



Secretary of State Blinken Says that the United States is in Talks with Its Allies About Getting Iran Back into a Nuclear Deal

In the aftermath of the recent Group of Twenty (G20) summit, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken has expressed that the United States is in talks with some of its closest allies regarding the prospects of getting Iran to return to the terms of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal. While Blinken and other officials have voiced hope for the potential reinstatement of the JCPOA, at the same time they have also laid out that diplomacy efforts are contingent upon whether or not Iran chooses to meaningfully engage on the issue. Subject experts have highlighted that discussion on the matter is slated to resume this month, and as such, many are pointing to this current period as a critical juncture if any substantial progress is to be made. Following the previous Trump administration's decision to pull out of the JCPOA, Iran has taken steps to further its nuclear program and negotiations have stalled since the election of Iran's new president, Ebrahim Raisi, back in June. The enrichment of uranium in Iran at an accelerated rate has troubled security analysts in the region, and therefore productive nuclear talks are one of the top foreign policy priorities of the United States and its major partners.

Four of the most prominent western nations in the JCPOA reportedly had a sideline meeting during the G20 summit in Rome to discuss where things stand with the JCPOA negotiations. After the meeting, U.S. President Joe Biden, U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, and French President Emmanuel Macron held a press conference in which they jointly agreed that Iran's efforts to block inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) had deeply hindered the negotiations process. They also concluded that the worrying pace of uranium enrichment in Iran had heightened the need for a diplomatic resolution to the issue. Ultimately, it is clear that the efforts to reinstate the JCPOA is an area where the world's most influential nations have consensus, and it appears that these countries are also in agreement as to the urgent need to act quickly and aggressively with potential negotiations.

Some experts have expressed concern over whether the talks in fact hold the potential to be productive and worthwhile. A fear has emerged that Iran is increasingly becoming more skeptical about the negotiations with the United States and its allies being worth the effort. In a '60 Minutes' interview with former Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, he claimed that Iran could not just trust the United States to abide by its treaty and deal commitments because of the dramatic shift in policy that may happen upon the election of new administrations. With Iran's election of a new prime minister, this attitude of skepticism towards the United States' trustworthiness is an evident element which is likely to only get worse, and thus observers warn that the coming months are critical to address the nuclear issue before any further deterioration in relations.

If the upcoming push for fruitful negotiations fails, it is highly improbable that any potential reinstatement of the JCPOA will take place. Iran will likely refuse to adjust or shift direction regarding its nuclear program if it feels that a trustworthy and long-term deal cannot be met. Due to the Trump administration's costly decision to pull out of the JCPOA, the current administration – as pointed out by Biden officials – has a difficult task ahead. Regardless, however, it is imperative that the United States and its allies maintain focus on the important subject of nuclear deal negotiations with Iran.