

French Foreign Minister Fabius Once Again Questions P5+1 Deal with Iran



French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius, Quai d'Orsay, Feb. 24, 2015

Source: Reuters

French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius is convening a meeting in Paris Saturday with Western and EU members of the P5+1 raising questions about the elements of the bi-lateral discussions between Secretary of State Kerry and Iran's Foreign Minister Zarif in Switzerland. The US and Iran have under discussion a proposed 10-year phased 'verifiable' deal to allegedly prevent Iran from nuclear breakout in less than a year. This follows Israeli PM Netanyahu's address before a Joint Meeting of Congress on Wednesday, March 3rd during which he called the emerging deal a "very bad deal". President Obama suggested that Netanyahu had not offered anything new in his address and that PM Netanyahu had not offered "viable alternatives." Back in November 2013, we [wrote](#) about M. Fabius with regard to the then proposed interim agreement noting:

The Local in France [reported](#) on Iranian Parliamentary members objecting to Fabius allegedly representing Israel's PM Netanyahu's emphatic position that the deal on the table was a bad one, "a very bad one".

Note in retrospect M. Fabius' concerns in November 2013:

[Fabius](#), in Geneva for what is now a third day of intensive negotiations, said earlier in the day there was "no

certainty" a deal could be reached and that Israel's "concerns" need to be taken into consideration.

Fabius told France Inter radio that "there is an initial draft that we do not accept... As we speak, I have no certainty that we can finish up."

"There are some points on which we are not satisfied," he said, citing the "extremely prolific" Arak nuclear reactor and the question of uranium enrichment.

Fabius also expressed concerns over Iran's stockpile of 20 percent enriched uranium.

Is this a case of déjà vu 'all over again' according to baseball great Yogi Berra? Note Fabius' remarks in a [Reuters article](#) requesting tomorrow's ministerial meeting:

Fabius said he had invited U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini and the foreign ministers of Germany and Britain to Paris on Saturday to review the state of the Iran nuclear negotiations.

"We are in favor of a solid agreement ... for now there remain difficulties," he told reporters in Riga where he was taking part in a European Union foreign ministers' meeting.

"There has been progress but as far as the volume, checks and duration of the envisaged commitments are concerned, the situation is still insufficient, so there is more work to be done," he said.

[...]

Fabius took a more downbeat view of the Iran talks than Mogherini, who said earlier in the Latvian capital that a

good deal was at hand in the negotiations.

“I also believe that there is not going to be any deal if it is not going to be a good deal. And this is something we have to pass as a message to all our friends and partners,” Mogherini said in apparent reference to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s criticism of the nuclear deal under negotiation.

Before we jump to any conclusions about whether Fabius’ call for stronger terms could forestall the proposed agreement to be reached by March 31st, we must recall that despite M. Fabius’ objections on November 10, 2013, an interim Plan of Action agreement was agreed to by the P5+1 14 days later in Geneva. Israeli PM Netanyahu [commented](#) on the interim deal:

What was concluded in Geneva last night is not a historic agreement, it’s a historic mistake. It’s not made the world a safer place. Like the agreement with North Korea in 2005, this agreement has made the world a much more dangerous place.

For years the international community has demanded that Iran cease all uranium enrichment. Now, for the first time, the international community has formally consented that Iran continue its enrichment of uranium.

Secretary Kerry [replied](#):

We believe very strongly that because the Iranian nuclear program is actually set backwards and is actually locked into place in critical places, that that is better for Israel than if you were just continuing to go down the road and they rush towards a nuclear weapon.

Perhaps, this time M. Fabius might convince his Western peers that Netanyahu’s original objections to the interim deal in November 2013 were reflected in his March 3, 2015 address to the Joint Meeting of Congress. This might put the brakes on

P5+1 negotiations headed towards a disastrous deal with Iran.