

Accessing a Suspicious Iranian Site:

Step One: Section Q of Annex I establishes the process for accessing suspected Iranian nuclear facilities. If the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which is charged with verifying compliance with the agreement, has concerns about any Iranian activity, it must first raise these concerns with Iran.¹ Iran is allowed to respond in writing and, if its response does not resolve the IAEA's questions, the IAEA may request access to a site in order to verify that no illicit activity is being carried out.² Paragraph 78 provides for a 24-day bureaucratic process. During that time, Iran may negotiate with the IAEA and the Joint Commission on the issue. It provides:

- 14 days for negotiations between the IAEA and Iran
- 7 days for consultation with the Joint Commission
- 3 days for Iran to implement the Joint Commission's advisement

“78. If the absence of undeclared nuclear materials and activities or activities inconsistent with the JCPOA cannot be verified after the implementation of the alternative arrangements agreed by Iran and the IAEA, or if the two sides are unable to reach satisfactory arrangements to verify the absence of undeclared nuclear materials and activities or activities inconsistent with the JCPOA at the specified locations within 14 days of the IAEA's original request for access, Iran, in consultation with the members of the Joint Commission, would resolve the IAEA's concerns through necessary means agreed between Iran and the IAEA. In the absence of an agreement, the members of the Joint Commission, by consensus or by a vote of 5 or more of its 8 members, would advise on the necessary means to resolve the IAEA's concerns. The process of consultation with, and any action by, the members of the Joint Commission would not exceed 7 days, and Iran would implement the necessary means within 3 additional days.”

Step Two: If Iran does not comply with the advice of the Joint Commission, the only redress available to the United States is provided by the agreement's "Dispute Resolution" mechanism, located in paragraphs 36 and 37 of the accord's main text. Leaving aside considerable implementation challenges, this process could last 65 days or longer. The timeline includes:

- 15 days for review by the Joint Commission
- 15 days for review at the ministerial level
- 5 days for the Joint Commission to consider the opinion of an Advisory Board
- 30 days for consideration and action by the U.N. Security Council

“36. If Iran believed that any or all of the E3/EU+3 were not meeting their commitments under this JCPOA, Iran could refer the issue to the Joint Commission for resolution; similarly, if any of the E3/EU+3 believed that Iran was not meeting its commitments under this JCPOA, any of the E3/EU+3 could do the same. The Joint Commission would have 15 days to resolve the issue, unless the time period was extended by consensus. After Joint Commission consideration, any participant could refer the issue to Ministers of Foreign Affairs, if it believed the compliance issue had not been resolved. Ministers would have 15 days to resolve the issue, unless the time period was extended by consensus. After Joint Commission consideration – in parallel with (or in lieu of) review at the Ministerial level - either the complaining participant or the participant whose performance is in question could request that the issue be considered by an Advisory Board, which would consist of three members (one each appointed by the participants in the dispute and a third independent member). The Advisory Board should provide a non-binding opinion on the compliance issue within 15 days. If, after this 30-day process the issue is not resolved, the Joint Commission would consider the opinion of the Advisory Board for no more than 5 days in order to resolve the issue. If the issue still has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the complaining participant, and if the complaining

¹ Paragraph 75.

² Paragraph 76

participant deems the issue to constitute significant non-performance, then that participant could treat the unresolved issue as grounds to cease performing its commitments under this JCPOA in whole or in part and/or notify the UN Security Council that it believes the issue constitutes significant non-performance.

37. Upon receipt of the notification from the complaining participant, as described above, including a description of the good-faith efforts the participant made to exhaust the dispute resolution process specified in this JCPOA, the UN Security Council, in accordance with its procedures, shall vote on a resolution to continue the sanctions lifting. If the resolution described above has not been adopted within 30 days of the notification, then the provisions of the old UN Security Council resolutions would be re-imposed, unless the UN Security Council decides otherwise. In such event, these provisions would not apply with retroactive effect to contracts signed between any party and Iran or Iranian individuals and entities prior to the date of application, provided that the activities contemplated under and execution of such contracts are consistent with this JCPOA and the previous and current UN Security Council resolutions. The UN Security Council, expressing its intention to prevent the reapplication of the provisions if the issue giving rise to the notification is resolved within this period, intends to take into account the views of the States involved in the issue and any opinion on the issue of the Advisory Board. Iran has stated that if sanctions are reinstated in whole or in part, Iran will treat that as grounds to cease performing its commitments under this JCPOA in whole or in part.”