

Iran - Trump Has No Strategy, Only Aims and No Way to Achieve Them

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Trump hates the international nuclear deal with Iran. The agreement put temporary restriction of Iran's nuclear program and opened it up to deeper inspections. The other sides of the deal committed to lifting sanctions and to further economic cooperation. Trump wants to get rid of the deal; but he is unwilling to pay the political price.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was negotiated and signed by the five permanent UN Security Council members (U.S., Ch, Ru, UK, F), Germany, the EU and Iran. If the U.S. defaults on the deal it will be in a lone position. The diplomatic isolation would limit its abilities to use its influence on other issues.

Trump has little knowledge of Iran, the nuclear deal, the Middle East or anything else. What he knows comes from Fox News and from Netanyahu and other Zionist whisperers who get to his ear. All he heard is that the deal with Iran is bad. Therefore, he concluded, it must end.

The White House handed a paper to the media which is supposed to describe [President Donald J. Trump's New Strategy on Iran](#). But there is no strategy in that paper. It list a number of aims the Trump wants to achieve. But it does no explain how he plans to do that. It is a wish list, not a program to follow.

The "Core Elements of the Presidents New Iran Strategy" are:

- The United States new Iran strategy focuses on neutralizing the Government of Irans destabilizing influence and constraining its aggression, particularly its support for terrorism and militants.
- We will revitalize our traditional alliances and regional partnerships as bulwarks against Iranian subversion and restore a more stable balance of power in the region.
- We will work to deny the Iranian regime and especially the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) funding for its malign activities, and oppose IRGC activities that extort the wealth of the Iranian people.
- We will counter threats to the United States and our allies from ballistic missiles and other asymmetric weapons.
- We will rally the international community to condemn the IRGCs gross violations of human rights and its unjust detention of American citizens and other foreigners on specious charges.

- Most importantly, we will deny the Iranian regime all paths to a nuclear weapon.

The list is full of factual mistakes:

- Iran stabilized Iraq when the Islamic State was only days away from taking over Baghdad. Iran also helps to stabilize Syria and to defeat the Islamic State.
- Ballistic missiles are not “asymmetric weapons”. Iran’s neighbors Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have such missiles. Iran’s missiles are no threat to the United States.
- The IRGC is the equivalent of the U.S. special forces. It is funded by the state. It does not “extort the wealth of the Iranian people”. (The IRGC’s pension funds (bonyads) hold significant industrial assets. But they are different entities.)
- The IRGC does not detain American citizens.
- Iran has repeatedly declared that it rejects all nuclear weapons out of religious reasons. It signed several international agreements which prohibit and prevent it from seeking such weapons.

The White House list of aims, “the strategy”, is followed by “background” information on Iran and its alleged behavior. Some White House intern must have copied it from a neoconservative version of Wikipedia. It is a conglomeration of general talking points which lack a factual basis.

When the JCOPA deal was closed, Congress legislated that the White House must certify every 90 days that Iran sticks to the deal. Trump will now stop to certify Iran’s compliance even as everyone, including the White House, acknowledges that Iran is fulfilling all its parts. The White House claims that non-certification is not a breach of the agreement. The issue now falls back to Congress which might re-introduce the sanctions on Iran which the agreement had lifted. If it does that Trump will say that it is responsible for all consequences.

It is not clear if or what Congress will do. Senators Corker and Cotton are pushing for [legislation](#) that amounts to an unilateral change of the nuclear deal. It would introduce new sanctions if Iran does not accept their demands. Trump seems to support that.

But it is not going to work. It is an unilateral breach of the contract and no other country involved in deal will support it. Trump may introduce new economic sanctions on Iran but why would Iran care? Unless all other countries follow Trump’s lead, it can simply buy and sell elsewhere.

The EU countries were again craven and [offered](#) to push against Iran’s ballistic missiles if Trump does not completely break the JCPOA deal. This was utterly stupid negotiation behavior. Why offer concessions to Trump even before he makes a self defeating move? Still – they will not support breaking the deal.

Iran will not give up to its rights and it will not disarm. Obama pushed sanctions onto sanctions to make Iran scream. But the country did not fold. Each new U.S. sanction step was responded to with an expansion of Iran’s nuclear program. In the end Obama had to offer talks to Iran to get out of the hole he had dug himself.

Now Trump is saying that stopping Iran from getting nukes is the priority. And that Obama was wrong to focus on it. The result is a bungled policy which will have either catastrophic,

or no consequences at all.

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