

Twelve Major Consequences Of Sanctions on Iran

By: [Seyed Hossein Mousavian for Al-Monitor Iran Pulse](#) Posted on **May 3**.

به فارسی

Sanctions, whether unilateral or multilateral, have been the United States' [core policy on Iran](#) since the 1979 revolution. President Barack Obama entered office confirming that he intended to pursue a policy of engagement with Tehran. During his tenure, however, the United States has orchestrated its harshest sanctions to date against Iran.


About This Article

Summary :

Seyed Hossein Mousavian reviews the futility of the US sanctions policy to affect Iran's nuclear program or change its relationship with Iran for the better.

Author: [Seyed Hossein Mousavian](#)

Posted on: May 3 2013

Categories : Originals  Iran

Sanctions have slowed Iran's industrial and economic growth, considerably limited foreign investment and triggered national currency devaluation, hyperinflation, declining GDP and, last but not least, reduction of oil and gas production and export. Mahmoud Bahmani, governor of the Central Bank of Iran, described the seriousness of the effects of sanctions as "[no less than a military war](#)." Even President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who once asserted that the sanctions were viewed as "[the most ridiculous behavior](#)," now admits that sanctions have taken their toll on [Iran's economy](#).

Simply put, if the real objective of the sanctions was to hurt ordinary Iranians, they have been successful. If they were intended to compel Iran to cease its current nuclear program, they have not only failed, but have actually resulted in acceleration of the program. This is the outcome I predicted and have reiterated from the onset of imposing harsh sanctions. Due to their mentality, culture and religious beliefs, the Iranians have resisted coercion and have further expanded their nuclear program.

As reports by the International Atomic Energy Agency indicate, prior to sanctions related to its nuclear program, Iran had one uranium enrichment site, a pilot plant of 164 centrifuges enriching uranium at a level of 3.5%, one generation of centrifuges and an approximately [100 kg stockpile](#) of enriched uranium. Today, it has two enrichment sites with roughly 12,000 centrifuges, can enrich uranium up to 20%, possesses a new generation of centrifuges and has amassed a stockpile of more than 8,000 kg of enriched uranium.

Iran's nuclear progress while under increasing sanctions leaves no doubt that coercion has been a major factor in pushing the country toward proficiency and self-sufficiency in nuclear technology. A similar phenomenon emerged during the Iraq-Iran War. Before the conflict, Iran was incapable of producing a single bullet and wholly depended on the West for weapons. During the war and its aftermath, however, and despite the sanctions and pressure imposed by the West, Iran built a large defense industry, achieved self-sufficiency in conventional weapons, accumulated a vast arsenal of long-range missiles and even [launched a satellite](#).

Through the sanctions policy, the United States is, in practice, promoting the growth of Eastern influence in Iran, specifically that of its rival China. Since 2001, [Chinese exports to Iran](#) have increased nearly sixteenfold. The European Union had a more than 50% share of Iran's economy in the 1990s. Due to sanctions, the West has lost its leverage to influence Iran's economy. In other words, the West has been sanctioning itself out of influence, and instead has been letting its main competitors — China, Russia and India — win in Iran's economy and gain authority. Sanctions have shifted Iran's international trade direction from the West to the East, thus a trade policy of [Asianization](#) or Easternization.

Iranians are among the least hostile populace in the region toward the United States. US officials, knowing that sanctions [hurt ordinary Iranians](#), are nonetheless essentially risking a great asset for normal relations by planting seeds of long-term alienation between the Iranian people and their country. Gallup polls indicate that "Iranians feel the bite of sanctions," but they [blame the United States, not their own leaders](#).

The sanctions damage the middle class and squeeze out the private sector in favor of the public. In addition, they are shifting trade away from the official banking system to underground networks. As a result of sanctions, the West is forcing Iran to distance itself from a market economy.

It is now apparent that the United States has been unsuccessful in leveraging sanctions to elicit more cooperative policies from Tehran. The Western policies of sanctions have only resulted in the further radicalization of Iran. Basij commander Mohammad Reza Naghdi remarked that he was opposed to Iran asking for sanctions to be lifted in the next round of nuclear talks with the P5+1. He reasoned that sanctions would unlock Iran's "latent potential," and the oil embargo could help the country's economy [cut its dependence on crude sales](#), a policy now on the agenda of the Iranian administration.

Mastering nuclear technology has become a matter of national pride. An overpowering majority of Iranians support the country's nuclear program. A Gallup poll conducted in December 2012 indicated that 63% of Iranians believe that Iran should [continue to develop its nuclear](#)

program, even given the scale of sanctions imposed on the country. Only 17% were opposed. Like the popular oil nationalization movement of the 1950s in response to foreign bullying and domination, sanction policies secure more support for the system rather than less.

The pressures and sanctions have raised doubts about the benefit of Iran remaining a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). "If Iran had not been committed to the NPT, would Western countries have taken other measures?" challenged [Ali Larijani](#), the Iranian speaker of parliament. General Mohammad Ali Jafari, commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, stated at a press conference in Tehran that Iran might [withdraw from the NPT](#).

Last but not least, insisting on sanctions and coercion has convinced the Iranian government that the United States is not serious about engagement and is following its core traditional policy of regime change. "Whenever we are close to a solution, the Americans cause a problem in order to prevent reaching a solution," Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei asserted, adding, "My assumption and interpretation is that their goal is to [keep the issue unresolved](#) so that they can have a pretext for exerting pressure on us."

John Limbert, former deputy assistant secretary, in charge of Iran affairs at the State Department during 2009–2010, maintained that "since 1979.... We've used sanctions against Iran. They're something we know. They're something with which we have experience.... [But] changing the unproductive relationship that we've had with Iran for the last 30 years [is something] that we do not know how to do. [That's hard.](#)"

The United States needs to reconsider its unsuccessful 34-year sanctions policy and engage in a meaningful dialogue with Iran. Washington and Tehran have a history of missed opportunities since 1979. Perhaps the upcoming Iranian presidential election will create a new opportunity for the two governments to adopt a new strategy to normalize relations based on mutual respect.

Seyed Hossein Mousavian is associate scholar at Princeton University. He served as the head of the Foreign Relation Committee of Iran's National Security Council during 1997 to 2005. He is author of The Iranian Nuclear Crisis: A Memoir, published by Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in 2012.



[Nude Feminism Challenges Islamist Discourse](#)



[Sanctions May Scuttle Compromise Between Iran and P5+1](#)



[Assad Toys With Erdogan Over Riots](#)



[Sadr Gives Maliki 'Final Warning'](#)

Recommended by

11 comments



AI-Monitor: The Pulse of the Middle East requires you to verify your email address before posting



Leave a message...

Newest

Community My Disqus

Share



AI Redhammer • a month ago

The entire focus of the U.S. is on nuclear weapons but the writer seems to forget this simple fact. Iran has shown itself as a supporter of international terrorism, that is a fact. Based upon that simple fact, if Iran were to secure nuclear weapons it would, based upon past experience, be in a position to provide these weapons that kill on a massive scale to Hezbollah and other terrorist groups.

All Iran has to do is stop moving toward weapons production and simply concentrate upon the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

It Has Not Done So.

The world has a right to protect itself from regimes like Iran and North Korea and, short of declaring war, sanctions which are a simple way of saying, "If you continue to do threatening things we will not trade with you and will isolate you", are legitimate methods for peaceful countries to use.....

1 | 1 Reply Share



Guest • a month ago

It all boils down to A2AD - Anti-Access Area Denial. The US feels it has a right to enter any country it likes with the obvious exception of China and possibly Russia. It galls the americans that they can't exploit Iran.

Crawl back into your hole, Yanks.

2 | 1 Reply Share



superalien4peace • a month ago

Unfortunately, the sanctions are to remain for a very long time. These sanctions were designed towards a regime change and weakening Iran for a military invasion. They are not designed to be removed. Iran should forget the sanctions ever coming off.

As for option for Iranians, they have to formulate their national economy on solid foundations. Obviously, Iranians have to cure their chronic "Dutch Disease" and depend on their own progress in science and technology to improve the quality of life. There is no other solution as far as Iran should be concerned.

In the meanwhile, Iranians must move eventually to pull out of NPT, a colonial treaty that has caused much havoc and much pain for Iran without being of any benefit to Iranians. At least a nuclear armed Iran, will have the strategic security that Iranians have been craving for in the past 400 years. Without nuclear weapons, Iran will never be safe in a very anti-Iranian world and being surrounded by nuclear weapons states (Pakistan, Russia, India, Israel, China, US and Turkey).

Here are some points why Iran will never be able to trust the west:

1- Western countries led by UK started to steal Iran's hydrocarbon reserves specially oil from

see more

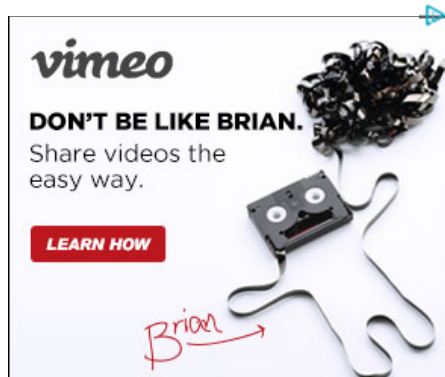
3 | 1 Reply Share



Guest → superalien4peace • a month ago

Very good but you forgot lots of things including the seven million Iranians (almost 25% of the population) that died of starvation when Americans and Brits invaded Iran and took her food to feed their own troops during WWII.

And also shooting down an Iranian civilian airplane in 1980s and killing 200 civilians on



vimeo

DON'T BE LIKE BRIAN.
Share videos the easy way.

[LEARN HOW](#)

Brian →

The advertisement features a central illustration of a character named Brian, who is a cassette tape with a face, arms, and legs. He has a tangled mass of black tinsel or streamers on his head. The character is positioned on a white background. To the left of the character, the name 'Brian' is written in red cursive with an arrow pointing to him. The Vimeo logo is in the top left corner, and the text 'DON'T BE LIKE BRIAN. Share videos the easy way.' is below it. A red button with the text 'LEARN HOW' is also present. A small blue arrow icon is in the top right corner of the ad area.