



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on November 27, 2013

Iran Attacks Obama Spin on “Historic Deal”; Critics Express Alarm

President Obama’s brain trust, no doubt,  expected that the “historic deal” Secretary of State John Kerry had struck with Iran would be greeted with widespread approval and would offer a welcome diversion of public attention from the non-stop cascade of negatives that have plagued ObamaCare since its disastrous rollout on October 1. Polling by various organizations has shown that when it comes to the thorny issue of Iran, most Americans favor pursuing diplomatic efforts rather than war. With the war in Afghanistan still grinding on, the costly Iraq War still in mind, and the recent Obama-backed debacles in Egypt, Libya, and Syria offering fresher evidence of the perils of foreign military ventures, it is not surprising that there is little American support for opening another conflict with the likes of Iran.

However, as details of the agreement have been revealed and digested, opposition has been growing not only among Republicans, but also among leading Democrats in Congress. That opposition has been helped (perhaps inadvertently) by Iran, which claims that the Obama administration has misrepresented the agreement. On Tuesday, November 26, two days after the White House’s “historic deal” announcement, the Iranian Foreign Ministry declared that it [strongly rejected](#) the “one-sided interpretation of the agreed text” provided in a White House “fact sheet.”

“What has been released by the website of the White House as a fact sheet is a one-sided interpretation of the agreed text in Geneva and some of the explanations and words in the sheet contradict the text of the Joint Plan of Action (the title of the Iran-powers deal), and this fact sheet has unfortunately been translated and released in the name of the Geneva agreement by certain media, which is not true,” Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Marziyeh Afkham said on Tuesday.

The Obama administration had announced early Sunday morning, November 24, that it had concluded an agreement to lift sanctions against Iran in exchange for a reduction in Iran’s efforts to build their nuclear capability. The agreement followed four days of heavy negotiations in Geneva between Iran and the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (the United States, Russia, China, the United Kingdom, and France), plus Germany.

The deal was praised [as a breakthrough](#) by Iran’s Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif (shown above):

We believe that the current agreement, the current plan of action as we call it, in two distinct



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places, has a very clear reference to the fact that the Iranian [nuclear] enrichment program will continue and will be a part of any agreement, now and in the future.

President Obama also said the agreement was a breakthrough, [adding](#):

While today's announcement is just a first step, it achieves a great deal. For the first time in nearly a decade we have halted the progress of the Iranian nuclear program, and key parts of the program will be rolled back.

Iran has committed to halting certain levels of [uranium] enrichment, and neutralizing part of its stockpile. Iran cannot use its next-generation centrifuges which are used for enriching uranium.

The White House's "fact sheet" on the agreement claimed that it placed meaningful limitations on Iran's nuclear development program while giving the UN six months to hammer out a permanent agreement:

Today, the [group of five] and Iran reached a set of initial understandings that halts the progress of Iran's nuclear program and rolls it back in key respects. These are the first meaningful limits that Iran has accepted on its nuclear program in close to a decade....

The concessions Iran has committed to make as part of this first step will also provide us with increased transparency and ... monitoring of its nuclear program.

In the past, the concern has been expressed that Iran will use negotiations to buy to time to advance their program. [But] these first step measures will help prevent Iran from using the cover of negotiations to continue advancing its nuclear program.

And if Iran fails to keep its end of the bargain, Obama added that "we will turn off the relief and ratchet up the pressure [once again.]"

The entire agreement is dependent upon Iran's keeping its commitment. According to the White House,

Without this phased agreement Iran could start spinning thousands of additional centrifuges. It could install and spin next-generation centrifuges that will [speed up its nuclear weapons program.] It could fuel and commission [its] Arak heavy water reactor.

It could grow its stockpile of 20% enriched uranium to beyond the threshold for a bomb's worth of uranium.

Iran can do none of these things under the conditions of this first step.

Secretary of State John Kerry [was confident](#) about the agreement's chances for success: "We have no illusions [about Iran]. We don't do this on the basis of somebody's statements to you. We do it on the basis of actions that can be verified."

Rabbi Steve Gutow, president of the liberal Jewish Council for Public Affairs, [was also optimistic](#) about the agreement succeeding:

[While] Iran has done little to deserve our trust, [this agreement] has the potential to serve as a valuable stepping stone to a final agreement that can serve the long-term security interests of the United States, Israel, the Middle East and the entire international community.

The menace of a nuclear-armed Iran needs to be eliminated once and for all.

The state most affected by the success or failure of this "historic deal" wasn't even a party to the negotiations: Israel. Once he had a chance to review the agreement, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [was incensed](#):



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What was achieved last night in Geneva was not historic; it is a historic mistake. Today, the world has become a much more dangerous place because the most dangerous regime in the world has taken a significant step toward attaining the most dangerous weapon in the world.

The Iranian regime is committed to Israel's destruction, and Israel has the right to defend itself, by itself. Israel won't let Iran develop military nuclear capability.

Israel's Economy Minister Naftali Bennett said this "bad deal definitely increases the need for action [by Israel]. If the deal gives Iran the ability to achieve a bomb ... we won't sit idly by." Eldad Pardo of Jerusalem's Hebrew University observed that another stall would lead to another stall, all the while allowing Iran to continue building its nuclear capability, despite the agreement: "[This] is a kind of temporary agreement that will lead to another temporary agreement."

Israel's Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman said that the agreement [does little or nothing](#) to prevent Iran from continuing its military nuclear development. Indeed it cements into place its present program, he said:

Iran has achieved a great diplomatic victory. [The agreement] does not require the dissolution of Iran's nuclear program. It legitimizes Tehran's ability to enrich. It is worse than the chemical weapons deal with Syria since there is not even a promise of removing uranium now in Iran.

Israel's Finance Minister Yair Lapid was equally candid about the deal, saying, "This bad deal gives Iran exactly what it wanted: a significant easing of the sanctions while retaining the most significant parts of its nuclear program."

Fred Fleitz, chief analyst at LIGNET.com, [came to the same conclusion](#):

It freezes their ability to make at least three to five nuclear weapons, maybe more, out of the enriched uranium they [already] have.... All they have to do is kick out the international inspectors, do a little re-piping of their centrifuge machines, and they're off to the races.

The inspections granted by Iran don't even cover the most notorious, and perhaps the most dangerous, of the sites: their Parchin military base. In 1997 Parchin conducted a series of tests of a rocket engine needed to carry a nuclear-tipped missile 800 miles, more than enough range to reach Israel. In 2005 the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was allowed access to some parts of the base as part of an Iranian public relations campaign to mollify concerns, but from then until today those inspectors have been denied entry. Nothing in the present agreement refers to Parchin.

Many Congressional Republicans were, clearly, unhappy with it. House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) stated:

Iran has a history of obfuscation that demands verification of its activities....

We [may] look back on this interim deal as a remarkably clever Iranian move to dismantle the international sanctions ... while maintaining its infrastructure.

House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-Va.) said, "Loosening sanctions and recognizing Iran's enrichment program is a mistake, and will not stop Iran's march toward nuclear capability."

House Armed Services Committee Chairman Howard McKeon (R-Calif.) added:

Iran hasn't given the world [any] reason to be anything but deeply skeptical of any agreement that leaves their capacity to build nuclear weapons intact. The president sees wisdom in placing trust ... in a regime that has repeatedly violated international norms and put America's security at risk.



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Rep. Peter King (R-N.Y.) stated:

President Obama's agreement with Iran is a serious mistake. The United States will ease sanctions on Iran making billions of dollars available to the Iranians while Iran does not have to dismantle any of their 19,000 centrifuges.

This agreement is a victory for Iran and a defeat for the United States and our allies in the Middle East, specifically Israel.

Senator Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) was equally appalled at the agreement:

This deal appears to provide the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism with billions of dollars in exchange for cosmetic concessions that neither fully freeze nor significantly roll back its nuclear infrastructure.

Furthermore, the deal ignores Iran's continued sponsorship of terrorism, its testing of long-range ballistic missiles, and its abuse of human rights.

Saudi Hostility Toward Deal May Match Israel's

While Saudi Arabia has refrained from openly attacking the Iran deal cobbled together by the "international community," it is no secret that Riyadh is very upset with the final product, as well as the process that produced it. Mary Dejevsky, writing in the British leftist *Guardian* ("[Saudi hostility to the Iran nuclear deal should alarm us more than Israel's](#)") states that "Saudi Arabia feels double-crossed and is determined to contest a resurgent Iran."

According to Dejevsky:

Of the two states most unhappy about the interim agreement with Iran, Israel is generally seen as potentially the more dangerous. This may not be correct. In the longer run, the hostility of Saudi Arabia could present the greater threat to regional stability....

Relations with the US are in deep trouble. Saudi Arabia resented the fact that the US-Iranian talks had been kept secret from Saudi Arabia, and felt that it had been double-crossed by a major ally. It was not the fact of the talks - Prince Turki, in fact, had long advocated direct US-Iranian talks - but "the way they were done, hidden from us".

The governments of Qatar and Kuwait also, reportedly, view the Iran agreement as dangerous for the region.

President Obama is also facing pushback from Democrats in Congress over the deal.

"It was strong sanctions, not the goodness of the hearts of the Iranian leaders, that brought Iran to the table, and any reduction relieves the psychological pressure of future sanctions and gives them hope that they will be able to gain nuclear weapon capability while further sanctions are reduced," Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) [said](#). "A fairer agreement would have coupled a reduction in sanctions with a proportionate reduction in Iranian nuclear capability."

Rep. Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.), the ranking Democrat on the House Foreign Relations Committee, [told](#) CNN's *State of the Union*: "I don't think you make them bargain in good faith by going squishy.... I think we could have played good cop, bad cop, and Congress really believes sanctions should happen. That's what brought Iran to the table in the first place."

Meanwhile, Iran's revolutionary leaders portray the agreement as an [unalloyed victory](#) for their side,



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while continuing to stoke the anti-American fires.

On November 26, FARS News Agency, the official voice of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), reported on a speech by the IRGC's top commander General Ramezan Sharif lashing the United States and claiming that the only thing the U.S. understands is "force." [FARS reported](#):

"The US has double-standards towards social issues of nations and the language that Americans understands is the language of force," General Sharif said, addressing the Basijis (Volunteer forces) in the Northeastern Iranian city of Neishabour on Tuesday.

He underlined that the US does not have the power of 10 years ago or even two years ago, and added, "The pillars of the US strength have become seriously shaky in the world, specially in the Middle-East."

Photo of Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif: AP Images

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