

# The Iran Nuclear Agreement

## *Myth* vs. Fact

Since the United States and our international partners reached a nuclear agreement with Iran, President Obama, Secretary Kerry, and other Administration officials have made numerous statements in support of the deal that deserve close scrutiny. **The biggest myth about the Iran Nuclear Agreement is that it will prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon. In fact—by trading permanent concessions for temporary benefits—President Obama has assured that Iran will have an internationally recognized capability to quickly produce enough material for multiple nuclear weapons in 10 to 15 years. That is if Iran does not cheat.** While reviewing the agreement, Members may wish to keep in mind the following myths and facts.

---

### Myth: Congress Has A Choice Between the President’s Deal or War.

“There really are only two alternatives here. Either the issue of Iran obtaining a nuclear weapon is resolved diplomatically through a negotiation or it’s resolved through force, through war.” – [President Obama](#)

#### The Facts

- The President offers a false choice between *this* agreement or war. Even a supporter of the deal testified in front of the Committee that “I wouldn’t say that if you are opposed to this deal that somehow leads to war. I think that’s false.”
- As the President has said himself throughout these negotiations, “no deal is *better* than a bad deal.” This is a bad deal. Congress should reject it.
- But that doesn’t mean war. It means rolling-up our sleeves, turning-up the economic pressure on the regime and its supporters, and negotiating a better agreement that advances the national security interests of the United States, our allies and partners.
- Those opposed to this agreement aren’t opposed to diplomacy – we are against *bad* diplomacy.
- If Congress blocks this bad deal, the Administration will have no choice but to go back to the table and negotiate from a position of strength. Despite its rhetoric, Iran will follow because it desperately needs sanctions relief.
- After Congress rejects this agreement, it should maintain its diplomacy while simultaneously turning up the sanctions pressure, reaching out to Iranian dissidents, stirring opposition to the regime through international broadcasting and enhancing our security cooperation with our partners in the region through military sales and other exercises.

### Myth: The Administration Negotiated From a Position of Strength

“[The agreement] shows what we can accomplish when we lead from a position of strength...” – [President Obama](#)

#### The Facts

- The Administration consistently negotiated from a position of weakness, blocking attempts in Congress to pass sanctions that would have given Iran a choice between giving up its quest for nuclear weapons or facing economic ruin—this is called “coercive diplomacy.”

- Additional tough, bipartisan sanctions passed the House last session by a vote of 400-20. The Obama Administration worked with then Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid to kill the bill.
- Instead, the Administration approached Iran as an equal partner. Iran—a regional power and state sponsor of terrorism—is neither the moral nor geopolitical equal of the United States. We are the world’s only superpower.
- This weak approach resulted in concession after concession. Iran become emboldened and managed to gut the conventional arms embargo at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour—something that has nothing to do with the nuclear program.

**Myth: U.S. Sanctions Cannot Work Without International Support.**

*“And so we could still maintain some of our unilateral sanctions, but it would be far less effective -- as it was before we were able to put together these multilateral sanctions.”* – [President Obama](#)

**The Facts**

- The most effective sanctions against Iran have been those that give companies and countries a choice to do business with Iran or the United States. When given such a choice – which would still be possible to if Congress rejects this agreement – they have chosen the United States.
- The Obama Administration has never liked sanctions, and fought vigorously to oppose sanctions targeting Iran’s Central Bank in December 2011. Then – as they are now - the Obama Administration claimed that imposing these sanctions would divide the international coalition, and leave the United States alone in the world.
- Businesses, and in particular banks, will be hesitate to put a premium on the Iranian market if that would mean getting shut-out of the United States. As much as President Obama doesn’t like it, we are still number one in the world.
- While maintaining a united sanctions front after Congress rejects the nuclear agreement will be difficult, it will be easier to do so today than five or so years down the line when Iran is caught cheating and a sanctions regime must be reconstituted. There were no signs of the sanctions regime collapsing when the Obama negotiations began.

**Myth: The Agreement Is Permanent, With No “Sunset”**

*“Contrary to the assertions of some, this agreement has no sunset. It doesn’t terminate...some of the provisions are in place for 10 years, others for 15 year, others for 25 years.”* – [Secretary Kerry](#)

**The Facts**

- The essential restrictions on Iran’s key bomb-making technology do expire, or “sunset” in 10 to 15 years. After these restrictions expire, Iran will be left with an internationally recognized, industrial scale nuclear program—just like Japan. Iran could even legitimately enrich to levels near weapons grade under the pretext of powering a nuclear navy—as Brazil is currently doing.
- *All* these activities are permissible under the NPT – and *all* would be endorsed by this agreement. Indeed, as President Obama said of his own agreement, in year “13, 14, 15,” Iran’s “breakout times would have shrunk almost down to zero.”
- As a result, the U.S. and its allies will be left with no effective measures to prevent Iran from initiating an accelerated nuclear program to produce the materials needed for a nuclear weapon. And Iran surely would

be able to speed toward a nuclear weapon faster than an international sanctions regime could be reestablished. One nonproliferation expert told the Committee that this sunset clause is “*a disaster*.”

- It is precisely this sunset clause that the Prime Minister is referring to when he notes that this agreement paves the way for a nuclear Iran.

### **Myth: The Agreement Is Not Contingent On Iran Changing its Behavior**

“So this deal is not contingent on Iran changing its behavior. It's not contingent on Iran suddenly operating like a liberal democracy.” – [President Obama](#)

#### **The Facts**

- At its core, the President’s deal is a bet—that in ten or fifteen years we will see a kinder, gentler Iran. That’s because once key provisions expire Iran will have an industrial scale nuclear program capable of producing fuel for dozens of nuclear weapons. Such a capability will dramatically increase the threat Iran poses in the region.
- At the same time, the agreement makes it less likely that Iran will change. Iran will receive \$150 billion dollars in sanctions relief and will end up with hundreds of billions more as its economy begins to grow.
- Much of this funding will help secure the regime, taking pressure off its leaders. Billions will be spent abroad, to continue to prop up the brutal Assad regime in Syria, fuel Sunni/Shia divisions in Iraq, support the Houthi rebels who overthrew a U.S. partner in Yemen, and resupply Hamas and Hezbollah with the rockets they use to threaten Israel.

### **Myth: The Agreement Contains Unprecedented Inspections and Verification**

“We will have installed an unprecedented inspections regime”... “That entire infrastructure that we know about, we will have sophisticated 24/7 monitoring of those facilities”... “the nature of nuclear programs and facilities is such -- this is not something you hide in a closet. This is not something you put on a dolly and kind of wheel off somewhere.” – [President Obama](#)

#### **The Facts**

- Just a few months ago, the Secretary of Energy—himself a nuclear physicist—made it clear that “we expect to have anywhere, anytime access.”
- Yet after the Iranians boasted that “They will not even be permitted to inspect the most normal military site in their dreams,” we ended up with “managed access.”
- “Managed access” would be better called “manipulated access” as inspectors will get access to suspected sites only *after consultations* between the world powers and *Iran*, over as long as 24 days. China, Russia and Iran will have a say on the consultations as to who can go where.
- The former head of the CIA, Michael Hayden, testified in front of the Committee, “we never believed that the uranium at Iran’s declared facilities would ever make its way into a weapon. We always believed that that work would be done someplace else, in secret.” As a top State Department official has said, the Iranians have deception in their DNA.
- Hayden also explained that requiring consultations between the world powers and Iran takes inspections from the technical level and puts it at the political level, which he calls “a formula for chaos, obfuscation, ambiguity, doubt...”
- Former top weapons inspector Charles Duelfer explained to this Committee that after the First Gulf War—even with anytime, anywhere inspections; sanctions remaining on; and the burden of proof on the Iraqis—

his team “*could not do their job*” and were stymied. Yet, the inspections process negotiated by the Obama Administration would have much less authority.

### **Myth: Tough “Non-Nuclear” Sanctions Will Remain on Iran**

*“We will maintain our own sanctions related to Iran’s support for terrorism, its ballistic missile program, and its human rights violations.”* – [President Obama](#)

#### **The Facts**

- If fully implemented, this agreement will destroy the Iran regime, which Congress has built up over decades despite opposition from several administrations—including the Obama Administrations.
- As 344 Members of Congress reminded the President in a letter last year, the concept of an exclusively “nuclear-related” sanction does not exist in U.S. law. Almost all sanctions related to Iran’s nuclear program are also related to Iran’s ballistic missile program and its support for international terrorism.
- Many U.S. sanctions target Iranian banks, including Iran’s Central Bank, to prevent these banks from funding Iran’s nuclear program—including the development of ballistic missiles—and its support for terrorism. Removing sanctions on Iranian banks will allow the regime pump a significant part of the billions it receives under this deal through these “bad banks” into developing true ICBMs and support for terrorism.
- In a major, last minute concession the President agreed to lift the UN arms embargo on Iran. In 5 years, Iran will be able to buy conventional weapons. In 8 years, ballistic missiles. Russia and China want to sell these dangerous weapons to Iran—that’s why they pushed for the embargo to be lifted.
- As Secretary of Defense Carter just testified: “The reason that we want to stop Iran from having an I.C.B.M. program is that the ‘I’ in ICBM stands for ‘intercontinental,’ which means having the capability of flying from Iran to the United States.” Remember, countries build ICBMs for one reason—to deliver nuclear weapons.
- Under the agreement, European sanctions on the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and the leader of its elite Quds Force Qasem Soleimani are removed. Their job is to “export the revolution”—that means support terrorism.
- General Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, recently testified that Iranian militias, such as those trained and equipped by Soleimani, killed some 500 U.S. soldiers in Iraq. Removing sanctions on Soleimani and the IRGC is so shocking that when the deal was first announced, many thought it was a mistake.

### **Myth: If Iran Cheats, Sanctions Can Be “Snapped Back” Into Place**

*“With this deal, if Iran violates its commitments, there will be real consequences. Nuclear-related sanctions that have helped to cripple the Iranian economy will snap back into place.”* – [President Obama](#)

#### **The Facts**

- Economic sanctions on Iran were built up over decades. They cannot be turned on and off at the flip of a switch. That’s simply not how the global economy works—once foreign companies sign contracts in Iran, those contracts will take years to unwind.
- The nuclear deal with Iran will unleash economic forces that make it unenforceable. Iran is a large, resource rich country with a young, educated population that sits at the center of historic trade routes. Lifting sanctions will create an economic power committed to the destruction of Israel and the United States.

- While U.S. sanctions are powerful on their own, the UN is an important part of the Iran sanctions regime. As the U.S. Ambassador to the UN, Samantha Power, told the Committee, “Nothing at the UN happens in a snap.”
- Congress built the Iran sanctions regime over the objections of several administrations. When Iran cheats, will the Obama Administration have the will to admit their deal is failing and re-impose sanctions?

**Myth: Critics of the Agreement Do Not Want Iran To Have Peaceful Nuclear Program**

*“I think the suggestion among a lot of the critics has been that a – a better deal, an acceptable deal would be one in which Iran has no nuclear capacity at all, peaceful or otherwise.” – [President Obama](#)*

**The Facts**

- Iran can have a peaceful nuclear program without the ability to enrich uranium. It is this key bomb-making technology that is so objectionable.
- Preventing the spread of this dangerous technology has been the foundation of U.S. nonproliferation policy for decades. As a result, over 20 countries have peaceful nuclear energy programs without a domestic enrichment program. In fact, buying fuel for nuclear power plants abroad, from countries like Russia, is much more cost effective than producing it domestically.

**Myth: The U.S. Could Not Demand the Release of American Hostages Because Iran Would Have Demanded Non-Nuclear Concessions From The U.S.**

*“Now, if the question is why we did not tie the negotiations to their release, think about the logic that that creates. Suddenly, Iran realizes, you know what, maybe we can get additional [non-nuclear] concessions out of the Americans by holding these individuals.” – [President Obama](#)*

- Iran demanded and received significant non-nuclear concessions anyway. These include an end to the UN embargo on conventional weapons and ballistic missiles as well as an end to significant terrorism sanctions.
- This is a perfect example of the poor job the Obama Administration did negotiating this agreement. This is a bad deal for the U.S., our allies, and partners. Congress must vote it down.

