

World Powers, Iran in New Attempt at Nuclear Deal

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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World powers resumed efforts to clinch a preliminary deal to curb Iran's nuclear program at talks in Geneva on Wednesday, with Russia and Britain confident that agreement can be reached.

Seeking to end a long standoff and head off the risk of a wider Middle East war, the U.S., Russia, China, France, Britain and Germany came close to winning concessions from Iran on its nuclear work in return for some sanctions relief at negotiations earlier this month.

Policymakers from the six have since said that an interim accord on confidence-building steps could finally be within reach, despite warnings from diplomats that differences remain and could still prevent an agreement.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said: "We hope the efforts that are being made will be crowned with success at the meeting that opens today in Geneva."

Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said Tehran would not step back from its nuclear rights and he had set "red lines" for his negotiators in Geneva. But Tehran wanted friendly ties with all countries.

"We want to have friendly relations with all nations and peoples. The Islamic system is not even hostile to the nation of America, although with regards to Iran and the Islamic system, the American government is arrogant, malicious and vindictive," Khamenei said, according to his official website. A United Nations report last week showed Iran had stopped expanding its enrichment of uranium and had not added major new components at Arak since August, when moderate Hassan Rouhani replaced hardliner Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as president.

Western diplomats have kept much of the details of the proposed deal under wraps but said Iran would not win relief from the most painful sanctions on oil trade and banking that many believe finally forced the country into serious negotiations.

If an agreement is struck in the coming days, it is intended to be the first step on the road towards a broader settlement that would avert the threat a new Middle East war.

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