

## **The 2012 Democratic Party of Virginia State Convention Supports President Obama's Efforts for Diplomacy with Iran**

### **Background**

The Obama administration has pursued a paradigm shift from the previous administration's pattern of coercive diplomacy toward Iran that precluded our diplomats from engaging with Iranian diplomats.

In 2009 President Barack Obama promised in his new year address to Iran that he was committed to a new diplomacy, and he has on numerous occasions since asserted "our offer of comprehensive contact and dialogue."

The consensus documented in the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) by 16 US national intelligence agencies in December of 2007, reaffirmed in May of 2008 and again in 2011, is that Iran ceased its nuclear weapons program in 2003.

In February 2012, The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reported the "agency has been able to continue to verify" that Iran has not diverted any of its declared nuclear materials to military use.

American officials insist that Iran's progress has been halting at best, and a November, 2011 IAEA report also shows that despite Iran's repeated boasts, it is still having trouble deploying significant amounts of next-generation equipment to make fuel. The United States also argues that Iran's program has a number of vulnerabilities should it decide to develop a bomb. American intelligence officials say they do not believe Iranian leaders have made that decision.

The Iran-Western powers dialogue is showing promising signs. In mid-April, diplomats from Iran, the United States and other world powers met in Istanbul, Turkey, to discuss Iran's nuclear program. The talks went well and were a turning point in the current American thinking about Iran as Iranian negotiators appeared more flexible and open to resolving the crisis.

Talks resumed in Baghdad on May 23, and Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khomeini and other Iranian leaders welcomed them. Officials on both sides said they hope to leave Baghdad with a clear framework for future talks and potential dealmaking, and Iran has tentatively agreed to allow U.N. inspectors to restart probes into a military base with suspected links to nuclear arms-related tests.

Given no concrete evidence of imminent danger from Iran, it is in US national interest to give the Obama administration's engagement with Iran a chance to succeed.

### **Action**

The 2012 Democratic Party of Virginia State Convention urges the US Congress to support the President's efforts to move forward with diplomacy, and to oppose legislation that would undermine his diplomatic efforts.