

Macron's Mission to Washington: Protect French Business Interests With Iran? Trump's Intent to Jeopardize the Iran Nuclear Deal?

By [Adam Garrie](#)

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In July of 2017, the French energy giant Total signed a [\\$5 billion deal](#) with Iran to develop the South Pars off-shore oil field. At the time, Total executives acknowledged the fact that they could lose all of their investments in Iran if the geopolitical situation regarding sanctions deteriorates. The deal between Tehran and Total was the largest of its kind since the JCPOA (aka Iran nuclear deal) came into force in 2015.

Now though, European companies like Total may see their Iranian business deals become immediately jeopardised due to Donald Trump's clearly stated intention to either amend or withdraw from the JCPOA. Making matters more complex, Tehran has vowed that it will not accept any ex-post-facto revisions of the JCPOA, not least because according to the International Atomic Energy Agency, United Nations, Russia, China, the EU, Germany, France and Britain, Iran remains fully compliant with the original deal. The United States and "Israel" remain alone in challenging Iran's compliance and have done so for obvious geopolitical rather than objective reasons.

With Trump seemingly on the verge of tearing up the JCPOA which could put the entire deal in jeopardy, enough though all the other signatories to the deal including France want the deal to remain in place, French President Emmanuel Macron has flown to Washington for a charm offensive that has seen Macron publicly cultivate what appears to be a very close personal friendship with Donald Trump.

While Macron indicated during a press conference that France is open to working with the US to re-negotiated a would be JCPOA 2.0, during his address to the US Congress, Macron [stated](#) that

"France will not leave the JCPOA because we signed it".

While Trump generally has nothing nice to say about Iran, many in the Democratic opposition see the JCPOA as a matter of domestic pride as it was one of Barack Obama's few positive achievements in the Middle East. While no American politician can be described as "pro-Islamic Republic", many will be keen for Trump to fail in his desire to undo what they consider a laudable legacy of Barack Obama.

Macron's mission was therefore one designed to secure a personal friendship with Trump at a time when America's other major US partners Germany and Britain are led by women that

Trump has famously cold relations with. By contrast, Macron and Trump have hugged and kissed one another so much so, that one could be forgiven for assuming the two were long time soulmates.

Macron is clearly hoping to convince Trump to salvage the JCPOA and in return France has [offered to play a larger role](#) in the west's illegal occupation of north-eastern Syria - something in keeping with Trump's stated desire to see France and America's Gulf partners take over some of the front line duties of US soldiers in the region.

It is still too early to say if Macron's deal to assert the French presence in US occupied Syria in return for Trump relaxing his position on the JCPOA will be a success, but in reiterating the French position vis-a-vis the JCPOA in front of the US Congress, Macron is making it clear that if Trump does decide to dump the JCPOA, France's role will be one of damage control rather than enthusiastic approval.

There is no altruism in politics and while Trump and Macron have certainly hammed up the Village People act in front of the cameras, Macon is in the US to try and protect the French and pan-European businesses who have been doing business and seek to do further business in Iran. This means so much to Macron that he is willing to sacrifice French lives in Syria to try and change Donald Trump's mind.

Behind the smiles, both Macron and Trump are testing the art of their own deal making.

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Adam Garrie is Director at Eurasia future. He is a geo-political expert who can be frequently seen on Nedka Babliku's weekly discussion show Digital Divides, RT's flagship debate show CrossTalk as well as Press-TV's flagship programme 'The Debate'. A global specialist with an emphasis on Eurasian integration, Garrie's articles have been published in the Oriental Review, Asia Times, Geopolitica Russia, the Tasnim News Agency, Global Research, RT's Op-Edge, Global Village Space and others.

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