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# Consequences of nixing the Iran deal

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# Consequences of nixing the Iran deal

## By Ghassan Michel Rubeiz

The US Administration cannot afford to create conditions that may lead to a new war in the Middle East.

President Donald Trump is expected to challenge the JCPOA agreement with Iran, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Trump considers this international nuclear deal with France, UK, Germany, Russia, China, EU and Iran no longer serving US "national interests".

The president accuses the Islamic Republic of "violating the spirit" of the accord. Just as Trump shocked the world a few months ago by withdrawing US membership from the Paris Agreement on climate change, he is now about to surprise the international community by decertifying the 2015 nuclear deal. Trump will be acting negatively alone on Iran, against the wish of his international partners; he looks increasingly isolated domestically and internationally.



Iranian city, Photo courtesy of Wikipedia

For Trump, Iran's development of long-range "ballistic missiles" and its support of Hezbollah and other warring groups in Syria, Iraq and Yemen undermine the "spirit" of JCPOA understanding. But in fact, the JCPOA is by design restricted to nuclear terms; and Iran views its proxy fighting in neighboring countries a matter of "defense" of its national security.

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Here is how Hossein Mousavian, Tehran's former Ambassador to the US, explains Iran's policy: After the revolution, Iran was invaded by Saddam Hussein's Iraq and, for much of the past decade, chaos on its thousands of miles of borders with Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan – all factors that have compelled it to play a regional role.

If the United States wants to avoid scenarios where regional states aggressively compete for power it must encourage the creation of a regional security system involving the six Gulf Cooperation Council countries along with Iraq and Iran. [Click here to read article.](#)

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It is crucial to note that the International Atomic Energy Agency, IAEA, has certified eight times that Iran is in compliance with the JCPOA terms. Trump is confronting Iran against the judgments of his own Secretaries of State and of Defense.

There is a glaring and dangerous role-reversal (confusion of responsibility) in exercising US Mideast foreign policy. Concerning Iranian issues, Israel and Saudi Arabia occasionally seem to have more influence on this US Administration than the State Department does. The largest recipient of US foreign aid, Israel acts as a "donor" in Washington. And Saudi Arabia, the best client of the US in purchase of arms, acts as a "donor" of pan-Arab gratitude to America, the source of sustained security to the Gulf States.

If Trump intends to discipline Iran's conduct in international relations, he has miscalculated. Unintended consequences are at work. The US President is unwittingly giving a new pretext for Tehran's hardliners in their relentless attempts to undermine the more moderate regime of President Rouhani. As he decertifies the JCPOA Trump will ask the US congress to exercise coercive diplomacy with Iran, by determining whether to snap back sanctions recently abolished by the JCPOA agreement.

Trump in effect, will be saddling the congress with a counterproductive foreign policy task, at a time when America is highly preoccupied with tax reform, health care, budget issues and weather disasters, not to mention the ongoing nuclear challenge of North Korea. Trump's attempts at dismantling the nuclear Iran deal will distract global efforts in the fight of terrorism; it will also discourage North Korea from considering negotiating a similar international agreement.



Ambassador Friedman

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It would not be easy for the Congress to agree to reintroduce new sanctions on Iran, but still decertifying Iran would generate an elevated climate of hostility in the Middle East, where tension among regional powers has never been as high.

US sensitivity to the culture and political dynamics of the region is fading. Washington threatens Iran with one arm and embraces Saudi Arabia and Israel with another. Such contrast in treatment fuels hostility between Riyadh and Tehran, on one level, and between Tehran and Tel Aviv on another. Washington's attempt at intimidating Iran occurs at a time when Israel is threatening to prevent Iran's expanding presence in south Syria, close to the former's borders.

Prime Minister Netanyahu threatens to destroy Lebanon for allowing Hezbollah to fight in Syria and to build a missile defense arsenal in south Lebanon. It is as if Lebanon's fragile state is capable of controlling a hyper-militarized and tribal Hezbollah. The culture of militia has spread in the entire region, given the recent erosion of respect for national borders.

Moreover, Washington is slapping more and more sanctions on Iran for its "militancy" in the Middle East, while totally ignoring Israel's occupation of Palestinian, Lebanese and Syrian territories. Ironically, the occupation is not serving Israel's own long-term security. Moreover, the militant ideology of the Israeli settlers in the occupied territories has the character of a militia.

As long as the United States continues to view a troubled Middle East through a binary framework by treating states either as friends or foes, Washington disqualifies itself as a peacemaker.

Washington will have to realize that if the people of the Middle East are to survive, to stay on their land and to prosper there is no solution other than finding common ground among Israelis, Iranians and Arabs. The geopolitical conditions in the Middle East today are reminiscent of those in Europe before the First World War.

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journalist Abdul Rahman Awad, a correspondent ...  
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I retired from teaching in 2000; I had taught 42 years in the states and two Middle Eastern countries. at Retired Teacher

A thorough description of the whole, depressing situation. Thanks for information and clarity in the description of Middle East problems that can lead to upheaval.

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October 11, 2017 Ghassan Rubeiz

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**ACCESS Hosts Domestic Violence Fundraiser Oct. 19**

October 19 @ 6:00 pm - 11:30 pm

**Palestine Film Festival, Boston, Oct. 20-29**

October 20 - October 29

**Challenges of refugees to be address by AHRC Oct. 26**

October 26 @ 6:30 pm - 11:00 pm

**American Muslim Health Professionals Benefit**

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## Dinner Oct. 28

October 28 @ 6:00 pm - 10:00 pm

## Arab American Heritage Month, Illinois 2017

November 1 - November 30

## Arab Democrats host fundraiser for Kennedy

November 8 @ 7:00 pm - 11:00 pm

## Jerusalem focus on interfaith discussion Nov 12

November 12 @ 12:00 pm - 4:30 pm

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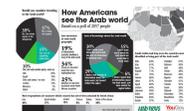
## Arab American journalists face industry bias



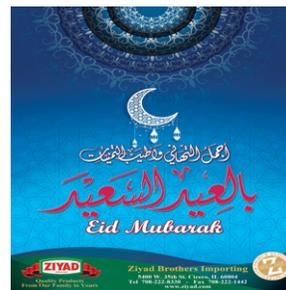
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