

Bolton's Pathetic Case for Reneging on the Nuclear Deal

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John Bolton [makes](#) the weakest possible case for Trump's decision to renege on the nuclear deal with Iran:

He decided that this deal actually undermines the security of the American people he swore to protect and, accordingly, ended U.S. participation in it. This action reversed an ill-advised and dangerous policy and set us on a new course that will address the aggressive and hostile behavior of our enemies, while enhancing our ties with partners and allies.

Iran's nuclear program and the restrictions placed upon it by the JCPOA are notably absent from Bolton's op-ed, because there is no credible argument to be made that the deal wasn't doing exactly what it was supposed to do. Like other critics of the deal, Bolton focuses on everything except what the deal does because he cannot dispute the tremendous success it has had in limiting Iran's nuclear program and establishing the most rigorous verification measures in the world. He refers to the agreement's "abysmal record," but he never identifies a single flaw in the agreement that the president has repeatedly denounced as the worst in the world. The deal's record as a nonproliferation agreement has been outstanding, and that is why Bolton is desperate to change the subject to talk about anything but that.

Bolton claims that Trump's decision "enhances" ties with "partners and allies," but this is also risible. As far as the vast majority of our allies and other governments around the world is concerned, Bolton's statement is absolutely untrue. The only relationship that Bolton can cite to support his claim is the one with Israel, and even this is misleading. Bolton conveniently leaves out the fact that most Israeli national security professionals are opposed to U.S. withdrawal from the agreement because they recognize the value it has for Israeli security, and instead he spends a large portion of his op-ed justifying another ill-conceived Trump decision to move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem. U.S. ties with our major European allies are already coming under significant strain as a result of Trump's initial decision, and those ties will become increasingly strained if the administration forces the issue and tries to penalize European companies for doing business with Iran.

He calls the agreement the "failed nuclear deal," but in terms of the only thing it was ever meant to do—restricting Iran's nuclear program—it has been extraordinarily successful and Iran's compliance has been verified ten times in a row. When Bolton says that the deal has "failed," he is measuring it against an unreasonable and dishonest standard that no agreement could ever meet. The fixation of the deal's opponents on Iran's other, non-nuclear behavior is telling. It shows that they refuse to judge the deal on the merits and

instead look for any excuse to blame the agreement for anything that Iran does that they dislike. This is akin to blaming Cold War arms control treaties for the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and it is every bit as ridiculous. All of this confirms once again how pathetically weak the arguments against the deal have always been, and it is why no one except for ideologues and Trump loyalists take them seriously.

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