

# Double Overtime: Iran Nuclear Talks Extended Again

BY MATTHEW LEE AND GEORGE JAHN  
Associated Press

LAUSANNE, Switzerland — With even a vague outline of an Iran nuclear deal eluding their grasp, negotiators headed for double overtime Wednesday night in a marathon attempt to find common ground for a more important task — forging a final deal by the end of June.

Iran and six world powers had cited progress in abandoning their March 31 deadline for the basic understanding that would prepare the ground for a new phase of negotiations on a substantive deal. But as differences persisted into late Wednesday, the State Department announced that Secretary of State John Kerry was postponing his departure and would remain until at least Thursday morning.

The talks — the latest in more than a decade of diplomatic efforts to curb Iran's nuclear prowess — will hit the weeklong mark on Thursday, with diplomats from the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council and Germany scrambling to reach a framework accord with Iran.

"We continue to make progress but have not reached a political understanding," spokeswoman Marie Harf said in announcing Kerry's decision.

German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said negotiators were still facing a "tough struggle."

A French diplomat said French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius was heading for

Lausanne less than a day after he departed. Asked why, the diplomat referred a reporter to the minister's comments earlier in the day when he said he would come back if there were chances for a deal.

At the same time, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammed Javad Zarif accused his country's negotiating partners, particularly the U.S., of having "defective" political will in the talks.

"I've always said that an agreement and pressure do not go together, they are mutually exclusive," he told reporters. "So our friends need to decide whether they want to be with Iran based on respect or whether they want to continue based on pressure."

The negotiators' intention is to produce a joint statement outlining general political commitments to resolve concerns about the Iranians' nuclear program in exchange for relief of economic sanctions against Iran. In addition, they are trying to fashion other documents that would lay out in more detail the steps they must take by June 30 to meet those goals.

But Iran has pushed back, demanding a general statement with few specifics. That is politically unpalatable for the Obama administration, which must convince a hostile Congress that it has made progress in the talks so lawmakers do not enact new sanctions that could destroy the negotiations.

By blowing through self-imposed deadlines, Obama risks further antagonizing lawmakers in both parties who are poised to take their own action to upend a deal if they

determine the president has been too conciliatory.

The initial response to the extensions from Republicans suggested they had already come to that conclusion.

"It is clear, the negotiations are not going well," said Sens. John McCain and Lindsey Graham in a statement. "At every step, the Iranians appear intent on retaining the capacity to achieve a nuclear weapon."

Iran's Zarif insisted the result of this round of talks "will not be more than a statement." But a senior Western official said Iran's negotiating partners would not accept a document that contained no details. The official was not authorized to speak to the negotiations by name and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Deputy Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi named differences on sanctions relief as one dispute — but also suggested some softening of Tehran's long-term insistence that all sanctions be lifted immediately once a final deal takes effect.

He told Iranian TV that economic, financial, oil and bank sanctions imposed by the U.S., the European Union and others should be done away with as "the first step of the deal." Alluding to separate U.N. sanctions, he said a separate "framework" was needed for them.

Araghchi has spoken of such an arrangement before. But both Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani have since demanded full and total sanctions lifting, and the floating of

the approach now suggested an Iranian shift.

Araghchi also rejected U.S. demands of strict controls on Iran's uranium enrichment-related research and development, saying such activities "should continue."

The U.S. and its negotiating partners want to crimp Iranian efforts to improve the performance of centrifuges that enrich uranium because advancing the technology could let Iran produce material that could be used to arm a nuclear weapon much more quickly than at present.

The additional documents the U.S. wants would allow the sides to make the case that the next round of talks will not simply be a continuation of negotiations that have already been twice extended since an interim agreement between Iran, the United States, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany was concluded in 2013. President Barack Obama and other leaders, including Iran's, have said they are not interested in a third extension.

Meanwhile, the White House says new sanctions could not only scuttle further diplomatic efforts to contain Iran's nuclear work but possibly lead Israel to act on threats to use military force to accomplish that goal.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has campaigned tirelessly for months against the emerging agreement, said it would "ensure a bad deal that would endanger Israel, the Middle East and the peace of the world."

## Reid's Retirement Sets Off Struggles

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid's decision to retire has sparked a very public feud between the No. 2 and No. 3 Senate Democrats, Dick Durbin of Illinois and Chuck Schumer of New York.

The two are longtime colleagues and former housemates in a group home on Capitol Hill who have clashed for power in the past.

This time, Durbin stood aside in the hours before Reid's retirement became public Friday morning, throwing his backing to Schumer and allowing the outspoken New Yorker to lock up support for the job of Democratic leader. Reid, D-Nev., publicly blessed Schumer, long seen as his likeliest successor, and Democrats hoped a messy leadership fight had been avoided.

The mess was still to come. According to Durbin's version of events, in the same conversation where Durbin told Schumer he would not challenge him for leader, Schumer pledged his support for Durbin to hang onto the No. 2 job as Democratic whip.

## Ark. Governor Calls For Changes To Bill

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) — Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson backed away Wednesday from his promise to sign a controversial religious-objections bill, bowing to pressure from critics that included his own son and some of the state's biggest employers, who say the legislation is anti-gay.

The Republican governor said he wants the Legislature either to recall the bill from his desk or pass a follow-up measure that would make the proposal more closely mirror a federal religious-freedom law.

Hutchinson said his son Seth was among those who signed a petition asking him to veto the bill.

"This is a bill that in ordinary times would not be controversial," the governor said. "But these are not ordinary times." Hutchinson initially supported the bill, and on Tuesday, his office said he planned to sign it into law. But a day later, his position had changed.

## Mandatory Water Restrictions In Calif.

ECHO LAKE, Calif. (AP) — California Gov. Jerry Brown ordered officials Wednesday to impose statewide mandatory water restrictions for the first time in history as surveyors found the lowest snow level in the Sierra Nevada snowpack in 65 years of record-keeping.

Standing in dry, brown grass at a site that he said normally would be snow-covered this time of year, Brown announced he had signed an executive order requiring the State Water Resources Control Board to implement measures in cities and towns to cut the state's overall water usage by 25 percent compared with 2013 levels.

The move will affect residents, businesses, farmers and other users.

"We're in a historic drought and that demands unprecedented action," Brown said at a news conference at Echo Summit in the Sierra Nevada, where state water officials found no snow on the ground for the first time in their manual survey of the snowpack. "We have to pull together and save water in every way we can."

Brown's order follows previous cutbacks imposed by the water board. It will require campuses, golf courses, cemeteries and other large landscapes to significantly cut water use; direct local governments to replace 50 million square feet of lawns throughout the state with drought-tolerant landscaping; and create a temporary rebate program for consumers who replace old water-sucking appliances with more efficient ones.

# Iraq Hails Victory Over IS In Tikrit

BY QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA AND SAMEER N. YACOUB  
Associated Press

TIKRIT, Iraq — The government declared victory in Tikrit on Wednesday over extremists of the Islamic State group, and it warned the militants holding other Iraqi provinces that they would be the next to fall.

Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi walked triumphantly along a street in Tikrit, carrying an Iraqi flag and surrounded by jubilant forces.

Across the border in Syria, however, Islamic State fighters made their deepest foray yet into the capital of Damascus by infiltrating a Palestinian refugee camp, according to opposition activists and Palestinian officials.

Iraq's victory over the extremists in Tikrit was seen as a key step toward eventually driving the militants out of Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city and the capital of Nineveh province.

Defense Minister Khalid al-Obeidi announced the victory, saying security forces have "accomplished their mission" in the monthlong offensive to rid Saddam Hussein's hometown and the broader Salahuddin province of the militant group.

"We have the pleasure, with all our pride, to announce the good news of a magnificent victory," Obeidi said in a video statement, and he named the other Iraqi provinces still being held by the IS militants.

"Here we come to you, Anbar! Here we come to you, Nineveh, and we say it with full resolution, confidence, and persistence," he said.

Al-Abadi said that military engineering units still need more time to clear Tikrit of booby traps and looked to the next steps for the city and province.

"God willing, there will be a fund to rebuild areas destroyed by Daesh and the war. Tikrit and Salahuddin areas will be covered by this fund," al-Abadi said, using the Arabic acronym for the IS group.

Iraqi security forces take full control of city



The extremists seized Tikrit last summer during its advance out of Syria and across northern and western Iraq.

Iraqi forces, including soldiers, police officers, Shiite militias and Sunni tribes, launched a large-scale operation to recapture Tikrit on March 2. Last week, the U.S. launched airstrikes on the embattled city at the request of the Iraqi government.

Recapturing Tikrit is seen as the biggest win so far for Baghdad's Shiite-led government. The city is about 130 kilometers (80 miles) north of Baghdad on the road connecting the capital to Mosul. Retaking it will help Iraqi forces have a major supply link for any future operation against Mosul.

White House spokesman Josh Earnest said the victory was compelling evidence that the U.S. strategy against IS was working. He said the Tikrit operation had been stalled for weeks but that coalition airstrikes and advancing local forces apparently caused IS fighters to withdraw.

"What is clear is that over the last five days, this strategy of backing up Iraqi security forces that are multisectarian in nature with coalition airstrikes is a pretty powerful combination," Earnest said.

Earlier Wednesday, Iraqi security forces fired on

snipers and searched homes for remaining militants. Soldiers fanned out from the charred, skeletal remains of the Salahuddin provincial government complex, captured Tuesday.

Militant mortar fire, which had been intense in previous days, fell silent Wednesday, with commanders saying only a few militant snipers remained in the city. They spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss ongoing operations.

The objective, said Interior Minister Mohammed Salem al-Ghabban, is now to restore normalcy as quickly as possible.

"After clearing the area from roadside bombs and car bombs, we will reopen police stations to restore normalcy in the city, and we will form committees to supervise the return of people displaced from their homes," al-Ghabban said. He said the government will help displaced residents return and that a civil defense unit will be combing the city for roadside bombs and car bombs.

"Daesh is completely defeated," he added, using an Arabic name for the group.

A satellite image of Tikrit, released in February by the U.N., showed at least 536 buildings in the city were affected by the fighting. Of those, at least 137 were destroyed and 241 were severely damaged. The current offensive also exacerbated previous damage, particularly in the south where clashes have been the most intense.

Parliament speaker Salim al-Jabouri urged the government to find the means to resettle residents from damaged Tikrit buildings. He said this "requires effort and support by the central government in order to financially support the people in rebuilding their homes."

Aziz Jaber, a political science professor at Baghdad's Mustansiriyyah University, said retaking Tikrit could be seen as the "beginning of the end" for the Islamic State group in Iraq.

"Daesh was very talented in psychological warfare, but not any more after its defeat in Tikrit," he said. "Now, the morale of the Iraqi forces is high, while that of Daesh is low."

In the fighting in Syria, where Islamic State militants control large parts of the north, the extremists entered the Palestinian refugee camp in the capital of Damascus from the nearby Hajar Aswad neighborhood.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the IS group took control of large parts of the Yarmouk camp. If they gain full control, they can potentially threaten the heart of Damascus, the seat of President Bashar Assad's power.

The Observatory reported heavy clashes in the camp between IS fighters and members of an anti-Assad Palestinian faction called Aknaf Beit al-Maqdis.

Yarmouk, a Palestinian refugee camp in southern Damascus, has been under government siege for nearly two years. U.N. aid workers have been sending food parcels into the camp, where thousands of civilians remain trapped and in desperate need of food and medicine. The camp had seen fighting in the past between government forces and militants who control much of the camp.

Anwar Raja, the spokesman for the pro-Assad Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine — General Command, said IS fighters had been based in the Hajar Aswad neighborhood for months. He said Wednesday's push into the camp showed coordination between IS and a rival group, the Nusra Front, al-Qaida's branch in Syria.

"The Nusra Front opened the road for them in order to infiltrate the camp and several hours ago they entered Yarmouk," Raja said by telephone.

## OBITUARIES

### Marie Williams

Marie (Mary K.) Catherine Barnett Williams, known as Mary K., 93, of Gettysburg, died at her home Monday, March 30, 2015.

Mass of Christian Burial will be 2:30 p.m., Monday, April 6, 2015 at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Gettysburg with Father Jerry Kopel officiating. Burial of the remains will be held at a later date.

A reception will follow in the church fellowship hall with ice cream and oreos served in her honor.

Born Oct. 6, 1921 to George Richard and Ruth



Williams

Theresa (Bauch) Barnett in Sioux Falls, SD, Mary K. was raised in Sioux Falls where she graduated from Cathedral High School in 1939. She attended the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul, MN. She married Terrence M. Williams, her neighbor from Sioux Falls, on Feb. 5, 1942.

Her husband served as a P38 fighter pilot in World War II, and at the war's end in 1945 they moved to Get-

tysburg and later made their home on the family farm south of town.

Survivors include her sons Terrence M. (Judy) of Rapid City, Michael (Ann) of Lemmon, Bruce (Peggy) of Gettysburg, Richard "Bill" (Emily) of Aberdeen, Jay (Carol) of Yankton, and daughters Kara of Taos, NM, and Molly (Harry McRoberts) of Gettysburg; many grandchildren and great-grandchildren, brothers Dr. Lou (Maggie) Barnett and Don (Marilyn) Barnett of Sioux Falls; sisters-in-law Kay Barnett of Terre Haute, IN, and Liz Williams Bogue of

Rapid City, SD.

She was preceded in death by her husband in 1998, her brother Richard in infancy, her sister Sheila at age two, her brothers Bob and Jack, sisters Barb, Patricia, and Jane, and grandson Dan.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be directed to the Gettysburg Hospital Auxiliary, 606 E Garfield, Gettysburg, SD 57442 or Gettysburg Community Foundation, PO Box 33, Gettysburg, SD 57442.

Luce Funeral Home of Gettysburg has been entrusted with Mary K.'s arrangements. (www.family-funeralhome.net)

Yankton Press & Dakotan  
April 2, 2015

### Arnold Bierle

Arnold Bierle, 83, of Yankton died Tuesday, March 31, 2015, at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital in Yankton.

Funeral services are 2 p.m. Monday, April 6, at St. John's Lutheran Church in

Yankton with the Rev. David Gunderson officiating. Burial will be in the Garden of Memories Cemetery in Yankton.

Visitation is from 5-8 p.m. Sunday, April 5, at the Wintz & Ray Funeral Home in Yankton with a prayer service at 7 p.m. Visitation resumes one hour prior to the funeral at the church.

To send an online message to the family, visit www.wintzrayfuneralhome.com

## IN REMEMBRANCE

LaVina L. "Bunny" Prue  
1:00 PM, Saturday  
Community Center  
Santee

Virginia Donahoe  
10:30 AM, Monday  
Sister James Care Center  
Gathering Place  
Yankton

Harold "Les" Korff  
10:30 AM, Monday  
Holy Trinity Catholic Church  
Hartington

WINTZ & RAY FUNERAL HOME and CREMATION SERVICE  
Yankton  
605-665-3644 www.wintzrayfuneralhome.com

WINTZ FUNERAL HOME INC.  
Hartington, Coleridge, Crofton  
402-254-6547

The Ruth Simonsen family would like to thank everyone for their thoughts and prayers. They had 75 good years together. God Bless You. Clarence Simonsen Ken & Lonnie Remington Roger & Jeanie Simonsen

KYNT  
AM 1450  
MORNING COFFEE  
WEEKDAYS MONDAY-FRIDAY  
Thursday, April 2  
7:20 am Beginning Experience (Carol Christensen)  
7:40 am Yankton Conv/Vis Bureau (Stephanie Moser)  
8:20 am Yankton Chamber (Carmen Schramm)  
Friday, April 3  
7:40 am Clean Up Day (Jesse Bailey, Cheryl Sommer)  
8:20 am Yankton Area Arts (Julie Amsberry)

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