

# *Russia “Optimistic” About Iran Nuclear Talks*

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Muscat, November 12 (RHC)-- Russia's deputy foreign minister says he is "reasonably optimistic" that Iran and the P-5+1 group of world powers can reach a comprehensive nuclear deal before the November 24 deadline despite the remaining disagreements.

"The glass is not half empty. We are reasonably optimistic but not to an extent that we are sure that this agreement can be achieved. It is really a unique and never-tried-before effort," said Sergei Ryabkov in the Omani capital city of Muscat on Tuesday.

Ryabkov added that Russia is "fully committed" to the talks between Iran and the six world powers and is doing its best to help the negotiations end in an agreement.

"Russia is very interested in achieving this agreement and very wrong are those who believe that -- for whatever reasons -- because of our complications with the West, with the U.S., we are now less interested in this agreement. This is not true; we are fully committed and we are working towards this end," the Russian official stated.

Top officials from Iran and the P5+1 group -- the U.S., Britain, France, Russia, China and Germany -- wrapped up talks over Iran's nuclear program in Muscat on Tuesday. The meeting was led by Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and European Union's envoy, Catherine Ashton, who represents

the six countries in the talks.

Sources close to the Iranian negotiating team say the main stumbling block in the way of resolving the Western dispute over Iran's nuclear energy program remains to be the removal of all the bans imposed on the country, and not the number of centrifuges or the level of uranium enrichment.

Tehran wants the sanctions entirely lifted while Washington, under pressure from the pro-Israeli lobby, insists that at least the UN-imposed sanctions should remain in place.

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