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DEAL OR NO DEAL? NEGOTIATING WITH IRAN

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. WITTES: Good morning, everyone, and thank you for joining us. I'm Tamara Wittes, Director of our Center for Middle East Policy. I am delighted to be hosting you this morning for a discussion of the Iran negotiations along with my colleagues from the Arms Control Initiative also here in Foreign Policy at Brookings. And I think for all of us who follow the Middle East the pace and scope of events over the last week have been dizzying. Whether it's the back and forth U.S., Iraqi and Iranian role in Tikrit, the Saudi led intervention in Yemen, or the ongoing negotiating drama in Lausanne what we're seeing across the region is not merely the consequence of the breakdown of the state order in the wake of the Arab uprising of 2011, but we're also seeing a grand struggle for power across the region. And it's understandable that in that context regional states feel a tremendous stake in seemingly small struggles, but it's also understandable in that context why the significance of these negotiations in Lausanne goes far beyond the substance of the talks themselves or the specifics of what deal may or may not be announced or declared or described in broad terms later today.

In any event I cannot imagine a better group of people than the ones we have up on our dais today to help us understand not merely the specifics of what is going on in these negotiations, in U.S. relations in the region around these negotiations, in American politics around these negotiations, but the broader significance and symbolism of what is taking place.

A few brief administrative announcements for all of you before we get this conversation underway. First I want to point all of you to the place where our conversations go on in between these public events, and I invite you all to join the conversation on our Middle East blog, Marcoz on the Brookings website. And just over the last week we've had a dozen posts on all of the issues that I mentioned, but we've

had a very consistent focus on the Iran negotiations there with contributions from Suzanne, Bob, Bill, and others. In addition, for those of you who are watching via CSPAN or following us on Twitter at this event you can tweet questions to the panel when we get to the Q&A portion. Just tweet your questions to the Brookings Foreign Policy Twitter handle @BrookingsFP. And for those of you who are tweeting the event or would like to be part of a Twitter conversation around this conversation, please tweet using our Twitter handle for the event, #IranNegotiations.

And with that I turn the proceedings over Dan. Thank you all for being here.

MR. BYMAN: Good morning. And let me add my thanks to Tamara's. I don't think I need to tell anyone who has read the paper in the last couple of weeks the importance of the negotiations with Iran, but also the importance of timing right now. We seem to be at a turning point where in the next few days there may be a foundation from which to move forward, something that really will last for quite some time. Or conversely we might look back at these few days right now and say this was the moment when negotiations collapsed, when things that had seemed so promising no longer look that way. Making this more complex, in contrast, many negotiations, not everyone believes the deal is the best outcome. In both Iran and in the United States there are many serious critical voices that believe that a negotiated agreement is actually a much worse outcome than no agreement.

I'm delighted to say that even by Brookings standards we have a truly superb panel here for you. We have three people up here who have long been looking at different aspects of the questions they're going to address today. Our first speaker on my far left is Bob Einhorn, senior government official in multiple administrations, long working on arms control, and he's someone who is going to give us really the state of play in

what's going on with negotiations now, the unresolved issues, what needs to be tackled in the days as well as weeks to come. Our next speaker is Suzanne Maloney. She is one of our nation's premiere Iran watchers both in government and outside it, and will give us really Tehran's perspective on this, something that is often neglected on the American side. And our last speaker is not giving us a foreign policy perspective, but is Bill Galston from our Governance Studies Program, who is going to explain the political dynamics and ramifications in the United States. So together I think we're going to end up with a much more nuanced understanding of the issues that are dominating the front pages today.

So without further ado let me turn things over to Bob.

MR. EINHORN: Dan, thank you very much. Tammy, thank you. First a few words of background to the current round of negotiations in Lausanne. Last November the P5+1 countries and Iran agreed to a second extension of the interim deal they had reached in November 2013. And in November they set a deadline of end of June of 2015 for concluding a comprehensive nuclear deal. They also set a target date of end of March, basically yesterday, for reaching agreement on the key elements of a deal, sometimes been called political understanding, political framework. But the idea was that this March political framework would provide guidance to the negotiators in fleshing out all the critical technical details required in a comprehensive agreement by the end of June. Now since November the Iranians have played down the importance of the March target date. The Supreme Leader said they don't want a two stage agreement, they want a single agreement that will be worked out by the end of June. So they didn't place much importance on the end of March concluding date. The U.S. played up the importance of the March target. For the U.S. the March date was a key test of whether a nuclear agreement, a sound agreement was even achievable, of whether Iran would be

willing and able to make the necessary concessions to ensure that a sound agreement could be reached. Also for the U.S. the March target date assumed great political importance. Congress for quite some time has been poised to adopt new legislation that could have a disruptive effect on the negotiations. They agreed -- that is the key members of Congress agreed to put off any votes on new legislation at least until the conclusion of this Lausanne round.

It appears at this point that the complete political framework that negotiators hope to reach by the end of March will not be achievable. There has been some progress over the last six-eight weeks, and including the last six days in Lausanne, but some key issues are almost -- will be almost impossible to resolve in the limited time they have remaining. Deputy Foreign Minister Araghchi, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister, is a key participant in the negotiations, said this morning that no deal is going to be announced, you know, today or tomorrow. What will be issued is what he called a press statement which would simply indicate that progress is being made. After his remarks to the press U.S. officials countered the notion that it would be a simple, vague press statement. The U.S. side wanted a concrete statement with important details of what had been achieved. But whatever the contents of a joint statement that may be issued tonight or tomorrow, the U.S. will almost certainly prepare its own version of events, maybe in written form. It's not clear, but it will hope to brief members of Congress and inform the U.S. and world public of its impression about where the negotiations stand.

So what has the U.S. been trying to achieve? I'll mention some of the key goals. One, it's wanted to achieve rigorous verification measures, measures capable of detecting Iranian non compliance at both declared nuclear facilities as well as covert locations. And this would involve not just adhering to the International Atomic Energy Agency's additional protocol which provides for a much more intrusive verification than

standard verification measures, it would also mean going well beyond the additional protocol in a number of key respects. Second key goal is to lengthen from about the current two to three months to at least one year the amount of time it would take Iran to produce enough weapons grade nuclear material for a single nuclear bomb. And lengthening the so-called breakout time to at least one year would involve putting significant constraints on possible methods for Iran to produce fissile materials for a nuclear bomb. That means constraints on Iran's enrichment program as well as constraints on the nuclear reactor that Iran is building at Iraq. And, third, the administration wants a long duration agreement. This is important because there is already agreement that after the expiration of the deal Iran will be treated like any other non nuclear weapons state party to the NPT. So some if not all special restrictions applicable to Iran would go away at that point. So it needs to be a long duration. And the U.S. view is that it should at least be 10 years. Some restrictions should continue for another five years, and some such as the adherence to the IAEA additional protocol should be permanent.

Those are some of the key goals and much progress has been made toward these goals in recent weeks and months, and in fact in recent days. But there are some key issues that appear to remain unresolved. The situation is murky now because there in the throes, perhaps the final hours of this round of talks, not much official information has been released, there's been a lot of press speculation about the unresolved issues, but I'll mention some that have gotten a lot of press play whether or not they're fully accurate.

One issue that seems to be hard to resolve is the question of the phasing and timing of the relief from sanctions that have been imposed on Iran. The Iranians say they would like all the sanctions removed almost immediately. The U.S. position is that

sanctions should be phased out over time as Iran meets certain benchmarks in restricting its nuclear program and as the IAEA develops confidence in the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program. Recently the focus has largely been on the easing of UN Security Council sanctions. These are important because the UN Security Council sanctions include restrictions on Iran's ability to procure equipment and material relevant to its nuclear program. A second issue that has been difficult to resolve is on research and development on advanced centrifuge machines. This is important because if Iran is able during an agreement to develop high confidence in the performance of very efficient centrifuges, and once the agreement is over they can move very, very quickly to ramp up their enrichment capability and shorten significantly their breakout time. Another issue, duration. As I mentioned before the U.S. would like these restrictions to last as long as possible. It's been reported that Iran would like virtually all of them to end after the 10 year period. Another issue that has become prominent in the last few days has to do with the amount of enriched uranium in a gaseous form that Iran would be allowed to possess. This amount is a critical factor in calculating the breakout time. The smaller the amount of gaseous enriched uranium that Iran could keep, the higher the number of centrifuges that could be allowed Iran, but without shortening the breakout time. And for the last few months it has been widely assumed that Iran had agreed tentatively or not, but had -- you know, the understanding was that it had agreed to ship out almost all of its stock of 8,000 kilograms of low enriched uranium gas to Russia. This would be a very neat and effective solution to this problem. But just a couple of days ago Deputy Foreign Minister Araghchi said that shipping any of this enriched uranium gas out of Iran would be out of the question. It's not clear how this apparent change of position will be compensated for. There are other ways of dealing with this problem including by diluting the material from an enriched state to a natural state which is less than one percent enriched, but it's not

clear. And this was an issue that many assumed had been resolved before, but now it is an open question.

Final issue I'll mention is called PMD, possible military dimension of Iran's nuclear program. This involves the IAEA's investigation into certain past activities, activities conducted before 2003 that the IAEA and the United States believe were related to the development of a nuclear weapon. The Iranians have stonewalled the IAEA's investigation and the U.S. and its P5+1 partners have said that it's important that this issue be resolved. At this point, given Iranian stonewalling it's highly unlikely that the IAEA can fully resolve its concerns before a June deadline. And the question now is whether a schedule will be reached for resolving these issues once the agreement actually goes into force.

Why have the negotiators apparently fallen short of reaching an agreement on a complete political framework? I think the main reason is that the Iranians have dug in their heels on some critical issues. You know, they simply have not displayed enough flexibility to reach effective compromises on these key matters. Why? Some speculate that it's tactical. The Iranians may have concluded that the U.S. team was under so much pressure from the Congress to get a deal that the U.S. and its partners would make all the remaining concessions. I don't know if that's the case. It may also be not a tactical explanation, it may be that Iran's Supreme Leader has simply laid out some very tough red lines and no one is prepared to cross those red lines. But whatever the explanation the deal that -- or the solution -- the joint statement that the U.S. team will be taking back to Washington is going to fall short of expectations. There will be a lot of disappointment in the American administration, and a lot of skepticism in the Congress whether a deal will ever be concluded. You can expect in coming weeks a lot of interaction between the executive and legislative branches of government. The

Obama administration will try to make a strong case that sufficient progress has been made recently and including in Lausanne to justify a continuation of the negotiations and a continuation of the negotiations without Congress voting on new legislation. Again, many will be skeptical of this and there will be very strong pressures in the Congress to vote new sanctions laws or a Corker-Menendez bill that would require the administration to submit a deal to the Congress for essentially an up or down vote.

So the March round was designed to test whether Iran was willing to achieve agreement, whether a sound agreement was negotiable. And I think unfortunately after these six very intense days of negotiations those are still unanswered questions.

Thanks.

MS. MALONEY: Thanks very much to both the Center for Middle East Policy, the Arms Control Initiative for pulling together today's event. Obviously our timing is either perfect or just a little bit premature depending on where you stand, but I think it's a great opportunity for a discussion on what we know to be the likely outcome and I think Bob in particular for giving us that really comprehensive and detailed state of play of where things stand.

I was asked to talk a little bit about the view from Tehran which is always a bit of a challenge when you're sitting in Washington, but we have the benefit of quite a bit of discourse on this issue from the Iranian side over the course of the past 14 months while the negotiations have been ongoing. And it has been a fascinating discussion and I think that it does illuminate a little bit about where things stand from the Iranian perspective and how they're likely to continue to play out the remaining three months of the current stage of the negotiations.

I want to start by saying first that I think that there is a broader and

deeper political consensus around a deal in Iran than we sometimes hear, at least in the sort of conventional analysis outside Iran which is to say that this is not a controversial notion on the Iranian side. And the idea of negotiating with the United States and the other partners in the P5+1 is one that has been endorsed by the Supreme Leader time and again. He has provided his support to the negotiator repeatedly and in fulsome terms. So when we hear about sort of hard liners on both sides, opponents of a deal on both sides, I would suggest that in fact the Iranian debate on a deal is less fractured than the American debate on a deal at this time. And that's an important caveat to give. It's not to suggest that there is a unified position in Iran. There's not a unified position in Iran on any subject whatsoever, it's a very politicized society. And in fact there are a variety of viewpoints. And in fact I think it's reasonable to suspect that there are those within the current executive branch of the Iranian government, President Rouhani, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, who might in fact be capable or willing to embrace more lenient terms for a deal, more flexibility on the Iranian side, if they were in fact empowered to do so. That's a supposition that's often put forward. I have no evidence in fact to support it other than my interactions with them and my presumption that they have a certain leaning toward reengagement with the international community.

But let me just reinforce that I think that both Rouhani and Zarif are very much in line with the Supreme Leader's instructions on this deal. They have no interest in or willingness to bend from what he has laid forward in terms of the terms for a deal. They are not subversive in their efforts to negotiate and they're not likely to try to sell a deal that he has not endorsed or blessed. By the same token there are critics of a deal from the Iranian side, there are hard liners certainly within the Iranian political spectrum who are disinterested in anything that looks like a capitulation to the international community and of course to the great Satan. And hardliners who at the particular

moment in time are probably especially averse to appearing to strike a deal with a country that they see as leading a sort of encirclement strategy that has contributed to some of the instability that we're seeing in Iraq as a result of the Islamic state, as well as endorsing or backing the Saudi and Arab campaign in Yemen at this time. And so from their perspective they would undoubtedly like to see the Supreme Leader endorse less flexible terms, but they are not critics in the sense that they are likely to subvert any deal that the Supreme Leader does in fact give his sanction to. And so in a sense I think that once the Iranians can arrive at terms that are consistent with the Supreme Leader's red lines this deal will sell in Iran and it will stand in Iran, and it will be implemented as we have seen the interim agreement, the Joint Plan of Action, implemented in fairly reliable form.

But that said, obviously the Supreme Leader's terms for a deal are not the terms that the international community finds acceptable or amenable. And I think this is the fundamental gulf, that you have a set of negotiators on the Iranian side who simply don't have an enormous amount of flexibility in what they're able to offer, and you have an international community that is quite intent on trying to make the most of what does appear to be a sort of important opportunity from recent Iranian political history. We all remember eight years of Ahmadinejad and the difficulty both in having a sort of reliable negotiating position from the Iranians as well as having a leadership that was amenable and acceptable to be dealing with in a diplomatic fashion.

And so for that reason I think what the Iranians have concluded is that their primary leverage in these talks is their willingness to walk away, their willingness to hang tough, mostly because they have to. And they've seen time and time again that as they hang tough the P5+1, and frankly it's largely due to the creativity and the determination of the American negotiating team, but also because of the really close

consensus and cooperation among all six of the partners, that the international community comes back with terms that come a little bit closer to where Khamenei has set his red lines. And so hanging tough has been a strategy that has worked for the Iranian negotiators and I think that that's what we're seeing here again today. And I think we'll continue to see it play out.

With that I'll just make a point that probably bears clarification because so many of us watched the election of Rouhani, the endorsement of a greater engagement with the world and more flexible apparently negotiating position as a signal that -- you know, he had been elected to do a deal. I certainly thought that and said that and wrote that. But in fact Rouhani was elected to get a deal but not at any price. And I think that we've seen that quite clearly over the course of the past 14 months, that Iran will continue to hold fast to the terms of the deal that are acceptable. And that means retaining as much of the nuclear infrastructure as possible, that means obtaining as much sanctions relief as quickly possible, and effectively ensuring Iran's rehabilitation in the international community. That's the real goal here. And so you're seeing some of these terms both -- some of the sticking points both I think are a reflection of Iran's determination to hang onto this nuclear infrastructure, but also in terms of the sanctions looking for that rehabilitation as quickly and as securely as possible.

I would say that I believe that Rouhani and Zarif and those around him understand that Iran needs this deal more than the international community needs the deal. The Supreme Leader has articulated a position that Iran can in fact manage its economy without return to a pre-sanctions era and that resistance economy, reliance upon domestic production can in fact benefit the country by weaning it off its dependency on oil. Those are wonderful words and they are noble goals, but fundamentally Iran needs reintegration with the world. Rouhani knows that, Zarif knows that, but they are

prepared to try to restructure the economy, manage the economy even in the event that they cannot get sanctions relief. So they have their Plan B; their Plan B is in fact to go forward without sanctions relief. And they I believe are very determined and prepared to go forward in that direction.

Finally, let me just say a few words about the kind of tactical behavior that we've seen by the Iranian side over the course of the past few days. Bob referenced the shift or apparent reversal on the position on the export of low enriched uranium stockpiles to Russia. This obviously has been an issue that appeared to be settled and at that the Iranians by putting into jeopardy in the last moment created new obstacles to a political framework that only a few weeks ago appeared to be almost inevitable. There seemed to be a lot of optimism coming out of the negotiations that led up to this final phase, that there was in fact a pretty robust set of understandings, still a few remaining issues, but the real kernel that had been eluding the negotiators on both sides over the course of the past year or so had finally been overcome, this issue of enrichment had finally been dealt with through a fairly complicated formula that included that export of the stockpiles. Why suddenly shift positions? You know, I don't think I can look into the minds of the negotiators, but I would suggest a couple of possibilities. First I think that there is a real mistrust on the part of the Iranian system that the United States can uphold its end of a bargain. That mistrust has been intensified as a result of the ongoing friction between the Congress and the executive branch here, and by the efforts, determined efforts on the part of many on the Hill to suggest that any deal will not be implemented and that any implementation will not continue beyond the term of this current president. I think there are real doubts on the Iranian side about what they might be forced to sign and whether or not it will be in fact be upheld on this side. We also know that Khamenei, as Bob suggested, has said he doesn't want a two-stage deal. So in effect the price for

Iran of failure at this state is not terribly high. There is a lot of anticipation, there are a lot of people on social media who have been staying up all night and tweeting nonstop, and many of those are in Iran watching for some good news. But ultimately there is not political price to be paid for Iran if in fact this ends with a very vague statement. As Bob said the political price will be much higher on this end. And so it's an easy round for the Iranians to inflict a wound effectively on their adversaries across the table.

I'd also suggest that the issue of sanctions has been underplayed in our own discussion of the deal and its complications. We've spent a lot of time in Washington talking about centrifuges over the course of the past couple of years. Everybody had gained I think a better understanding -- not nearly as well as Bob and the real experts on this -- but a better understanding of a what a breakout timeline might entail. But in fact the sanctions regime is far equally complicated and from the Iranian perspective their own expertise, their own familiarity with the regulatory environment, with the multiple layers of U.S. unilateral measures, of European and multi lateral measures, and of course United Nations measures, and how to coordinate their unraveling in a way that is in fact beneficial to the Iranian economy, I believe has been one that they have basically been playing catch up on. And they've seen over course of the past 14 months with the implementation of the interim agreement that in fact simply signing a deal doesn't bring the billions back to Iran, it doesn't open the floodgates of investment, and it doesn't facilitate the financial transactions that are blocked as a result of U.S. measures. And I think that they've come to the party late, but are determined to try to ensure that they don't sell cheap in any kind of a final deal. And that is why some of the issues that really weren't front and center in the agenda of the discussion of this negotiation are suddenly emerging to become roadblocks at this late stage.

Thanks.

MR. GALSTON: Well, you've just heard the view from Tehran and now for the view from the United States.

I'm going to talk about two topics. First of all public opinion as a frame for these negotiations and for what's going to happen, and, secondly, more specifically possible action in the Congress over the next few months. Let me make four points about U.S. public opinion. First of all, stepping back from Iran and looking at American's attitudes towards the world in general in the past 18 months there has been a notable shift in public sentiment, a shift towards rising concern about American national security. Support for increased military spending now stands at the highest level since late 2001, and by an astonishing margin of two-to-one, Americans are now willing to support the insertion of U.S. ground forces into the Middle East to defeat ISIS if that is seen as militarily necessary. We have moved I believe into what might be called the post-post Iraq world of national security in the same way that in late 1979 we moved into the post-post Viet Nam era that the elections of 1980 revolved around to a very significant extent.

Point two, this willingness on the part of the American people to lean forward, to use force, is highly selective and that has an immediate bearing on the topic of Iran and the negotiation. Although Americans continue to see Iran as one of the arch enemies of the United States, that has not changed in decades, Americans do not see Iran as an imminent threat to the United States, and that is a crucial distinction. They see ISIS as an imminent threat, not Iran. And so there is massive public resistance to any course of action that would lead to a military confrontation with Iran in the near future. I've been sitting up here while the discussion has been swirling around me, and although I did listen it, you know, frantically analyzing a new Quinnipiac University poll that came out just this morning focusing on three key swing states of Florida, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, and nobody has been elected for president for a very long time without

carrying at least two of those states, and there is support in all three of those states, overwhelming support, for the path of negotiation over force. In Florida 71-18, in Ohio 73-18, and in Pennsylvania by a margin of 76-15. So there is indeed support for the ongoing negotiations with the Islamic Republic and about three in five Americans indicate their willingness to accept a deal along the lines that seem to be emerging in recent weeks until the speed bumps that you just heard about. And once again the swing state analysis, willingness to accept that kind of deal, 63 percent in Florida, 65 percent in Pennsylvania, 68 percent in Ohio. And now, if the test of intelligence is the ability to keep two contradictory thoughts in your head at once, here is the contradictory thought: Americans are in favor of these negotiations and in favor of the kind of deal that seemed to be on the table despite the fact that they have no trust and confidence whatsoever in the government of Iran. Almost two-thirds think that Iran isn't serious about addressing U.S. concerns. More than three in five say that Iranians are not negotiating in good faith. And a national survey that came out last week indicated 59 percent of Americans doubt that the emerging deal would prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. So yes to negotiations, yes to the kind of deal that seemed to be on the table, but no confidence in the Iranians and no confidence in the deal.

Let me now move to my second topic, Congress. And my hinge point is this, there is very strong public support for Congressional involvement in these Iranian negotiations, but the American people distinguish sharply between a right way and a wrong way for Congress to be involved. Strong majorities disapproved of the letter drafted and then sent to the Iranian leadership by the 47 republican senators. Almost nobody thought that that was an appropriate action by the Congress. On the other hand, and this is going to turn out to be crucial I believe in the coming months, 62 percent of the American people believe that Congress ought to have the right to approve or to

disapprove any final deal that's put on the table. And this when you look at it in a broader historical context is not at all surprising because at similar points in the actual or possible crucial decisions involving Syria, Iraq, and the Balkans, similar majorities of Americans said that Congress ought to have the right to approve or disapprove the action. Now in this context what are the prospects when Congress comes back from the Easter/Passover recess on April 13, which is the real moment of truth, not March 31?

And let me just review the bidding there very quickly. As many of you probably know on March 20 members of the House of Representatives sent a letter to the President of the United States defining their understanding of an acceptable deal. It had to be very long lasting, it had to absolutely block any and all Iranian pathways to a bomb, it had to institute full transparency, and interestingly it had to take into account "Iran's destabilizing role in the region" which was a direct critique of the administration's effort to decouple the nuclear negotiations from Iranian actions on the ground throughout the Middle East. And I predict that Iranian actions in the Middle East will become a major talking point when Congress reconvenes and there will be an effort on the part of the opponents of the administration's approach to link these issues which the administration has worked so hard to decouple. Now this House of Representatives letter was extremely interesting in no small measure because 367 members of the House signed it, including all but 7 republicans, and about two-thirds of House democrats. And there may in that context be a veto proof majority of more than two-thirds for some significant legislation in the House after April 13.

Now what about the Senate which has been the cockpit of serious legislative activity? I have in this thick folder a confusing swirl of pieces of legislation already drafted and introduced which I've read so you don't have to. And, you know, to reduce it to its essentials this draft legislation goes along three different tracks. Track

one, very simply trying to legislate Congressional involvement in the eventual approval or disapproval of any final agreement, draft final agreement that might emerge. Second, efforts to strengthen sanctions in April to bring about -- the supporters of this approach believe a better deal than would otherwise be attainable. And number three, various strategies for blocking or stripping the President of his waiver authority to relax sanctions at any time before a final deal has been approved.

Now let me just do in conclusion a quick diagnosis of the options. When Congress reconvenes on April 13 I believe that Senator Bob Corker, who is the Chair as you know of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and the lead sponsor of one of the key bills in this area, will proceed with his bill which would establish Congress' right to approve or disapprove within 60 days regardless of whether there is a framework agreement or not. And Corker has made it very clear I believe that he has deferred to democrats, he has deferred to the President, he will wait no longer. And I believe that there will be very substantial support for the Corker bill. The last count was either 65 or 66 senators, very, very close to a veto proof majority. If there is no framework agreement there will be rising support for tougher sanctions along the lines of the bill that Senator Mark Kirk has introduced.

And I would conclude with the fact that recent events in the Senate have dramatized the role of some senators. As you know Senator Harry Reid has made public his determination to sand down after his current term which means that he will be standing down not only as a Senator but as the Senate Minority Leader, and he has anointed and his rivals have accepted Senator Charles Schumer of New York as the titular head of the democratic party. Senator Schumer signed onto the Corker Bill and reportedly got into a very bitter argument with the White House when he did so. And the conversation was described as heated by both sides. Senator Schumer will play a critical

role in the last two weeks of April in determining whether the Senate in fact will insist and insist successfully on a role for Congress in the approval of any final agreement.

MR. BYMAN: Thanks to all our speakers; that was exactly my hope of how we would begin our conversation today. Before I open it up to the audience I wanted to ask each a brief question. For Bob, one thing that seems to be happening is these deadlines get pushed back a bit. From an American point of view is this a bad thing? If we're still negotiating in a somewhat similar way to how we are now a year from now is this a form of success? Is kicking the can down the road something that we actually should be very happy to live with because the alternatives are worse?

MR. EINHORN: I think the end of March target date was an artificial, self-imposed target. I think it put excessive and needless pressure on American negotiators. I think it would have been better to have adopted the approach supported by the Supreme Leader of looking at the end of June as the key target date. The interim deal that has been in effect since November 2013 has been much more advantageous to the U.S. and its negotiating partners than to Iran. The interim deal has frozen in all meaningful respects Iran's nuclear program and it has retained most consequential sanctions. So if anyone has an incentive to terminate the negotiations and ending the interim arrangement it's Iran. And I think that gave us considerable leverage. And I think it would be wise for us not to set anymore deadlines, but to be patient and use leverage we have to try to achieve a sound deal.

MR. BYMAN: Suzanne, you mentioned this decoupling issue; Bill mentioned it. One thing our Gulf allies and others in the region fear is that the nuclear deal is part of a broader alignment between the United States and Iran, it's not just about the nuclear deal that the United States is really switching sides effectively. I'm sure Iranians aren't thinking quite that broadly, but are they decoupling as well or do they hope

that if there is success on the nuclear deal it will have an impact on kind of broader areas of tension in a positive way from their point of view?

MS. MALONEY: The decoupling issue is an interesting one. Before I get to the Iranian perspective let me just note that of course it was the Bush administration that officially endorsed this decoupling by establishing the decision to join with the Europeans and effectively creating the P5+1 as a framework for negotiating solely on the nuclear issue, and it was always conceived of in that fashion.

There is this really robust conspiracy theory that suggests that the president is really all about trying to achieve a rapprochement with Iran and switch teams, effectively dropping our traditional allies of Israel and the Gulf States in favor of some kind of new alliance with Iran. I think that doesn't accurately reflect what the administration is endeavoring to do. I think that in fact there is a presumption that this is a very urgent security challenge to both the region and to our primary allies in the region and that's the rationale for the focus as well as the sense that there was an opportunity to make some progress.

From the Iranian side, you know I don't believe within the official political spectrum there is a readiness for rapprochement, certainly not on the side of the Supreme Leader. I don't believe that the security bureaucracy is looking for some kind of tacit or open alliance with Washington in its efforts to battle ISIS throughout Iraq and elsewhere. Obviously among the Iranian people though there is an identification of this deal with a real step forward. In this long-standing estrangement it would be a profound note of optimism for many who hope for some kind of a better relationship, and it will be interpreted in that fashion publicly within Iran in a way that obviously works to the benefit of the regime despite the fact that the regime is not interested in nor is it pursuing any kind of rapprochement.

MR. BYMAN: Bill, as you know, part of the Congressional letter was warning the Iranians that, you know, we have an election for a president coming up and if there is a new president he or she has the right to change the deal. Let's assume that a republican wins the next presidential election, what is your sense on kind of what might change in terms of an agreement and how this might be -- what would say the same and what might be different? Is this political bluffing or is this something that actually has a substantial threat behind it?

MR. GALSTON: Well, it depends on the legal status of the deal. If it's simply a political agreement between two heads of state that's one thing. If it has been ratified by the Congress of the United States that's a very different thing. And so I think one has to read the Congressional letter in the context. So it's always a serious matter when a president of the United States alters or abrogates an agreement with a foreign country. It's not a step that any president will take lightly. You know, there is a version of the legal doctrine of stare decisis that applies in foreign policy because the costs of the abrupt shift are typically significant.

With that said, you know, having talked about the deal may I talk about two other "Ds" very briefly that have already come out, namely the deadline and decoupling? The administration I think didn't establish that deadline because it wanted to, it established it because it had to. The administration has struggled and has just barely succeeded in maintaining control of the negotiations. And the price of that domestically is giving Congress a clear sense that we will go this far this long, but no farther and no longer. I believe the administration would have had an unmanageable situation on its hands in the Congress had it not established some sort of interim deadline and that's why it's there. And if the interim deadline passes, we reach April 13, and there is nothing that looks like a framework agreement, but just sort of a vague press release

and a lot of unsettled issues, I think the administration will in part lose control of the situation. So this is a game for very high stakes.

With regard to decoupling, 2008 is one thing, but I think 2015 is a very different thing because the Iranians are much more active in the region and much more visibly active than they were even in 2008. And so I think with that rising visibility the stakes in Congress have also risen. And I don't see any way that the administration can prevent some re-linking of the two issues.

MR. BYMAN: With that I'm going to open it up with a few caveats. First of all, for those of you watching remotely, again you can tweet question to use @BrookingsFP, which means of course those of you in the audience please limit your questions to 140 kilobytes. (Laughter) And please wait for the microphone and identify yourself when it comes.

So let's being right there. Yes, you.

SPEAKER: -- Feldman. I just want to thank you all for a very instructive and timely discussion. The only question I want to ask at the moment, Suzanne, is do you think the Iranians are correct that there is no cost to them given the political situation in the United States and the dramatically tense situation in the Middle East? I would just mention the gesture towards Egypt that was made by the President reported in this morning's paper as what I would predict to be a harbinger of things to come.

MS. MALONEY: I think you're right, there is a cost to the Iranians of a failure here, but it's not a domestic political cost for them. And so as a result it's one that is less significant for example than appearing to say contravene the red lines of the Supreme Leader. If in fact this move does reenergize an already determined effort on the Hill to intercede in the negotiations in one fashion or another, then it complicates the picture tremendously. But the Iranians recognize that they have little control over that

and that the President has little control over that. And so I don't know if from an Iranian perspective the movement that may happen as a result of a vague statement is any more problematic than the movement that was likely to happen even if there was a tremendously robust political framework that had been announced late last night. You know, the differential from the Iranian perspective is probably relatively limited. They know that the Congress is going to try to sabotage a deal, they know that the President has limited ability to stop that, and I think that they see that playing out almost irrespective of how they managed this deadline.

MR. BYMAN: Standing in the back please.

MR. MENCONI: Thank you; fantastic discussion. Suzanne --

MR. BYMAN: I'm sorry, could you identify yourself?

MR. MENCONI: I'm sorry, my name is Arn Menconi. Suzanne, do you think that if there is not a negotiation that is settled by April 13 or by the end of June that this could lead to some kind of conflict or war with Iran?

MS. MALONEY: I would probably call on my fellow panelists to give their own opinions. I tend to believe that all parties have overhyped the prospect of military conflict between the United States and Iran on the nuclear issue for many years. I think that we've seen that neither the Bush administration and certainly not the Obama administration have been terribly trigger happy when it comes to dealing with this particular issue. They have exerted an enormous amount of influence over Iran's choices and options as a result of other forms of course of diplomacy, whether it's the economic sanctions regime or some of the other covert campaigns that we've read about in the press that have impacted Iran's decision making calculus. So I do not believe that the choice is between a deal or war. I think that is a very effective political slogan on the part of the administration to try to galvanize support for a deal. I believe though that once we

walk away from the negotiating table we aren't likely to get back to a better position in terms of negotiating with Iran simply as a result of our walking away. What we've seen is the longer this problem festers the larger the Iranian nuclear program develops, and the greater the costs both to the regional security infrastructure as well as to the Iranian economy and to the stability of the Iranian state.

So I think that all sides lose and all options immediately become on the table and the situation becomes more unstable without some sort of an agreement.

MR. EINHORN: Just to add to that, Dan, if talks break down for whatever reason and whenever they make break down, I think the immediate tool the U.S. will go to would be to try to ratchet up the sanctions substantially. But the success in being able to get international partners to strengthen the sanctions will depend very significantly on who is to blame, who is perceived to be to blame for any breakdown. If the U.S. is seen as upping the ante of setting its sights on unrealistic negotiating goals then we will be seen as the party to blame. And I think it's going to be very hard to get key members of the International Sanctions Coalition, which include China, India, Japan, South Korea, to go along with us in strengthening the sanctions. Also even if we were able to get stronger sanctions the question is would it have the desired impact of getting Iran to make concessions that they've been unwilling to make for a year and a half now. I think it's quite problematic. Unless Iran is really seen as to blame for a breakdown I think it's going to be very hard to shift the balance of incentives here in a way that would get Iran to make concessions, and at that point your options begin to narrow. And I think at that point military options become more thinkable.

MR. BYMAN: Yes, in the front.

SPEAKER: (Inaudible) from Foreign Policy Association and Foreign Affairs. I'd like to bring it back to the current situation in Yemen. Which would the Saudi

prefer in your opinion, an Iran that has nuclear weapons but has its economy in shambles, even if they benefit from it, or an Iran that gets its sanctions phased out as you mentioned over time and has a better economy but no nuclear weapons?

And my second question is if Yemen becomes the newest failed state, stays a failed state, do you expect the possibilities that the U.S. will mediate between Iran and Saudi Arabia knowing that the possible deal could be which a new formulation to solve current crisis?

MR. BYMAN: Suzanne, I'm going to ask you to kind of take the one really focusing on kind of how Iran sees the Yemen situation and conversely how Saudi Arabia, what it kind of wants problem in Iran deal in some ways.

MS. MALONEY: I mean I think that the fear on the part of region is Iran's rehabilitation without its reform of its foreign policy and its regional policy in particular. And so an Iran that has been reintegrated into the international community, that is able to export as much oil as it can produce, and repatriate the revenues from those exports is one that is deeply disturbing for the rest of the region because there is really no evidence that a nuclear bargain is likely to alter Iran's regional interests or its calculations. We've seen from past experience that Iran has a sort of transactional approach to this kind of diplomacy. It has very much decoupled its nuclear negotiating strategy from the rest of its regional policy. And I think from the perspective of the region there's also an added concern which is that they don't trust the deal anymore than the American people do. They're widely convinced that Iran will at some point reach nuclear weapons capability irrespective of the outcome of these negotiations. And so for that reason they'd prefer to keep as much pressure on Iran for as long as possible in hopes of altering its trajectory within the region.

MR. BYMAN: Right there, yes. Yes.

MR. BIDWELL: Thank you. Chris Bidwell from Federation of American Scientists. My question goes to -- maybe my ear is a little tinny, but something between what Bob said and what Suzanne said -- and that's with regard to sanctions. And when I use the word sanctions I want to dissect between UN sanctions related to proliferation and U.S. sanctions related to economic issues as well as maybe even the state banking regulators of New York sanctions. And what I heard Bob say, and I heard it said by many others so I think it was consistent, is Iran's first position was they wanted relief from the UN sanctions. But do they really need relief from the UN sanctions or do they really need relief from the financial sanctions, insurance banking sanctions. And if so are they asking for the wrong relief, or are they maybe just not as sophisticated enough, thought about this? I was hoping you could resolve this conflict in my mind for me. Thank you.

MR. GALSTON: I think the most consequential sanctions are the U.S. and European financing and oil sanctions. If those are suspended early on in the process, even if they're not lifted in terms of statute, that would give the greatest boost to Iran's economy. So they want that and I think they could get that if they make early steps on their nuclear program. The UN sanctions for them, the Security Council sanctions have symbolic importance. You know, this is the international community finding them in non compliance and imposing strong punitive measure against them. So they would like these gone for political and other kinds of reasons.

From the U.S. perspective and the perspective of U.S. partners in negotiations the UN sanctions are important for reasons you alluded to. The UN sanctions include restrictions on Iran's import of critical materials that could be used in nuclear and missile programs. And the U.S. and its partners really don't want to see these relaxed early on, only down the road as Iran's behavior -- it's peaceful intent is verified by the IAEA.

MR. BYMAN: Yes, in the back.

MR. SABET: My name is Farzan Sabet; I'm a Visiting Fellow at George Washington University and Managing Editor to IranPolitik.com. So my first question is for Dr. Maloney. So you mentioned that Iran is seeking rehabilitation, reintegration into the international system and there is no doubt that they definitely seek to recoup some of the old revenue they've lost and be able to conduct transactions, but thanks in part to sanctions there's a big constituency that's evolved in Iran around the sanctions. And we kind of saw this type of protectionist economic thinking reflected in Khamenei's meshed narou speech. And we also kind of see continuing the escalation in terms of some of Iran's activities at the regional level. So for the Iranians to what extent is it simply about getting sanctions relief versus some kind of movement towards global reintegration?

And then the second question is for Professor Galston.

MR. BYMAN: I'm going to try to hold people to one.

MR. SABET: Okay. Sorry.

MR. BYMAN: We have a lot of people. So let's start with one. Go ahead please.

MS. MALONEY: I think when I say reintegration I mean primarily reintegration into the international financial community. Obviously there is a sort of dimension to this which gets to Iranian pride and dignity and the sense that I think was very deeply felt during the Ahmadinejad years that the management of the country had led to its pariah status in a fashion that was simply unacceptable to most of the political establishment of the Islamic Republic. This may seem a little bit comical because of course Iran has always been, or at least since the '79 revolution, has been something of a pariah here in Washington, but the rest of the world did not in fact treat Iran in that fashion and that was significant in terms of both the way Iran dealt with the world and its

own vision of itself. But I believe that the primary goal here is the ability to do business as usual as much as possible, and particularly with respect to the most consequential aspect of the Iranian economy which remains the energy sector.

MS. MACKBY: Thank you very much. My name is Jenifer Mackby and I was just curious, we've heard the view from Tehran and from Washington and you spoke about the possibility of abrogating a deal among two leaders, but it's really -- there's the talk of P5+1. I wondered if anybody has the view from Beijing or Moscow, we hear occasionally about France towing a hard line. If anybody could enlighten us about the rest of them. Thank you.

MR. BYMAN: Our panelists are experts on all so I'll see if anyone would like to tackle that. Bob?

MR. EINHORN: It is clear that the Russians and Chinese have been less demanding of Iran in these negotiations. They would like to see a deal concluded and most deals that the U.S. and Iran would agree to would be acceptable to both China and Russia. In terms of continuing the deal after its concluded and being implemented I think the Russians and Chinese would very strongly want to see this deal perpetuated for a long period of time. And that's one of the concerns of the critics, that if we begin we to see evidence of Iran cheating, nibbling at the edges of compliance, then some of our current P5+1 negotiating partners would take the view well, you know, let's pursue this, let's investigate this, but let's not be too quick to pull a plug on this agreement. And there's a concern that we may be under pressure to tolerate Iranian non compliance. But I think the Chinese and Russians also have a stake in Iran not getting nuclear weapons, and so they have a stake in ensuring that Iran meets its obligations as well. Of course all of the domestic political pressures would be in the other direction and I suspect that those pressure would be trump especially with relations between the United States and Russia

and their current condition.

MS. MALONEY: I just wanted to chime in on this issue, largely to echo something that Bob referenced earlier which is the remarkable coherence among the P5+1. This is historical in many respects. For most of the past 36 years the United States has had a very lonely position on Iran and has struggled to gain support of even its closest allies in moments of crisis for applying pressure to Iran. And in fact what we've seen is not just a really robust and durable U.S.-European partnership on the nuclear issue, but good cooperation from the other members of the permanent five UN Security Council which is particularly remarkable because it is still alluded we are in a period of really difficult relations bilaterally with Russia and yet the cooperation holds there are clearly different positions and there's a lot of rumors floating now about some distinctions within the P5+1, but the fact that we've made it this far without a breakdown is important and it really should guide how we move from here. And I think that isn't fully appreciated within the Congress in the way that it should be. Because if you simply compare our ability to impact outcomes with Iran, over the course of the past few years as a result of this cooperation, with the way that we struggled for many years before, we should understand the value of this coalition and our policy should be framed around sustaining it.

MR. GALSTON: Having said that if I could just venture one more comment. In the Congress there is a sense we have been held hostage in some respects to the imperatives of maintaining this coalition and also to the single minded focus on the nuclear talks. That we have been debarred or we've felt ourselves to be debarred from taking stronger action against Iranian adventurism in the region that we really don't like. So this is a sword with two edges and I think members of Congress are fingering one edge rather than the other.

MR. MITCHELL: Thanks very much. I'm Garrett Mitchell and I write the Mitchell Report. And I want to ask Bill Galston, come back to one of the beta points that he mentioned in his opening remarks, and that was that while there is widespread support for actions against ISIS and the deal with Iran, the supposed deal with Iran, that Americans see a sharp difference between the national security implications of ISIS as opposed to Iran. If I understood you correctly they see ISIS as a direct threat to national security, they do not see Iran as a direct threat to national security. And I think what I want to ask is the metaphysical question, and that is are they right?

MR. GALSTON: Well, I'll give you a metaphysical answer. That is it depends on what you mean by national security. You know, when Americans think about national security average citizens they think first and foremost about direct threats to themselves and to people like them. I cannot stress too strongly the impact of the ISIS videos on American public opinion. I think depending on how things go in the next 10 years we may look back on those videos and say that they were to this decade as the Soviet of Afghanistan was to the late 1970s. I mean you can really see public opinion turn on a dime. If they are capable of doing this sort of thing to people just like us, not special forces, but average people in the wrong place at the wrong time, then none of us is safe. However farfetched that syllogism may sound, it has a very powerful hold on the public mind.

I think in a broader perspective the outcome of our effort to alter our relationship with the Islamic Republic of Iran will turn out to matter even more than ISIS, but there is no way of persuading the American people of that right now and therefore there is no way of persuading the American people at this juncture that military force is an acceptable option vis a vis Iran.

MR. BYMAN: Yes, in the way back.

MR. MEYERCORD: Ken Meyercord, Worldox. With regard to war with Iran, aren't we already at war with them? Isn't sabotaging a country an act of war, and didn't we sabotage their centrifuges through the stuxnet virus? That along with the assassination of a number of Iranian nuclear scientists make it reasonable for the Iranians at least to assume they're at war with us. In this regard does the President have authority to commit acts of war against Iran?

MR. BYMAN: Anyone want to kind of take that broader question on? Bob, you are the logical person to ask having stuck you with kind of the U.S. perspective on this.

MR. EINHORN: I think you need to make distinctions between various hostile acts. I think using cyber warfare, you know, other kinds of coercive pressures are very different from bombing nuclear facilities. So I don't know what more to say.

MR. MOHSENI: Suzanne, thank you for your almost comprehensive analysis of where Iranians stand. One thing that was missing in your analysis was the upcoming --

MR. BYMAN: Could you identify yourself?

MR. MOHSENI: I'm sorry. I'm Ebrahim Mohseni from University of Maryland. One thing that was missing in your analysis was the upcoming parliamentary elections. And I was wondering how you think the fear that Rouhani would not be able to convince the Iranian people on how the deal actually made their lives any better, particularly if they don't feel the effects of sanctions relief in their own daily life. How is that going to effect the parliamentary elections and whether that fear is something negotiators have in mind when they're pushing for rapid sanctions relief? Thank you.

MS. MALONEY: I think the elections themselves are important and will be really interesting to watch, but I don't think it's any one particular election that drive

Iranian negotiating behavior. But you allude to a really important concern on the part of the Iranian side which is that there hasn't been a trickle-down effect in any significant fashion as a result of the interim agreement. There has been some improvement in the economic situation largely as a result of better management techniques by the Rouhani team that he put in place, but there hasn't been a sort of vast amount of new investment or growth in jobs. And this is going to be a real concern for I think the entire Iranian leadership and certainly those who want to sell the platform at the election, at the ballot box because it will take time, it will be very gradual. And there has been this sense I think among many Iranians that Rouhani came forward, he spoke in a very forthright and really at the time unprecedented fashion in favor of some kind of a better relationship with the world. He signed a deal, he spoke to President Obama on the phone, something that no prior Iranian leader had done since before the revolution, and so all of these actions in totality as well as his other efforts to reach out to the international community warrant some reward, warrant some end to the siege the county has experienced over the course of the past years in particular. And there is a frustration that in fact why haven't we seen that. We see that Iranians tend to be impatient with their elected officials; we saw this during the Hotemi period. I don't see it turning against Rouhani at this stage. I think he is still given a certain amount of running room, but I think we all should be concerned about a situation in which Iran finds itself with a population that doesn't see any benefits from its diplomatic outreach because what we've seen in the past is that a shift in Iran's elected politics can have an impact on its foreign policy and diplomacy, not direct but certainly one that can be very problematic. And that was the sort of -- the post Hotemi hangover was one that was very unpleasant for the international community.

MR. STOIBER: I'm Carlton Stoiber with the International Nuclear Law Association. The proposed arrangements for verifying compliance by the Iranians with

any agreement depend largely on the application of IAEA safeguards plus. In my own view the agency currently lacks the capability to really effectively manage such a program largely because of resources and also because of certain parts of its own agreement in the safeguards area. And I wonder if any of the speakers have a perspective on whether or not IAEA safeguards can be relied upon to clearly demonstrate that the Iranians are complying with their agreement.

MR. EINHORN: Well, Carl, you've probably followed the IAEA's monitoring of this interim Joint Plan of Action and the obligations under the Joint Plan of Action go considerably beyond what would be necessary to monitor the additional protocol. Going to uranium mines and mills, going to workshops that produce components of centrifuges, and so forth. So they're into an area that's beyond their normal verification mandate which is good, and they seem to have done a very efficient job and they have had to report on a monthly basis on Iran's compliance. And they reported in fact that Iran has been compliant with the JPOA. The comprehensive deal would be more ambitious. It would probably require many more sites, more intrusive inspections, access to military installations on some kind of managed access basis. So it would be stressful and it would be expensive, but the members of the IAEA, nation states that are members, have been willing to provide the resources to the agency to meet the expanded demands of Iranian verification. I think they would step up under a comprehensive deal. And I think the performance of the agency under the interim deal give every confidence that they could perform effectively under a comprehensive (audio skips).

MR. BYMAN: I'd actually like to give our last question to a panelist. So, Bill, please.

MR. GALSTON: This is a question for Bob. You've been publicly quoted

in recent days to the effect that the apparent Iranian pullback from the willingness to ship fuel out of the country is not just one detail among many, it's a very -- it poses some very, very significant problems for the overall regime that we were trying to create. So number one, why do you think the Iranians did it, assuming arguendo that there was a pullback, that there was something previously agreed to at least informally that was then disagreed to by one side. And (b), assuming that the Iranians stand firm on their new position, what would be needed to compensate for the withdrawal of that element of the overall regime?

MR. EINHORN: It's a critical element because it goes into the calculation of how much breakout time you have. And if you aren't restricting the amount of enriched uranium in gaseous form you have to get a much lower level of centrifuges. So it becomes much more problematic. Had the Iranians agreed? It's unclear. A senior Russian told me back in September that there was an understanding between Russia and Iran that Iran would ship out this enriched uranium. And I've spoken to a number of Americans who seem to have been operating on the assumption this was part of the deal. So if it was part of the deal, even tentative part of the deal, why did they back away? Well, we just don't know. You know, maybe it's tactical, maybe they thought that if they took a tough position on this maybe they could bargain for something else in exchange for going back to the original position, or maybe the Iranian team just found out that it would be tough to get support for this within Iran. I participated in negotiations in 2009 where the Iranians first agreed to ship out 80 percent of their enriched uranium again to Russia. Within two weeks after that agreement, and I was there in the room when they did it, they walked it back. They weren't prepared to do it. The Iranian negotiating team ran into a buzz saw back in Tehran for a number of reasons. But a number of Iranians were saying we can't allow any of this precious enriched uranium produced by Iranian scientists to leave the country. It's conceivable that they ran into a

political buzz saw back in Iran again and they just don't want to part with this material which has very little value, frankly. But anyway it's unclear.

So if they stick to this position -- and I don't believe the U.S. has given up on getting them to agree to ship the material out -- but if they stick to this position there are some alternatives. You know, one alternative is to convert the gaseous uranium into a powdered form and then it has to be converted back. There will be debate in how quickly you can reverse that process and one will say that's not adequate because it can be reconverted quickly. Another is to dilute the material from little less than five percent enrichment to below one percent, the enrichment level of natural uranium. This would be a better solution. How feasible it is, how much the Iranians would be prepared -- they're going to be continuing to enrich during the agreement -- they would have constantly enrich and then dilute, enrich, dilute, enrich, dilute. And they may wonder why in the world should we go to the expense of doing that.

So there are alternatives and I'm sure there are alternatives that I haven't thought of, and I'm sure they are going to be working that problem. They're probably working that problem today, but the best solution in my view would be for the Iranians to agree to what I think they previously agreed to, which is to ship the material out to Russia.

MS. MALONEY: And just say one quick word -- I know we're over time -- which is that from what I understand, and my understanding of the intricacies of the negotiations is far less detailed than Bob's, but from what I understand this sort of shifting position is representative of the way that the Iranians have approached the development of formula for dealing with enrichment which is that they appear to agree to one piece of the puzzle and then as soon as you move to the next one the first part of their agreement begins to collapse. And so I think this is -- there's concern about the negotiating tactics.

It goes beyond even the complexities of dealing with the stockpile itself. It goes to the reliability of the commitments that they're making at the table along the way since this really needs to be an incremental process by which many aspects are resolved and then come together to form one overall agreement.

MR. BYMAN: Thank you. Thank you all very much for joining us today. I think we've all emerged smarter after this hour and a half. But before we go please join me in thanking our panelists for an excellent presentation today. (Applause)

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