

The week ending April 3, 2015

IRAN

Washington Post: Obama's Iran deal falls far short of his own goals

The “key parameters” for an agreement on Iran’s nuclear program released Thursday fall well short of the goals originally set by the Obama administration, reports an editorial in [The Washington Post](#). None of Iran’s nuclear facilities—including the Fordow center buried under a mountain—will be closed. Not one of the country’s 19,000 centrifuges will be dismantled. Tehran’s existing stockpile of enriched uranium will be “reduced” but not necessarily shipped out of the country. In effect, Iran’s nuclear infrastructure will remain intact, though some of it will be mothballed for 10 years. When the accord lapses, the Islamic republic will instantly become a threshold nuclear state. That’s a long way from the standard set by President Obama in 2012 when he declared that “the deal we’ll accept” with Iran “is that they end their nuclear program” and “abide by the U.N. resolutions that have been in place.” Those resolutions call for Iran to suspend the enrichment of uranium. Instead, under the agreement announced Thursday, enrichment will continue with 5,000 centrifuges for a decade, and all restraints on it will end in 15 years. Both Mr. Obama and Secretary of State John F. Kerry emphasized that many details need to be worked out in talks with Iran between now and the end of June. During that time, the administration will have much other work to do: It must convince Mideast allies that Iran is not being empowered to become the region’s hegemon, and it must accommodate Congress’s legitimate prerogative to review the accord.

AIPAC Statement on Framework Agreement

AIPAC appreciates the hard work and the diplomatic efforts of the Administration to reach an agreement with Iran to end its nuclear weapons program. We have long supported a diplomatic path to achieve this objective. However, we have concerns that the new framework announced today by the P5+1 could result in a final agreement that will leave Iran as a threshold nuclear state and encourage a nuclear arms race in the Middle East. Iran’s long history of cheating on its international obligations and its leading role in sponsoring terrorism and violating human rights should disqualify it from possessing the infrastructure for a nuclear weapons program.

The P5+1 appears to have stepped back from prior demands—backed by large majorities in Congress—to dismantle significant elements of Iran’s nuclear infrastructure so that it has no path to a nuclear weapons capability. For example, Iran will be able to maintain its once secret underground facility at Fordow and continue research and development on advanced centrifuges. We note that the framework relies heavily on supervision by the IAEA, whose demands for access to suspect nuclear sites have been ignored by Tehran for well over a decade.

Going forward, we believe that the proponents of this agreement must answer many questions, among them: (1) Will this time-limited agreement actually prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapons capability? (2) How will sanctions be reinstated if Iran cheats on the agreement? (3) What will actually happen to the enriched uranium that the framework promises to neutralize? (4) Will all sanctions relief to Iran be delayed until it

comes clean on its past weapons development activities? (5) How will Iran be prevented from perfecting its advanced centrifuges so that it cannot rapidly produce highly enriched uranium after 10 years?

Because these questions and concerns are central to the definition of what constitutes a good deal, we believe this framework and any subsequent agreement must come before Congress for review. We are encouraged that the two key sponsors of the bipartisan Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015 (S. 615)—Senators Corker and Menendez—have reaffirmed their commitment to mark up this legislation on April 14.

Some claim that the only alternatives to this framework are capitulation or military action. We reject that assertion. A clear alternative to a bad deal remains a good deal that is achieved by the application of increased economic and political pressure on Tehran to reach an agreement that transparently does not allow Iran a path to a nuclear weapons capability. That is the best way to ensure that Iran will not develop nuclear weapons capability and to reinforce nuclear nonproliferation in the Middle East.

Iran nuclear framework faces skepticism from Congress

With a path newly in sight to a diplomatic resolution to the Iranian nuclear threat, President Obama immediately moved Thursday to thwart interference from U.S. lawmakers lining up against the fragile accord, reports [The L.A. Times](#). Shortly after international negotiators reached a framework to guide final negotiations to curtail Iran's nuclear program, Obama argued that the agreement is the best option for heading off another war in the Middle East or a nuclear arms race in the region. He warned lawmakers that if they obstruct the talks, they will imperil America's status as a world leader. The skepticism from Congress is shaping up to be the next major hurdle for Obama as he pursues a legacy-shaping foreign policy achievement, an agreement to limit Iran's nuclear activity in exchange for easing sanctions on its economy. Negotiators from Iran and six world powers, including the U.S., have until the end of June to close the deal. But in less than two weeks, Congress returns to Washington from a recess and key lawmakers have pledged to take up legislation that could imperil the final accord. The Senate has twice this year postponed consideration of Iran-related bills, one to essentially require congressional ratification of a potential deal, and another to impose new sanctions in the event Iran proves unwilling to abide by it. The delays came at the urging of the White House, which sought more time to let the talks progress, but may have only helped foster a bipartisan consensus on both proposals.

Netanyahu to Obama: Iran deal threatens Israel's survival

A nuclear deal with Iran based on the political framework reached in Switzerland between Tehran and the P5+1 group earlier Thursday "threatens the survival of the state of Israel," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told U.S. President Barack Obama during a phone call to discuss the accord. "A deal based on this framework would threaten the survival of Israel. Just two days ago, Iran said that 'the destruction of Israel is nonnegotiable,' and in these fateful days Iran is accelerating the arming of its terror proxies to attack Israel. According to [The Times of Israel](#), this deal would legitimize Iran's nuclear program, bolster Iran's economy, and increase Iran's aggression and terror throughout the Middle East and beyond," Netanyahu told Obama during the call. "Such a deal would not block Iran's path to the bomb. It would pave it. It would increase the risks of nuclear proliferation in the region and the risks of a horrific war. The alternative is standing firm and increasing the pressure on Iran until a better deal is achieved," he added. Obama, calling from aboard Air Force One, said the deal "represents significant progress towards a lasting, comprehensive solution that cuts off all of Iran's pathways to a bomb and verifiably ensures the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program going forward," according to a read-out released by the White House. Intelligence Minister Yuval Steinitz, who oversees the monitoring of the nuclear program, said the deal was "disconnected from the sad reality" of the region.