

A U.S.-Europe Statement on Iran

On February 17, 2005, a group of prominent European and American foreign policy experts issued the “Compact between the United States and Europe,” a detailed and comprehensive proposal for transatlantic cooperation on the key foreign policy issues of the day. The premise of the Compact was that the split that had emerged between the two sides of the Atlantic in recent years was deeply damaging to the interests of both sides, and that specific agreements on common policy challenges was both necessary and possible. We remain convinced that the partnership between the United States and Europe is critical to world security and stability and that the toughest problems we face are better dealt with when the United States and Europe stand together.

In that light, all of us were deeply disappointed by Iran’s rejection of the August 2005 offer by Britain, France, and Germany to provide Iran with support for a civilian nuclear energy program—as well as far-reaching political and economic incentives—in exchange for Tehran’s agreement not to develop its capacity for nuclear enrichment and reprocessing. The EU-3 proposal, which had explicit support from the United States, would have made it possible for Iran to acquire Western nuclear reactors and fuel for the civilian nuclear energy program Iran claims to need. Yet Iran rejected it out of hand, removed International Atomic Energy Agency seals at its nuclear facility in Isfahan, and resumed the process of uranium conversion.

As European and American leaders have said many times, an Iranian nuclear weapons capability would be dangerous and destabilizing. It could lead to further nuclear proliferation (in Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Turkey for example); it could provide cover for Tehran to pursue a more aggressive foreign policy (including through support for terrorism or armed intervention in neighboring countries); and it could be a fatal blow to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). Given Iran’s past track record of hiding significant aspects of its nuclear program, moreover, allowing Iran to develop enrichment and reprocessing capabilities—even under an international inspection regime—would be extremely risky. Doing so would leave Iran one short step away from a nuclear weapons capability—with which it could easily proceed, once the full fuel cycle was in hand, by withdrawing from the NPT and asking inspectors to leave.

The credibility of western nonproliferation policy is now clearly on the line. The European Union and the United States have a strong common interest in bringing Iran back to the negotiating table and persuading it to change course. The best way to do that is to make clear to Iran that it can win significant political and economic benefits if it foregoes a nuclear weapons program, but that it will pay a very big political and economic price if it does not. Such an effort will only work if America and Europe stand united.

Therefore, the United States and the European Union should endorse the following:

- *The United States and European Union reaffirm their determination to prevent nuclear proliferation and their insistence that Iran abide by its obligations under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, including by providing full information about its past and present nuclear program. They regret Iran's August 2005 decision to resume its nuclear conversion activities and call upon Iran to suspend such activities and to send overseas all materials produced since the breaking of seals at Isfahan as a basis for resuming nuclear discussions with the EU-3. The U.S. and EU insist that only a permanent and verifiable end to Iran's nuclear fuel cycle (enrichment and reprocessing) program can provide an objective guarantee that Iran is not working toward a nuclear weapons option.*
- *The United States reiterates its support for the European Union's nuclear dialogue with Iran. If Iran permanently and verifiably ends its fuel cycle programs, the United States would support Iran's right to import technology for a civilian nuclear energy program (including the provision of fuel and fuel-cycle services on a commercial basis); not impose sanctions against European companies that engage in civilian trade and investment with Iran; and enter into a dialogue with the Iranian government on regional security issues. The United States reiterates its intention to deal with the Iranian nuclear issue through diplomatic means while leaving all options open if diplomatic efforts fail.*
- *The United States declares its willingness to explore directly with Iran other areas of concern. These include the issue of bilateral diplomatic and economic relations; U.S. economic sanctions against Iran; Iranian support for terrorist groups such as Hizbollah and Palestinian Islamic Jihad; Iran's opposition to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process; Iran's membership in the World Trade Organization; and financial disputes dating back to the Iranian revolution. The United States and European Union will continue to support the efforts of the Iranian people to secure basic human rights and to build a functioning democracy in Iran.*
- *The European Union countries reiterate their willingness to provide Iran with support for a civilian nuclear energy program and offer far-reaching political and economic incentives in exchange for Tehran's agreement not to develop its capacity for nuclear enrichment and reprocessing. At the same time, they declare their readiness to impose meaningful penalties on Iran if it refuses to end its fuel cycle programs or withdraws from the NPT. If Iran refuses to reestablish the full suspension of all enrichment related activities and to send overseas the materials produced at Isfahan since August 1, EU leaders will support taking the issue to the United Nations Security Council and support a mandatory resolution requiring Iran to do so. If Iran refuses to comply with this resolution, the EU countries will support a UNSC resolution imposing economic and diplomatic sanctions on Iran, including a ban on new foreign investment in Iran's energy sector. The EU countries*

will seek consensus at the Security Council, but Russian or Chinese opposition would not prevent them from imposing sanctions on their own, together with the United States and Japan, if Iran refuses to end its fuel cycle program and live up to its NPT obligations. The EU will consider additional steps should Iran proceed with nuclear enrichment, withdraw from the IAEA Additional Protocol, or withdraw from the NPT.

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