

ISSUE BRIEF

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The Iran Nuclear Negotiations: Understanding Key Issues

James Phillips

The Obama Administration has bent over backward in an effort to secure a nuclear agreement with Iran. In principle, it has accepted Iran's illicit uranium enrichment activities, the heavy-water reactor at Arak that could become a plutonium bomb factory, and Iran's continued stonewalling of the investigation of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). These concessions, which contravene multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions, have alarmed a bipartisan congressional coalition, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and other U.S. allies threatened by Iran's aggressive foreign policy.

The Obama Administration naively believes that carrots in the form of sanctions relief are sufficient inducements for Tehran to accept meaningful limitations on its nuclear program. Moreover, it has succumbed to wishful thinking about the possibility of strategic cooperation with Iran against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Listed below are publications by Heritage Foundation staff that shed light on these and other Iran-related issues:

Obama Administration Should Sanction Iran, Not Israel

James Phillips

The Daily Signal

December 11, 2014

<http://dailysignal.com/2014/12/11/obama-administration-sanction-iran-not-israel/>

The Obama Administration has a tense relationship with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu due to major differences on the Iranian nuclear issue and clashing world views. The White House continues to oppose bipartisan congressional efforts to ratchet up sanctions against Iran. As long as the White House remains more concerned about engaging enemies than alienating allies, it will gain more of the former and fewer of the latter.

On Iran, No Deal Is a Good Deal

Theodore R. Bromund, PhD

Commentary

December 1, 2014

<http://www.heritage.org/research/commentary/2014/12/on-iran-no-deal-is-a-good-deal>

It is no secret that the Obama Administration very much wants a nuclear deal with Iran, and it is no secret that the Iranians are playing hard to get. The talks, which were supposed to yield a final agreement in November, have been extended to July, which is a relief because, right now, the best deal is no deal.

This paper, in its entirety, can be found at
<http://report.heritage.org/ib4343>

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5 Problems with the Nuclear Talks with Iran

James Phillips

The Daily Signal

November 25, 2014

[http://dailysignal.com/2014/11/25/
5-problems-nuclear-talks-iran/](http://dailysignal.com/2014/11/25/5-problems-nuclear-talks-iran/)

There are five major problems with the Iran nuclear negotiations, as currently structured:

1. Iran has been able to legitimize its once-covert nuclear program.
2. Iran has won sanctions relief disproportionate to the minor concessions it has accepted.
3. Iran has been rewarded for stalling and stretching out the negotiations.
4. Iran has refused to fully cooperate with the IAEA in its investigation of possible military dimensions of Iran's nuclear program.
5. Iran has a strong interest in prolonging the negotiations as long as possible.

Delayed Deal on Iran Nukes Better Than Bad Deal

Peter Brookes

Commentary

November 24, 2014

[http://www.heritage.org/
research/commentary/2014/11/
delayed-deal-on-iran-nukes-better-than-bad-deal](http://www.heritage.org/research/commentary/2014/11/delayed-deal-on-iran-nukes-better-than-bad-deal)

Nothing promotes rash decision making like a looming deadline. The concern is that Washington will cave to Tehran's demands—rather than the other way around—to rescue the diplomatic effort as the clock nears midnight in Vienna on November 24. Washington should remain firm in its nuclear negotiations and resist the tantalizing American temptation to “close the deal.”

Nuclear Negotiations with Iran: U.S. Must Avoid a Rush to Failure

James Phillips

Issue Brief No. 4303

November 22, 2014

[http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2014/11/
nuclear-negotiations-with-iran-us-must-avoid-a-
rush-to-failure](http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2014/11/nuclear-negotiations-with-iran-us-must-avoid-a-rush-to-failure)

The November 24 deadline for a nuclear agreement with Iran is fast approaching, with no sign that a deal that would advance U.S. national security interests can be reached by that date. After almost a year of negotiations, Iran has won international acceptance of its once-covert uranium enrichment facilities and obtained substantial sanctions relief in exchange for symbolic and marginal concessions that can be easily withdrawn, as Iran has done in the past.

Why the U.S. Can't Trust Iran to Help Defeat ISIS

James Phillips

The Daily Signal

October 30, 2014

[http://dailysignal.com/2014/10/30/
us-cant-trust-iran-help-defeat-isis/](http://dailysignal.com/2014/10/30/us-cant-trust-iran-help-defeat-isis/)

Iran is part of the problem in Iraq, not a reliable ally in defeating ISIS. Iran's support for radical Shia militias helped create the sectarian conflict that enabled ISIS to thrive. The logic of Iran's Islamist revolution repeatedly has trumped the logic of Iran's national interest.

A Really Bad Bargain: A U.S.–Iranian “Strategic Relationship”

Kim R. Holmes, PhD

Commentary

September 8, 2014

[http://www.heritage.org/research/
commentary/2014/9/a-really-bad-bargain-a-us-
iranian-strategic-relationship](http://www.heritage.org/research/commentary/2014/9/a-really-bad-bargain-a-us-iranian-strategic-relationship)

One of the lessons of statecraft is that mistakes tend to compound themselves. Good options disappear and bad ones proliferate. The hole is dug deeper because desperation convinces you to contemplate options that would never have been considered in better times. This is what I fear may happen next in Iraq. Because we have so few good options, the Obama Administration may think it's time to start thinking about making a “grand bargain” with Iran over Iraq.

U.S. Should Maximize Pressure on Iran at Nuclear Talks

James Phillips

Issue Brief No. 2393

October 18, 2013

<http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2013/10/us-should-maximize-pressure-on-iran-at-nuclear-talks>

Washington should reject a partial deal that allows Tehran to continue down its path toward a nuclear breakout capability. The United States should maintain sanctions as well as the credible threat of force until Iran has taken concrete actions to dismantle its uranium enrichment and reprocessing facilities, given up its stockpile of enriched uranium, and permitted more intrusive inspections of its nuclear sites.

Iran's Nuclear Program: What Is Known and Unknown

James Phillips

Backgrounder No. 2393

March 26, 2010

<http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2010/03/iran-s-nuclear-program-what-is-known-and-unknown>

Nuclear negotiations with Iran have been repeatedly tried and failed in the past. Even if a diplomatic agreement could be reached on the nuclear issue, it would be foolhardy to expect Iran's unscrupulous dictatorship to permanently abide by such an agreement. Yet the Administration continues to seek such a deal over the bloodied heads of Iranian opposition forces.

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