

Grossi's new opportunity ...

Despite such media hype, this never happened. Instead, it was decided to resolve the issues in the form of dialogue with the presence of Massimo Aparo, Grossi's deputy for Safeguards. Aparo came to Tehran last week and in several rounds of negotiations with the Iranian side, the issues that arose in recent weeks, which were caused by the IAEA's mischief and political games were resolved. Now, the IAEA director general is in Tehran concurrent with a time when everyone's eyes are on his Safeguards report, which has always tried to put pressure on Iran with claims about three allegedly undeclared nuclear sites in Iran. Political pundits believed that this is the main reason for the pause in the nuclear talks. In the last few years, Grossi has shown that he is a professional in implementing what the West dictates to him as much as his unprofessionalism and politicking in his reports on Iran. This is why he requested a trip to Tehran and even the exaggeration in the IAEA's recent report can be described as a pulse on the part of Europe and the United States to boost the nuclear deal revival talks atmosphere, even though no such words are said or even people like U.S. State Department Spokesman Ned Price and EU coordinator Enrique Mora continue to state that the JCPOA revival is not on the agenda.

However, it seems that this new opportunity given by Tehran to the Director General should be appreciated by the IAEA and Western countries, so that if they are really worried about Iran's stunning nuclear progress, would try to resolve the issue and revive the nuclear deal through a diplomatic solution and the use of diplomatic tools, which is the only viable way available.

As the recent IAEA report states, Iran's nuclear reserves are 18 times that of stated in the JCPOA. Iran also has adequate reserves of 20% and 60% enriched uranium to the extent that, according to the U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense, Iran's 12-month breakout to building an atomic bomb during the JCPOA era has now reached 12 days. All these nuclear developments, which can be worrying for the other side on the one hand, and the declaration of Iran's interest in dialogue and a diplomatic way to solve the issue, on the other hand, represent an important and great opportunity for Grossi. Until now, Tehran has witnessed nothing but unprofessional actions from the IAEA chief and he should think about his major role in resolving the existing nuclear tension. Grossi and his delegation know that the solutions to the issue of the three alleged sites have already been stated in the understandings that have already been reached and if there is political will, this issue can be resolved quickly. Yet, the important thing is the will, which apparently has not been witnessed so far. However, this trip can be promising.

Grossi, who returns to Vienna from Tehran on Saturday night, should publish his Safeguards report on Iran. The content of that report should be written in a way that it would not give excuses to the European and American parties and does not block the path to interact with Iran, as well as the behavior of the other side in the IAEA BoG. The meeting should not move towards the approval of a new censure resolution against Iran and must have a positive message for Tehran to continue giving diplomacy a chance to reach a final agreement. This is a win-win game for everyone. It only requires political will and moving away from the imaginary media hype surrounding Tehran and its internal issues.

Iran FM: Window for JCPOA revival won't remain open forever



● CNN

The Iranian foreign minister cautioned the United States that the window of opportunity for an agreement on reviving the 2015 Iran nuclear deal will not remain open forever, urging Washington to adopt a constructive approach to salvage the accord.

In an interview with CNN aired on Wednesday, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said Iran has informed the US through mediators that the parties to the Joint Compre-

hensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) are "on the path to reach an accord", but warned that this might change if the US side hangs back, according to Press TV.

"Our relationship with the IAEA is on its correct and natural path, and we have said this to the US side through mediators that we are on the path to reach an accord, but if the Iranian Parliament adopts a new law, then we'll have to abide by the parlia-

mentary act," he added.

"So the window for an accord is still open, but this window will not remain open forever," he added.

Amir-Abdollahian also made clear that Iran has been and is the most committed of all the parties involved in the diplomatic endeavors to restore the JCPOA, which was abandoned by the United States in 2018.

"The party that left the JCPOA was [former US president Donald] Trump and the United States," he said.

"The United States should not adopt a deceptive behavior and instead should return to the JCPOA and adopt a constructive approach."

He added, "The US party has been sending us positive messages through diplomatic channels, but in its media remarks, they made very deceptive comments that are totally different, and really, as the Iranian foreign minister, sometimes I have serious doubts."

The Iranian foreign minister noted that even though the administration of President Ebrahim Raisi sees some flaws and

shortcomings in the JCPOA, it has decided to continue with the dialogue in order to restore the multilateral accord, provided that all other parties come back to the negotiating table and do their utmost to reach an agreement.

Iran showed to the world the peaceful nature of its nuclear program by signing the JCPOA with six world states – namely the United States, Germany, France, Britain, Russia and China. But, Washington's unilateral withdrawal in May 2018 and its subsequent re-imposition of sanctions against Tehran left the future of the deal in limbo.

Elsewhere in his interview with CNN's Christiane Amanpour, Amir-Abdollahian criticized the United States for playing the blame game and accusing Iran of not having the "necessary resolve".

"I will tell you expressively that in the past few years, we saw that the US officials were unable to make a decision because of their own internal problems and the pressures they are under. They are still unable to make a courageous decision to return to the JCPOA," he said.

Tehran trip: Tough test

The director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) arrived in Tehran on Friday for talks with senior Iranian officials ahead of the next meeting of the UN nuclear watchdog's Board of Governors in March.

The trip comes at a time when certain differences remain unresolved between Tehran and the agency over the safeguards issues as well as the IAEA's claim of having detected uranium particles enriched to an almost 84 percent level in Iran's nuclear facilities. In addition, these differences have had their negative impacts on the talks to revive a 2015 nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Currently, many experts are upbeat about seeing the Grossi visit and his talks with Iranian officials turn into a turning point in Tehran's nuclear issue following the past bitter experiences.

Concurrent with expressing

readiness for cooperation with the IAEA, Iranian officials have warned that the agency chief should not let political issues and foreign pressures affect the technical discussions and cooperation with Tehran.

The standstill in the nuclear talks, concurrent with the intensification of the sanctions by the United States and Europe on Iran on different pretexts and, of course, the ramping up of Tehran's nuclear activities, appear to have convinced the negotiating parties, in particular Iran and the United States, that the continuation of the current situation fails to be in anybody's favor.

Within the same framework and prior to Grossi's arrival in Tehran, US Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Colin Kahl had described the JCPOA as the best solution vis-à-vis Iran. Echoing Kahl's remarks, the EU deputy foreign policy chief Enrique Mora also said the JCPOA is the best available option.

Also, the EU foreign affairs spokesman Peter Stano told Qatar's Al Jazeera news channel on Thursday that there is a consensus within the bloc on the necessity of continuing the negotiations and contacts with Iran. In addition, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian has voiced Tehran's readiness for reaching a nuclear agreement.

Grossi's visit ahead of the Board of Governors meeting and the Western sides' stances can serve as yet another test to see whether Europe and the United States are preparing to revive the JCPOA or would still seek to prevent the achievement of an agreement on different pretexts.

If the Western sides, like in the two previous Board of Governor meetings, would seek to pressure Tehran and issue resolutions against Iran's nuclear activities, the negotiations' knot would seem to remain to be a Gordian one, with the issue even getting more com-

plicated.

Following the previous meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors, the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) placed a number of new retaliatory measures on its agenda in response to the anti-Tehran resolution and the Grossi visit was postponed.

At present, however, The Wall Street Journal reporter Laurence Norman has said the United States and the E3 have some differences over the claim of Iran's "84 percent uranium enrichment", adding the United States is not on the same page with Europe about issuing an anti-Tehran resolution.

In remarks on Friday, US envoy for Iran, Robert Malley, pointed to Grossi's Tehran visit, saying Washington's reaction would depend on the results of the consultations between the agency's chief and Iranian officials.

He said following the IAEA's report of the trip, the next

steps will be taken.

In an address to reporters on Thursday, Grossi said it is important for us to maintain contacts and dialogue with Iran at the highest level.

He added, "We're recording alarming changes in the nuclear activities of Iran at certain points. The IAEA should have direct access to such points in order to study the situation on the ground and dispel doubts that have been spreading recently. The matter was also emphasized during our meeting with Iranian colleagues."

AEOI President Mohammad Eslami also said on Wednesday exchanges of delegations at the levels of experts and deputies had continued with the IAEA over the past two months and during the past two weeks, teams from the agency came to Tehran and exchanged views. One should wait and see whether Grossi's talks with Iranian officials would lead to the resumption of the nuclear talks or not.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Envoy: Iran will respond ...

He said the Israeli regime's threats are in direct contravention of the international law and the UN Charter.

The Iranian ambassador pointed to similar remarks by an Israeli minister, Yoav Gallant, on February 17, in which he made threats of employing military force against Iran's civil sites and critical infrastructure.

Iranian underscored that any Israeli military attack on Iran's infrastructure and facilities will have devastating effects on regional and interna-

tional peace and security. He urged the UN Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities in this regard, and unequivocally condemn the Israeli regime's warmongering statements and malevolent activities, which pose a real threat to international peace and security.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has made it clear time and again that it will not hesitate to take necessary measures, in accordance with international law and the UN Charter, to respond

decisively to any threat posed by the Israeli regime wherever and whenever deemed necessary, and to defend its national and security interests as well as to protect its people," Iravani emphasized.

The envoy said all those who aid, abet or otherwise assist, support and facilitate the Israeli regime to carry out a military action against Iran must bear responsibility and accountability for their role in such an internationally wrongful act.