

Iran, Coronavirus and U.S. Sanctions

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*In 2018, the United States, under the confused and confusing leadership of the bizarre **Donald Trump**, violated domestic and international law by withdrawing from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. This was an agreement made with Iran and China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States, Germany and the [European Union](#) that regulated Iran's nuclear program in exchange for the lifting of sanctions against that country. Among the provisions of the agreement were regular inspections of Iranian nuclear development sites by the United Nations, and the U.S. Congress had to certify to the president, every six months, that Iran was in compliance. On January 16, 2016, the agreement went into effect, and sanctions against Iran were lifted.*

Most of the world community praised the agreement, with the only notable exceptions being the apartheid regime of Israel, which considers Iran a threat to its regional hegemony, and Saudi Arabia, which also considers Iran a rival. Additionally, the Republican members of the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate also opposed it, due mainly to their obligations to pro-Israel lobbies who help to finance their re-election campaigns. Those lobbies also financed the campaigns of Democrats, but since the JCPOA was brokered at least in part by the Democratic **President Barack Obama**, they were willing to displease their Israeli allies to orchestrate what they saw as a 'win' for Obama.

The following January, Trump, who described the JCPOA as the 'worst deal ever', became president, following his popular-vote loss to the odious Hillary Clinton: the bizarre electoral college installed a minority-vote president for the second time in sixteen years. In 2018, with the United Nations inspectors and the U.S. Congress regularly certifying Iranian compliance, Trump withdrew from the agreement, thus doing exactly what he said Iran would eventually do, and threatened sanctions against the European counterparts if they continued to do business with Tehran. The fact that the leaders of these and several other nations begged him not to violate the agreement meant nothing to Trump.

And once again, brutal, crippling sanctions were issued against Iran.

Early in 2020, the coronavirus struck, hitting several countries, including Iran, particularly hard, and U.S.-imposed sanctions have worsened the situation. Iran's Foreign Minister, **Javid Zarif**, who had referred to the sanctions as 'economic terrorism' has since referred to them as 'medical terror'. Trump has again ignored the requests of the world community by not lifting, or at least easing, the sanctions, so much-needed medical supplies can enter Iran. Some U.S. politicians have also made the request, along with the highly- (but undeservedly) respected New York Times; others have encouraged Trump to maintain the sanctions.

Trump apparently believes that such barbaric cruelty by the U.S. against Iran will cause the

Iranians to reject the revolution that overthrew the oppressive, U.S.-support Shah, and seek a new agreement with the U.S. This is the same philosophy that the U.S. has used for over 60 years against Cuba: a belief that sanctions will cause the people to rise up against their own government in exchange for concessions from the U.S. This practice has been a dismal failure for the U.S. in Cuba, and sanctions are only maintained today to please a small but vocal Cuban-American community in Florida.

The result will be the same in Iran. The people of Iran know that it is not their government, but the U.S., which is the cause of their current difficulties. They have no desire to make concessions to the author of their misfortunes; they understand, better than many U.S. politicians who have no working knowledge of Iranian history or culture, that their revolution was a great victory for people over profits, and human rights over colonialism.

In June of 2017, when this writer visited Iran, he spent time in two busy, prosperous and exciting cities: Tehran and Mashhad. He was scheduled to return in February, but the coronavirus pandemic prevented that trip. But while there in 2017, he visited beautiful mosques dating back centuries, and observed how Iranians lived; he found it no different than any other city in the world he has visited.

Unlike in the United States, which currently has national guardsmen patrolling the streets of major cities, this writer saw two soldiers in Iran, both of them, like him, awaiting a flight at the airport in Mashhad. He saw one police officer, directing traffic at a busy intersection in Tehran.

And now, due to harsh and unjust U.S.-imposed sanctions, the economy of Iran is suffering, and innocent people are unable to obtain the medical supplies needed to combat coronavirus.

Prior to the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, the U.S. issued sanctions for a period of several years against that country; it is estimated that at least 500,000 innocent children died because of those sanctions. When then Secretary of State, **Madeline Albright**, was asked about that tragic statistic, she said that that number of deaths of children was “worth it”. How many deaths of innocent people will the current administration see as ‘worth it’ to achieve its unjust and repressive geopolitical goals?

Although the European signatories of the JCPOA are far from blameless in the suffering of the Iranian people, it is the United States that is fully culpable. The U.S. was the original country to violate the agreement, contrary to the advice of all the other signatories and nearly every nation on the planet except apartheid Israel and Saudi Arabia. It is the United States that has not heeded calls for lifting the sanctions so the Iranian government can obtain needed medical supplies. This may mirror the U.S. government’s own incompetent and haphazard handling of the pandemic within the U.S.: It is the country with the highest number of cases, the highest number of deaths, and the ninth highest number of deaths per 1,000,000 people. Iran, as of this writing, ranks 30th in deaths per 1,000,000 people.

This is how the United States government operates. It will do anything to achieve its geopolitical goals of worldwide power and increasing profits for the already super-rich. The suffering of countless innocent men, women and children means nothing; it is simply collateral damage in an ongoing war against the world to maintain hegemony at any cost. Whether the occupant of the White House is a Republican or a Democrat, the playbook has remained the same for centuries, and there is no reason to look for change anytime soon.

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