
Interview: Dr. Tim Guldimann

The ICG Proposal for Negotiation With Iran

Dr. Guldimann is the former Swiss Ambassador to Iran. He presented the International Crisis Group's (ICG) proposal for solving the conflict, at the Berlin conference of the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt. Muriel Mirak-Weissbach interviewed him on March 28.

EIR: Dr. Guldimann, where did the International Crisis Group initiative come from?

Guldimann: There was a discussion in which I participated in an American NGO, working together with leading American nuclear scientists. We had discussions with Iranians, and there, given the clear position on the Iranian side not to give up the enrichment, the question was: Is there any way out, where something could be done under clear conditions, which could allow us to accept such an approach, that the Iranians would have any kind of enrichment? The idea of a limited

enrichment scheme under very severe inspections and collateral conditions has been developed. Now, from there, I was in contact with the ICG, with Gareth Evans, and I suggested that the Crisis Group should work on this issue, because this was last Summer, and I was assured that this was going to be a major international issue about which the ICG should do something. They asked me to participate, and we started. There was also Bruno Pello, the former deputy to [IAEA Director General Mohammad] ElBaradei, Dr. Seyyed Mohammad Kazem Sajjadpour, [deputy head of the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic to the UN in Geneva], and of course, Gareth Evans participated in the final discussion, very substantially so.

EIR: I find it very exciting, because it's a new alternative, it is rational, it's in accordance with the IAEA and NPT, and it is not punitive. What do you think the Iranian response will be?

Guldimann: First of all, I want to stress that we say the best solution is the zero option—no enrichment—and we have to insist on this. I think all endeavors to achieve this have to be pushed. We think it is premature to say that is hopeless, and we support all that can be done to achieve this. What we have formulated is a perspective in case this does not work. The chances have to be exhausted, of course, although they're not very big.

In view of this perspective, we have called this a fallback position, which is the second-best compared to the worst-case scenario of confrontation. That is the setting in which we present this proposal.

EIR: Your view is to take a series of small, but real steps, instead of presenting maximalist demands, like stopping all enrichment. Now, the demand for recognition of Israel came up several times at this conference. Do you see this as relevant?

Guldimann: It's absolutely relevant, because we think that the threats presented by President Ahmadinejad were very negative in the context of these negotiations, and everything is linked with every other. However, we did not enter this explicitly. We think a major condition for any success for a negotiated solution of the problem can only be achieved by a far more active engagement by the U.S. Engagement by the U.S., of course, brings these issues on the table. And we could not imagine that that aspect would *not* sooner or later come up.

My personal position on this, of course, is: We have to see that to put it at the beginning, might be somewhat difficult. But I would not exclude that, if something is happening, we see a very, very small starting point in Iraq with these talks between [U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay] Khalilzad and the Iranians. If this is gaining some pace, definitely the issue of Israel has to come on the table. And, the Iranians are not



mfa.gov.ir

Dr. Tim Guldemann (right) with Iranian Foreign Minister Dr. Kamal Kharrazi, at the end of Guldemann's posting as Swiss Ambassador to Tehran, in 2004.

EIR: Mr. Brzezinski last night, when he was asked about the ICG report, said that he endorsed it, because he is a member of the board of the ICG. He's also a member of the policy-making circles—

Guldemann: —the Establishment.

EIR: —the Establishment, yes, in the U.S. Does his association with this mean that there is a push from certain Establishment circles for a shift in U.S. policy?

Guldemann: I think it is not so much a question of this proposal. It's a question of looking at Iran: Accept the fact that it's a regional power; accept the fact that there is a development that has to be taken seriously, because it is dangerous; and be realistic about what could be done to get it under control. We consider this proposal as a contribution to a general discussion. We don't say that it has to be, that it is the solution—for God's sake, no. It can be anywhere. I just hope that there is a solution.

EIR: Because you said that a military solution would be a total disaster.

Guldemann: That's my present conviction.

Just on the nuclear issue, my assessment—we don't have it in the report—but my personal assessment is that we have to make the distinction between the will of having the military option on the Iranian side—well, we have to see what it means. It has been said that that means they would be pregnant, and one can't be a little bit pregnant. I think they are already pregnant, but the question is, what does the baby look like? And if we accept a capability—they have it in a way, they want to work on that—we have to see under what conditions they can be, let's say, taken into an agreement, on such conditions that we have it under control. That is what we have to work on, and that is what the discussion is about.

stupid. They know, in the end, they have to be realistic. But, they're also *bazaaris*. And that is something we do not understand, that such a fundamental, absolutely clear issue, such as, just to look at the world map and to accept the realities, such as the existence of Israel, is not something we can negotiate on—but, well, we have to deal with the *bazaaris* attitude, that's also a fact.

EIR: What is your view of the U.S. attitude now? Is it monolithic? Is there a clear line in the government? Has your report been considered in any official way by the government, the State Department, or the Congress? Would you present it to the Congress?

Guldemann: I don't know. The only perception I have is, it's open. And everything should be done to keep it open, and to see what a constructive role could be played. What we see, and that has been said at this conference in Berlin over the last two days, is that the U.S. position moved from a very skeptical, to a very supportive attitude toward the EU approach. And this in itself is a move. We also see the move that, two years ago, the U.S. was clearly against any kind of nuclear activity in Iran. The current position of the U.S. Administration is to say, okay, peaceful use of nuclear energy, no problem. We should be optimistic about a possibility of flexibility, and I think it's open. So all has to be done to move it in this direction.

HOTLINE

LaRouche and EIR Staff
Recorded Briefings
—24 Hours Daily
918-222-7201, Box 595