

ISSUE BRIEF

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Recent Heritage Foundation Publications on the Iran Nuclear Agreement

James Phillips and Michaela Dodge

The Obama Administration's controversial nuclear agreement with Iran dismantles the sanctions that forced Tehran to the negotiating table without dismantling any major element of Iran's nuclear program. Centrifuges are retired but not destroyed. The illicit uranium enrichment facilities at Natanz and Fordow are constrained but not eliminated. The "anytime/anywhere" inspections that the Administration promised turn out to be "sometimes/some places" arrangements: U.N. inspectors must request written permission from Iran to inspect suspicious undeclared sites and could be blocked from doing so for up to 24 days.

The nuclear agreement essentially legitimizes Iran as a threshold nuclear power. Once key restrictions on uranium enrichment are lifted in 10 to 15 years, Iran will be well positioned to make a final sprint for an arsenal of nuclear weapons. The overly generous terms offered on sanctions relief is another major drawback. Tehran would benefit from the release of more than \$100 billion of its assets frozen overseas and from the tens of billions of dollars in additional oil revenues it would receive as oil sanctions are lifted. This could help Iran reshape the regional balance of power and establish hegemony over Iraq, Yemen, important oil resources, and oil supply routes. The dangers posed by Iran's enhanced ability to finance

terrorism and subversion would be compounded by the Administration's last-minute concession on the U.N. arms embargo, which will be lifted in five years.

The bottom line is that the Obama Administration has signed an agreement that will expand Iran's power and influence, strain U.S. relations with its regional friends, weaken long-standing nonproliferation goals for restricting access to sensitive nuclear technologies, and contribute to the evolution of a multipolar nuclear Middle East.

Here is a list of recent Heritage Foundation publications that assess the nuclear negotiations and the risky agreement that they produced:

The Iran Deal: 4 Big Red Flags for the Middle East (And the World)

James Jay Carafano, PhD

Heritage Commentary

July 16, 2015

<http://www.heritage.org/research/commentary/2015/7/the-iran-deal-4-big-red-flags>

Some deals, like the Munich Pact, crumble quickly. Others, like the Camp David Accords, hang in there. But rarely has there been a deal like the one reached in Vienna—a deal in which all the nations most closely affected by it pretty much start out knowing it will not end well. There are four major red flags: (1) the whole neighborhood will race to go nuclear; (2) Tehran gets to keep its vast nuclear infrastructure and its missile program; (3) sanctions relief will make the region far less safe; and (4) the deal is temporary, by design. Even the White House does not claim it will permanently keep Iran from procuring a bomb. The Oval Office insists that there are only two choices:

This paper, in its entirety, can be found at
<http://report.heritage.org/ib4436>

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this deal or war. But the choices are neither that limited, nor that simple. This deal is not the antidote to war. Rather, it makes increased conflict all the more likely, as a newly enriched and emboldened Iran increases its destabilizing activities throughout the region and its threatened neighbors pursue more extreme measures for self-preservation.

Iran Deal to Be Sent to UN Security Council Before Congress: A Deliberate Insult by the President

Brett Schaefer

The Daily Signal

July 16, 2015

<http://dailysignal.com/2015/07/16/iran-deal-to-be-sent-to-un-security-council-before-congress-a-deliberate-insult-by-the-president/>

The Obama Administration is expected to seek a vote at the United Nations Security Council on the Iran nuclear agreement before Congress has had an opportunity to review and act on the agreement. The Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015 states that during the review period, the “President may not waive, suspend, reduce, provide relief from, or otherwise limit the application of statutory sanctions with respect to Iran under any provision of law or refrain from applying any such sanctions.” U.N. Security Council sanctions are not U.S. statutory sanctions, but the clear intent of the legislation is to prevent any sanctions relief until Congress has reviewed the deal. Going to the Security Council prior to congressional consideration signals the Administration’s intent to proceed regardless of whether Congress supports or opposes the agreement. Such an action would be a deliberate insult to Congress and a breach of the President’s commitment to work with Congress on this matter.

The Iran Nuclear Negotiations: U.S. Concession After U.S. Concession

The Honorable Robert Joseph

Heritage *Lecture* No. 1263

July 16, 2015

<http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2015/07/the-iran-nuclear-negotiations-us-concession-after-us-concession>

The Obama Administration is negotiating a bad deal in the Iran nuclear negotiations. It has violated every rule of good negotiating practice,

making concession after concession on both major and minor issues. With each abandoned red line—whether enrichment, ballistic missiles, verification, or sanctions relief—the Administration has resorted to twisted logic and intellectually disingenuous explanations to justify its concessions. A good deal would deny Iran a nuclear weapons capability, prevent Iran from building a nuclear weapon in a short amount of time, extend the breakout time, be verifiable, and include phased relief of sanctions and guaranteed snap-back provisions to restore U.N. sanctions if Iran cheats. The Administration’s proposed deal fails on all counts.

The Most Glaring Flaws in Obama’s Iran Deal

James Phillips

The Daily Signal

July 14, 2015

<http://dailysignal.com/2015/07/14/what-the-major-flaws-in-the-iran-deal-are/>

The Obama Administration’s nuclear agreement with Iran has major flaws that could dangerously undermine the long-term national security interests of the United States and its allies. The agreement in effect legitimizes Iran as a nuclear threshold state. Although the Administration entered the negotiations pledging to cut off all pathways to a nuclear weapon, the agreement amounts to little more than a diplomatic speed bump that will delay, but not permanently halt, Iran’s drive for a nuclear weapons capability. Another major problem is verification of Iranian compliance. The Administration’s initial insistence on “anytime/anywhere” inspections was downgraded to “sometimes/some places.” Iran would have up to 24 days to move, hide, or destroy materials before U.N. inspectors are allowed to enter a site where prohibited nuclear activity is suspected. Iran also would gain a massive financial boost from sanctions relief that would enable it to build up its military power, especially after the U.N. arms embargo is lifted, and escalate its support of terrorism and subversion. The agreement will expand Iran’s power and influence, strain U.S. relations with its regional friends, weaken long-standing nonproliferation goals on restricting access to sensitive nuclear technologies, and contribute to the evolution of a multipolar nuclear Middle East.

Here's the Truth About 6 of Obama's Iran Deal Claims

Michaela Dodge
The Daily Signal

July 14, 2015

<http://dailysignal.com//2015/07/14/heres-the-truth-about-6-of-obamas-iran-deal-claims/>

The White House continues to misinterpret the recent deal with Iran, claiming that the deal will block Iran's paths to obtaining a nuclear weapon. In reality, the United States and its allies would be better off without a deal and with sanctions continuing to work as they have so far.

Deal or No Deal, Iran Still a Threat

Peter Brookes
Heritage *Commentary*

July 6, 2015

<http://www.heritage.org/research/commentary/2015/7/deal-or-no-deal-iran-still-a-threat>

Under the terms of recent legislation, Congress has the opportunity to vote on any final deal with Iran, an interesting White House concession indicating it probably thinks it has enough votes to prevent an override of a White House veto if the House and Senate do reject the pact. Indeed, we all want a look at it. There are strong concerns about inspection and verification procedures, the pace of economic sanctions relief, Iran's fissile material stockpiles, future research and development, and Iran's prior work on a warhead (aka possible military dimensions), among others. But putting those issues aside for a moment, we should not believe that our Tehran troubles will be over if America is able to cut a compromise with Iran on the bomb.

No Deal Still Better Than a Bad Deal on Iran Nukes

James Phillips
The Daily Signal

June 29, 2015

<http://dailysignal.com/2015/06/29/no-deal-still-better-than-a-bad-deal-on-iran-nukes/>

The Administration's downplaying of the military option and frontloading of sanctions relief early in the interim agreement has reduced Iranian

incentives to make concessions and rapidly reach an agreement. U.S. allies and friends in the region, including Israel and Saudi Arabia, are alarmed by the deep concessions already made by Washington. Even some former senior officials who were involved in formulating the Obama Administration's policy on the Iran nuclear issue warned in an open letter that the emerging deal "may fall short of meeting the administration's own standard of a 'good' agreement." President Obama should heed these widespread calls for caution and rule out a rush to failure by signing a flawed and risky nuclear agreement.

Israel and the United States: An Alliance Built on Shared Values and Interests

His Excellency Ron Dermer,
Israeli Ambassador to the United States
Jesse Helms Lecture

May 14, 2015

<http://www.heritage.org/events/2015/05/helms-lecture-dermer>

What this deal does is it dismantles the sanctions regime and leaves Iran with its nuclear program essentially intact—albeit with constraints, but within about a decade those constraints are removed and Iran will have an industrial [nuclear] program tomorrow.... Under this deal, Iran will walk into the nuclear club. The alternative to this is to hold firm, ratchet up pressure, and to not assume that what Iran won't agree to today, they won't agree to tomorrow.

Regime Can't Be Trusted to Honor Agreement

James Phillips
Heritage *Commentary*

May 1, 2015

<http://www.heritage.org/research/commentary/2015/5/regime-cant-be-trusted-to-honor-agreement>

Tehran not only gets to keep all its illegal nuclear facilities; it only has to mothball—not destroy—centrifuges used to enrich uranium. This means this rogue nation can quickly expand its enrichment activities and rapidly shorten its nuclear breakout timeline when restrictions on the number of

centrifuges expire in 10 to 15 years. Iran can quickly reverse all of its concessions if its mullahs decide to renege on the deal in the future. But sanctions on Iran, especially at the U.N., will take time to reimpose...if they can be re-imposed at all. If the Russians or Chinese were to object, it would delay the inherent time-lag before sanctions could bite—or be defanged completely.

Senate's Iran Nuclear Bill Misses the Point

Michaela Dodge, Steven Groves, and James Phillips
Heritage Issue Brief No. 4387 April 16, 2015

<http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2015/04/senates-iran-nuclear-bill-misses-the-point>

The recent Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015, a bill that allows the Obama Administration's agreement with Iran to go forward unless it is disapproved by the enactment of a new law, is well intentioned but falls short. It sets up Congress to allow the Administration to act as if it had congressional approval while a substantive oversight of the agreement is lacking, paves an easy path to removal of sanctions and congressional approval of what we can now see clearly is a bad deal.

Iran Nuclear Agreement A Rerun of North Korea

Kim R. Holmes, PhD
Heritage Commentary April 15, 2015

<http://www.heritage.org/research/commentary/2015/4/iran-nuclear-agreement-a-rerun-of-north-korea>

Pyongyang, like Teheran, claimed it was all about North Korea's legitimate energy needs. It was not. It was about getting the rest of the world slowly used to the idea that North Korea's nuclear program was inevitable. The stop-and-go nature of the talks, whereby a bold promise to dismantle something would be followed a few months later by disputes over verification, and eventually a nuclear test, were meant to wear down our patience. Goalposts were slowly but surely moved in North Korea's direction. Today there are no posts left because the goal has been attained. The same thing is happening with Iran.

Iran Deal Leaves Security Fears

Peter Brookes
Heritage Commentary April 7, 2015
<http://www.heritage.org/research/commentary/2015/4/iran-deal-leaves-security-fears>

This deal attempts to “freeze” Iran's nuclear weapons program for a decade or so, but does not roll it back; its vast nuclear infrastructure of reactors and enrichment facilities may be altered but will not be dismantled. That is troubling. This state of play will cause Arab and other Sunni countries in the region to start looking at leveling the nuclear playing field with their Persian/Shia rival by building programs of their own. Due to Iranian assertiveness in Syria, Iraq, and (to a lesser extent) Yemen, a conventional arms race is also likely to ensue. As sanctions are lifted on Tehran, money will flow into its coffers, allowing its political, economic, and military might to grow.

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