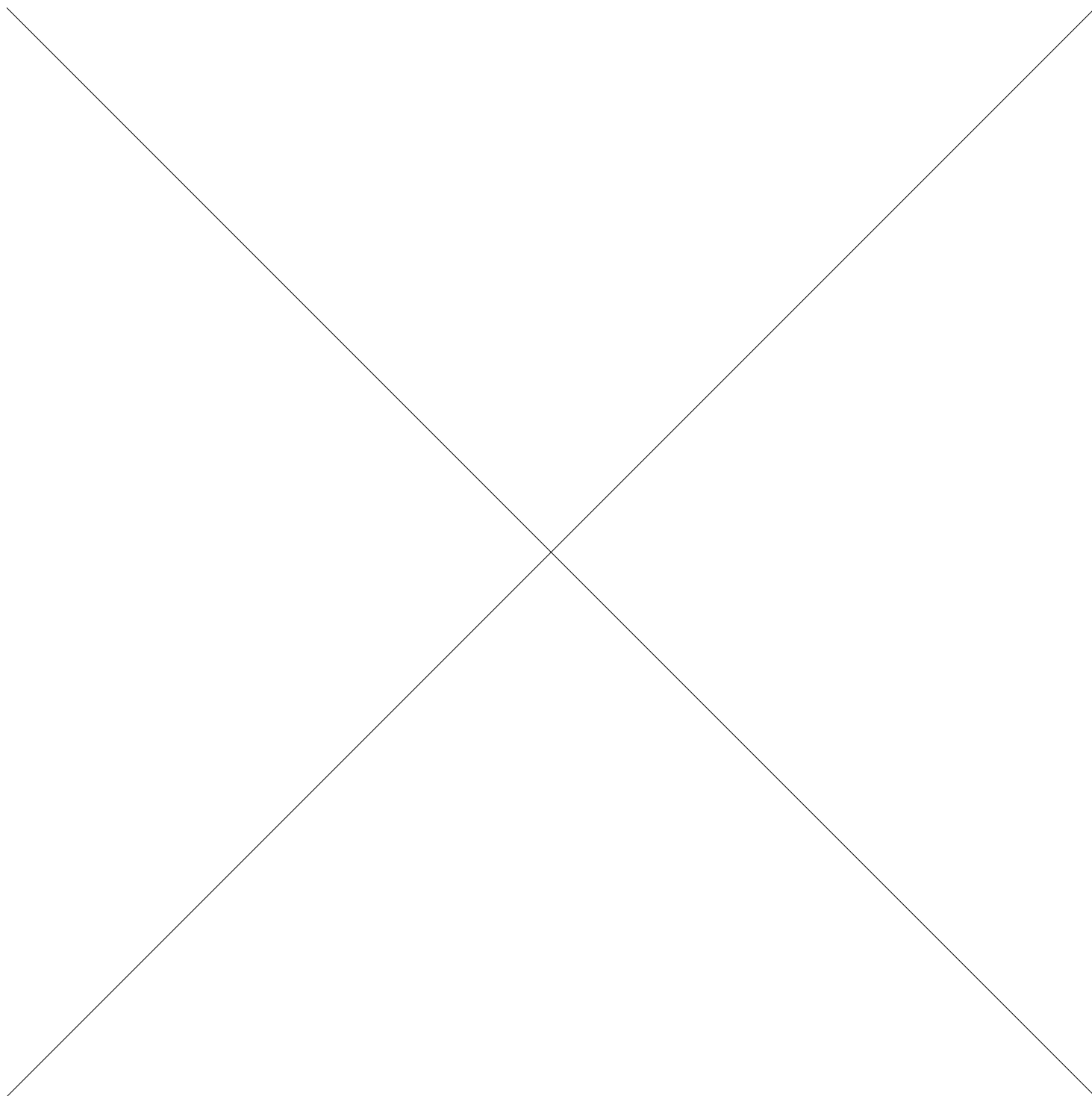




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 Global Power

Iranians fear the future after Trump exits Iran nuclear deal

With the agreement now on the rocks, some Iranians feel double-crossed by America and say they are pessimistic about their country's future.

by Ali Arouzi and Saphora Smith / May.10.2018 / 10:54 AM ET



A man reads a copy of Iran's Shargh daily newspaper featuring a photo of President Donald Trump on its front page on Wednesday.EPA

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TEHRAN, Iran — President [Donald Trump's withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal](#) has left a bitter taste in the mouths of many people here in the Islamic republic.

Many Iranians hoped the [Obama-era pact](#) would lead to prosperity and closer ties with the West.

But with [the agreement now on the rocks](#), some Iranians feel double-crossed by America and say they are pessimistic about their country's future.

Many Iranians feel they haven't seen the economic benefits of the nuclear deal. While it allowed Tehran to sell its crude oil and natural gas on the international market, Iran's economy remains weak with high unemployment and inflation.

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Azita Moghadam, a 25-year-old student, described Trump as a "racist and dishonest person who doesn't care about the people of Iran."

She added: "Iran's economy will take a hit by Trump's decision. A poor sense of security and poor economy are my biggest fear for the future."

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Hamid Salehi, 27, a car salesman, said he felt Iranians would face fewer opportunities to improve their livelihoods now that the nuclear deal was in doubt.

"We had high hopes of better relations with the world and easier business after the deal" he said. "That's all gone now."

Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, also criticized Trump for his decision.

"This man will turn to dust and his body will become food for worms and ants, and the Islamic republic will still be standing," he said, referring to the U.S. president. "I said many times from the first day: Don't trust America."



[Khamenei: Trump will 'will turn into ashes and food for worms'](#)

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Seyed Hossein Mousavian, a Middle East security and nuclear policy specialist at Princeton University who is a former spokesman for Iran in its nuclear negotiations with the West, said it was inevitable that Iranians would lose trust in the U.S. because of Trump's decision to violate the agreement.

He predicted that the country would no longer be prepared to "engage with the U.S. to negotiate on other disputed issues like weapons of mass destruction, terrorism and the regional conflicts."

Mousavian also suggested that Iran is now likely to turn its back on the West and instead build closer diplomatic and trade ties with Russia and China.



Iranians burn U.S. flags and makeshift Israeli flags on Wednesday. Atta Kenare / AFP - Getty Images

Dr. Mohammed Marandi, a professor at Tehran University and a political analyst, agreed.

“No group, no political faction that once said we should talk to America holds that position anymore, as a result it strengthens the argument that Iran should move closer to Russia and China,” he said.

Marandi said there had been a huge rise in the number of Iranian students and business owners going to China, accompanied by an increasing number of direct flights between the two countries in recent years. More Mandarin language courses have also become available in the country, including a degree program at the University of Tehran.

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Marandi said Trump's withdrawal from the pact leaves America being seen as “dishonest and unreliable, and unwilling to abide by its own commitments.”

A telephone survey of 1,003 Iranians conducted in April by IranPoll, a Toronto-based firm, found 67 percent of respondents felt the country should “retaliate” if the U.S. violated the nuclear deal. The survey had a margin of error of 3.1 percent.

Iranian lawmakers set fire to a paper U.S. flag in the Parliament Wednesday, while shouting “Death to America!” They also burned a piece of paper representing the nuclear deal and stomped on the papers’ ashes.



[U.S. flag set ablaze in Iran's parliament after Trump pulls out of nuclear deal](#)

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Although the burning of U.S. flags is common in Iran and harsh criticism of America has been a staple of Iranian politics for years, that was the first time observers could remember anything being set alight inside the Parliament.

And while chants of "Death to America" are commonplace in Iran, most Iranians frequently interact with the West, even if only through online videos and illegally obtained movies.

Many also have family members abroad, with Los Angeles a popular destination for Iranian ex-pats.

Ali Arouzi reported from Tehran, and Saphora Smith from London. Rima Abdelkader contributed reporting from New York.

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