

The week ending May 22, 2015

IRAN

Fmr. Defense Secretary Robert Gates: Alternative to Iran Deal is a Better Deal

On May 17, Former Defense Secretary Robert Gates joined [CBS "Face the Nation"](#) to discuss the state of nuclear negotiations with Iran and the alternatives to a bad deal. Robert Gates states, "Well, first of all, getting the Iranians to the negotiating table in the first place was a success for U.S. foreign policy. They didn't come to the table out of goodwill. They came to the table because their economy was being strangled and the leadership was afraid they might get overthrown. So they are there because they have to be there. I think that there are some specifics in the agreement that are very encouraging, but I have several concerns that I hope can be addressed in the negotiations between now and June. The first is the timing of the lifting of the sanctions. Are they going to be lifted right away as long as the Iranians agree to implement the agreement? Or will they be phased over time based on performance, which has been our position all along? The second is verification. Unless we have sort of on-demand inspection at all facilities, including military facilities, I think there is a great potential to cheat."

"What if we can't get a deal? What is the alternative?" asks Bob Schieffer.

Gates responds, "Well, I don't think the alternative is war. One alternative is a better deal. I think that you go back to the sanctions. I think you reinforce the sanctions, and you basically say here are the additional things we need for this agreement to work and to be worthwhile, and an agreement that reassures our allies or at least doesn't scare them half to death. If they choose not to come back to the negotiations, but to race to a nuclear weapon, well my guess is that will show that they intended to do that all along. Despite all their protestations, that they have no interest in a nuclear weapon...I think that there is a potential for a better deal."

[Click here to watch Secretary Gates' full interview with Bob Schieffer.](#)

France: Iran wants 24-day warning ahead of nuclear inspections

France's foreign minister, Laurent Fabius, said Wednesday that Iran is demanding more than three weeks' notice before international inspectors may visit its nuclear sites in the event of a suspected violation of a deal with world powers over its nuclear program. According to [The Associated Press](#), he said Iran was seeking a 24-day period between the reporting of a suspected Iranian violation of the deal's terms and the time when International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors would be allowed to visit the relevant nuclear site. Fabius cautioned that "a lot of things can disappear" in 24 days. Tehran has steadfastly refused IAEA requests for visits to suspicious sites and interviews with individuals allegedly involved in secret weapons in agency investigative efforts predating the latest Iran-six nation nuclear negotiations. And on Wednesday, Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei appeared to link his veto on such access to the talks themselves. "No inspection of any military site and interview with nuclear scientists will be allowed" Khamenei told military commanders. "The enemies should know that the

Iranian nation and officials will by no means give in to excessive demands and bullying.” IAEA chief Yukiya Amano has told The Associated Press that he didn’t know whether the protocol would make his experts’ attempts to probe the previous alleged weapons work any easier. Amano has said that if his investigation remains stalled he may make an assessment on the issue based on the evidence he now has available. Diplomats say that consists of intelligence from the United States, Israel and other nations, satellite photos and information compiled by agency experts. Iran dismisses the material as fabricated by its enemies.

ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS

Netanyahu tells EU’s Mogherini he’s committed to two-state solution

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told the European Union’s top diplomat Wednesday that he was committed to a two-state solution with the Palestinians, attempting to undo diplomatic damage wreaked by statements seemingly in opposition to a Palestinian state during March electioneering, reports [The Times of Israel](#). Speaking during a joint press conference with EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini, Netanyahu said he would like to end the conflict with the Palestinians once and for all. He added, however, that the Palestinians must recognize Israel as a Jewish state. “I don’t support a one state solution—I don’t believe that’s a solution at all,” the prime minister said in comments ahead of their private meeting. “I support the vision of two states for two peoples—a demilitarized Palestinian state that recognizes the Jewish state, and I look forward to discussing with you how we can advance that vision forth in a practical, secure and responsible way. I know that you share our goal and we see you as a friend who can help advance it.” During the comments with Mogherini, the prime minister also spoke out against the emerging nuclear deal with the Iran, saying the sanctions regime on Tehran was already being rolled back. Mogherini stressed the close ties between Israel and Europe and assured Netanyahu that Europe is committed to preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

Kadishman art sees record demand

In the days since the death of legendary Israeli artist Menashe Kadishman, demand for and appreciation of his work has spiralled. The iconic sculptor and painter passed away on May 8 at the age of 82. Israelis who have one of his distinctive pieces hanging in their home have shared their images of the work on social media, some garnering thousands of likes and shares. Kadishman, an Israel Prize laureate, was one of the most renowned Israeli artists and was successful both domestically and abroad. The most recognizable motif in his work was the colorful sheep paintings for which he rose to prominence. [Ynet](#)'s online art store has seen unprecedented demand for Kadishman's work in recent days, and dozens of signed, limited edition lithographs of his work have been sold. Best-sellers include his works "Three Sheep", "Sheep and Angels" and "the Red Sheep."