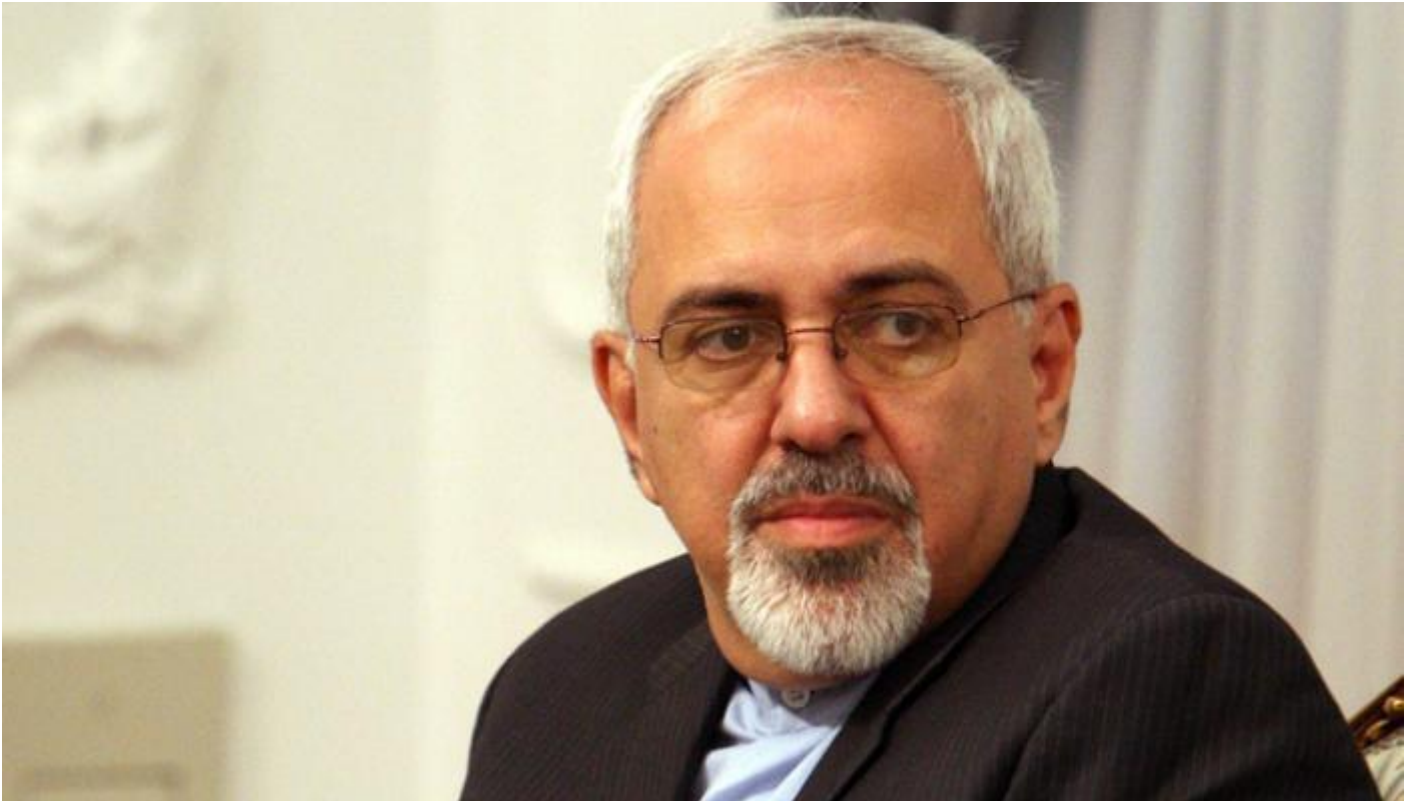


Discussions Between Iran and World Powers Off to Good Start



Vienna, February 20 (RHC)-- Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has termed as “fruitful and extensive” the nuclear talks between Tehran and six world powers in Vienna, saying negotiations were “a good start” for reaching a final agreement.

In a joint news conference with European Union foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton in Vienna on Thursday, Zarif said: “We had three fruitful and extensive working days and both sides have the feeling that it was a good start for the difficult task we have ahead.”

The talks over Iran's nuclear energy program started between Iran and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council -- the United States, China, Russia, France and Britain, plus Germany -- in the Austrian capital, Vienna, on Tuesday. The discussions were presided over by Zarif and Ashton.

The top Iranian diplomat said that during the talks in Vienna, both sides came up with a framework for comprehensive talks to reach a final agreement. To that end, Zarif said, technical experts from both sides would meet in March, adding that he would hold a meeting with Ashton on March 17th.

Ashton, for her part, said: “We had three very productive days during which we identified all the issues we need to address (to reach a final agreement). There is a lot to do. It won't be easy, but we've made a good start.”

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