.
5. lifting of sanctions, so Iran can use the attained funds to support terrorist activities.¹⁶

These objections tell some facts, but have exaggerated ingredients, and more are the assertions based on their political positions. Their preconceptions are to describe Iran as a country deliberately getting nuclear weapons, simply equal the uranium enrichment capability including other dual-use nuclear technology to ability of manufacturing nuclear weapons, denounce the lifting of sanctions as support for Iran to engage in terrorist activities, and claim that this will leave Israel in danger. Some opinions are even lack of common sense. For example, on international inspectors into a site after 24 days, if it is involved in nuclear material activities, Iran is unable to clear the traces in this period of time, since radioactive contamination can stay for decades. Opponents also have a fatal weakness, that is, they are unable to come up with a reasonable alternative. They are more concerned about how to maintain and strengthen the containment and sanctions against Iran in the long term rather than concerns about Iran's nuclear capabilities.

In Iran, especially the Revolutionary Guards and some members of Congress also complain about Iran's over-concessions, view the signing of the deal as a defeat for Iran and express discontent on allowing the IAEA inspection into Iranian military sites.¹⁵

Nevertheless, the opposing views of the two sides, while restricting the freedom of the respective negotiators, but failed to prevent the final deal from being reached. And, from another perspective, the opposing views are used by each side to counter criticism in their domestic political debate.

V. The Prospects for Implementing the JCPOA

The JCPOA provides the specific rights and obligations of each party, and the 5 annexes detail the practical steps and measures that Iran, the UN Security Council, the United States and the European Union should take in implementing the agreement. However, no matter how detailed the provisions are, they are difficult to be implemented if there is no desire to perform in good faith. In other words, if the JCPOA is to be effectively implemented, Iran should not develop the peaceful use of nuclear energy plan into a springboard to build nuclear weapons, while the United States should not for ever maintain hostility to Iran, and make the Iran nuclear issue the tool to contain Iran and maintain its leading position in the Mid-East.

1. Recent progress

From the overall perspective, since the signing of the JCPOA, progress is smooth in all aspects. On July 20, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 2231, which recognizes the concluded JCPOA. The Resolution stipulates that once the work of Iran to fulfill the agreement is confirmed, the relevant sanctions will be lifted, but the missile sanctions should continue for 8 years, the conventional weapons ban for 5 years; and provides detailed steps and measures to lift the sanctions. After 60 days of review, the U.S. Congress tried to block the deal in failure. It is of October 18 that the JCPOA is officially implemented. The United States, the European Union are committed to taking steps to gradually cancel the relevant sanctions after confirming Iran's implementation. Iran's cooperation with the IAEA is smooth. Iran is committed, in accordance with provisions of the protocol, to accepting the IAEA safeguards willingly, has completed the "road map" reached with the IAEA, and clarified the pending matters in Iran nuclear program. On December 15th, the IAEA issued a Report on Iran nuclear program for the final assessment. The Report confirms that Iran had a series of acts related to the development of nuclear explosive devices before 2003, but these R&D activities in Iran are not beyond the stage of the feasibility and scientific research and mastery of some relevant technical capabilities, indicating that Iran has never reached the stage to have the ability to manufacture nuclear weapons; that Iran, after 2009, had acts of R&D on nuclear explosive devices, but is not found with transfer of the nuclear material used for the possible military aspect within the Iran nuclear program.¹⁷ This conclusion creates the conditions for the full implementation of the JCPOA.

2. The future uncertainties

It should be noted that the fragile mutual trust, complicated nature of the JCPOA, the political environment and many other variables make implementation of the Agreement full of uncertainties.

Firstly, the domestic political factors. The United States is dubbed the "three-government" nation, -- the legislature, administration and judiciary, and three institutions restrict each other. From 1979 up to date, the United States imposed 27 sanctions against Iran, 10 of which are the Bills passed by Congress, the rest 17 are administrative measures.¹⁸ To lift the existing sanctions against Iran and add no new sanctions, the Congress coordination is very important. On March 9, 2015, the statement in the letter by some members of Congress to the Iranian top authority that the U.S. next president can abolish the agreement is not a joke. The U.S. Congress is also likely to pass a new bill to impose new sanctions on Iran.

Secondly, the sanctions factors. UN Security Council Resolution 2231 recognizes the JCPOA and abolishes the previous sanctions, but also establishes a mechanism for recovering sanctions. If any party believes that Iran does not comply with the JCPOA may request the Security Council to vote on "Continuously Lifting all Sanctions Resolution", if any one of the Permanent Members of the UN Security Council veto, sanctions will be automatically restored within 30 days, unless the related disputes are resolved during this period.¹⁹ This provision makes the threshold for recovery of sanction very low. As long as the United States or any other Permanent Members of the UN Security Council are willing, sanctions can be restored at any time. And Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, clearly stated that sanctions against Iran imposed by any state, for any reason, under any pretext, including the "human rights" or "support for terrorism" in the future will make the Iranian nuclear agreement fail. This makes implementation of the agreement in a very unstable state.²⁰

Thirdly, problems in verification. Iran promises to follow the additional protocol signed with the IAEA, which gives the IAEA rights to whenever and wherever possible to inspect undeclared projects, including suspicious military sites. This is a highly intrusive arrangement, related to inspected country's sovereignty and dignity. Meanwhile, it is also extremely vulnerable to be abused. When to inspect and what to inspect are controlled by the IAEA. Although the JCPOA annexes provide for the start of the relevant procedure, including the buffer period of 24 days given to Iran, controversies

can hardly be prevented from emerging.

Fourthly, wording of the JCPOA. Despite the detailed rights and obligations and the specific parameters specified by the JCPOA and its annexes for all parties concerned, but as mentioned earlier, in order to take care of the positions of the parties, there are deliberately vague and even contradictory statements in the JCPOA. It will be difficult to avoid disputes around the interpretation of the provisions between the two sides in the future, thus affecting the implementation prospects of the JCPOA.

Fifthly, the Iran nuclear agreement timetable. Restrictive measures in the JCPOA have a timetable. Once the limitations specified by the JCPOA expire, in addition to the safeguards agreement signed between the IAEA and Iran, Iran nuclear program will no longer be subjected to the restrictions. If Iran strives for the so-called equal rights as other NPT non-nuclear nations, and goes all out to develop its uranium enrichment and related nuclear program, and if the United States and the West have not changed their attitudes on Iran, new contradictions will re-surface.

Sixthly, non-nuclear factors. Sanctions against Iran, nuclear and non-nuclear factors are interwoven, such as ballistic missiles, human rights, and terrorism, etc. If hostility to Iran is not reduced, the missile problem, human rights issue, terrorism and other issues can be the pretext to impose sanctions on Iran. In October and November 2015, Iran twice tested medium range missiles, which caused the dispute between the United States and Iran, cast a shadow over implementation of the Iranian nuclear agreement at a critical juncture.

VI. The Significance On the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime

The most knotty problem of the Iran nuclear issue involves political, legal, military, technology, security factors and others, from problem emerging to negotiations to the final reached agreement, the whole bargaining process is full of struggles and compromises, negotiation strategies and skills, and is a very good political textbook, which helps to deepen understanding of present status and problems of the non-proliferation physique.

First, the balance between rights and obligations. The nuclear non-proliferation regime itself is a balanced design, restrains non-nuclear countries from obtaining nuclear weapons, while

also ensures their rights to peaceful use of nuclear energy, and these rights naturally include rights to uranium enrichment and spent fuel reprocessing. However, due to the dual nature of nuclear technology, the risk of nuclear proliferation always exists. Simply restricting non-nuclear countries' rights to peaceful use of nuclear energy is not the best way to eliminate the risk of nuclear proliferation, so to ensure non-nuclear countries' rights to peaceful use of nuclear energy while strengthening international safeguards and supervision is the only way to solve this contradiction. Regarding the Iran nuclear issue, the U.S.-led Western countries change their attitude on Iran's uranium enrichment, which is both pragmatic performance, and also a return to the spirit of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Second, sanctions and diplomatic choice. The pressure of sanctions is undoubtedly an important factor to force Iran to the negotiation table, but the conclusion that the sanctions are the way to solve the problem of proliferation cannot be drawn. For more than a decade, the international sanctions on Iran became overweight, but Iran's nuclear capability had been continuously enhanced. Sanctions may not be as effective on other issues such as the Korean Peninsula. More important is that unilateral sanctions by the United States and the West reflect serious problems as far as the international law is concerned, wide use of territoriality not only affecting the normal international trade, but also causing serious humanitarian disaster on the sanctioned countries.

Third, based on suspicions but succeed with mutual trust. The Iran nuclear deal is reached under the conditions of confrontation and suspicion, most provisions are based on suspicions and hedging for violation from other side. The JCPOA main text and annexes, rights and obligations arrangements, and the implementation specifics and steps are all for plugging the loopholes, preventing the right from being abused or the due obligations being bypassed. But it must be realized that no agreement can be perfect, prevent all ambiguities and solve all the problems. Its implementation must be based on mutual trust. There is neither perfect system nor perfect supervision. Mutual trust is the foundation while goodwill is essential. So these are true for the negotiations, and even true for implementation of the deal as well.

Footnotes:

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