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After the signing of the Agreement in Geneva between the Permanent Five of the UN Security Council, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia and China plus Germany (P-5+1) and Iran in July there was an outburst of twitter messages in many cities, not least in Teheran. One message from a young Iranian woman to her boyfriend read: “What this Agreement means to me is good-bye falafel and hello McDonald’s!” Lest my audience think this is a frivolous opening to a serious speech, let me cite a comment by Thomas Friedman, the New York Times correspondent published in 1996: “No two countries with a McDonald’s will ever go to war.” So perhaps this is a good portent.

It is important to keep in mind as we discuss the Agreement, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action the JCPOA, is that it already exists. It’s an agreement between the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) represented by the P-5+1 with Iran as to what Iran must do to restore itself as a compliant party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and to return to being a full-fledged member of the world community. It has already been approved by a 15 to 0 vote in the UNSC shortly after its signature and by its terms will come into full force 90 days later, in mid-October, no matter what the United States does. The debate in the United States is over whether Congress should pass a resolution of disapproval which would prevent the President from carrying out U.S. obligations under the JCPOA – the lifting of sanctions – forcing the United States to drop out of the Agreement. But all the sanctions on Iran related to its nuclear program will go away whatever the United States does, either gradually

over ten years as set forth in the JCPOA or immediately because the Agreement falls apart as the result of U.S. withdrawal.

In discussing the Agreement with Iran we should make several assumptions.

First, the Iranian people represent the most pro-American populace— except for Israel— in the Middle East. They are overwhelmingly middle class, many wear blue jeans, are the most internet connected in that part of the world, and a very large number have relatives in Los Angeles or elsewhere in the U.S. They come from an ancient and rich culture; a medieval Persian poet, Rumi, is today the most popular poet in the United States. And Iran has many of the same enemies as the U.S.: Al Qaeda, the Taliban, and ISIS.

Second, the Iranian government on the other hand, has been truly terrible and many key players who were there in the past are still there: Iranian dissidents were assassinated all over Europe in the 1990s; Hezbollah, Iran's agent in Lebanon, attacked the U.S. Marine Barracks and the U.S. Embassy there in 1983, killing nearly 250 Marines and many at the Embassy; thousands of political prisoners have been killed in Iran over the years; in 1996 the German Supreme Court indicted the Iranian Minister of Intelligence (who is still in the government) for ordering the murder of four Iranian dissidents in Germany.

Third, because we believe that the government of Iran has behaved so badly is no reason not to make an agreement with Iran. We don't need an agreement with Canada. It is your enemies (for example, the former Soviet Union) with whom you need agreements.

Turning to the Iranian nuclear program, one should note that Iran has been pursuing nuclear weapons for many years. With the assistance of France, Germany and South Africa— not opposed by the US—Iran began building a large nuclear infrastructure in the 1970s under the Shah. Two large reactors were under construction by Siemen's of Germany on the Persian Gulf not far from Bagdad. The probable goal was 20 reactors; in 2004 a former Foreign Minister under the Shah confirmed that Iran's nuclear program under the Shah had a dual purpose, to provide power and to give Iran the nuclear option.

After the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Khomeini initially declared that nuclear weapons were un-Islamic and the reactor program was not pursued with the reactors left unfinished. Khomeini changed his mind during the Iran-Iraq war but Iran's program did not truly begin again until after Khomeini's death in the late 1980s. Efforts were undertaken to contract with Russia to rebuild one of the two Bushehr reactors, both of which were badly damaged during the war. Also, Iran made a secret agreement with A.Q. Khan, the rogue Pakistani nuclear proliferator to supply centrifuge machines to produce enriched uranium and possibly the design of a Chinese nuclear weapon (which Khan did supply to Libya in more or less the same time frame). Iran in 2000 began the construction of a large underground facility at Natanz, capable of housing a pilot plant of around 1000 centrifuges plus a much larger chamber which could hold up to 50,000 centrifuges. The larger chamber had the potential to give Iran the ability to construct nuclear weapons on an industrial scale-up to 20 a year. Iran also began building a heavy water plutonium production reactor at Arak, modeled on the North Korean reactor at Yongbyon which was the foundation of the nuclear weapon program in that country.

In 2002 at the National Press Club the MEK, a former terrorist organization in Iran and at the time for some years a wholly owned subsidiary of Saddam Hussein (later referred to as an Iranian dissident organization) publically revealed the existence of the construction at Natanz and Arak. In 2003 Iran admitted that in failing to report the transactions with A.Q. Khan it had violated its NPT Safeguards Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and promised to never do that again. The United States had the opportunity to turn the Iranian program in 1997, 2001, and 2003 but failed to follow through on any of these opportunities. The Iranian nuclear program became a national program.

In 2003 the EU-3 (Britain, France, and Germany), later joined by the U.S. began negotiations with Iran. Over the years the U.S. –as did the EU-3– insisted that Iran agree to forswear enrichment before serious negotiations could begin. Iran consistently refused and over the years went from 164 operating centrifuges, to thousands by 2008 when these negotiations were discontinued. Today the number of centrifuge machines in Iran is 19,000.

In the last few years, since 2010, the U.S. has hugely ramped up the sanctions on Iran with the cooperation of the EU, Russia and China. Severe sanctions were placed on banking,

oil, shipping, gold etc. on the understanding that this was being done to achieve a diplomatic solution. Also in 2009 it was revealed by the U.S. the U.K., and France that Iran was building a second enrichment site, deep inside a mountain near Qom. It was claimed by the West Iran's failure to report this new site was a second Safeguards violation although this was somewhat controversial as the IAEA rule requiring notification at the time of the completion of construction was changed to the commencement of construction while Qom (known as Fordow) was being built. In 2013 President Rouhani was elected in Iran on a platform of improving relations with the West and negotiations between the P-5+ 1 with Iran, which had begun some months earlier were intensified. Rouhani on entering these more intense negotiations had Supreme Leader Khamenei's support.

But you ask, why would Iran want nuclear weapons?

First, a reason that the Islamic Republic shares with the government of the Shah. Since the earliest days of the Cold War, at least among major states, what distinguished Great Powers from lesser states, has been nuclear weapons.

Second, nuclear weapons in the eyes of the Iranian government would give Iran more influence in the region.

Third, Iran is surrounded by nuclear weapons, Israel to the west, Russia to the north, Pakistan to the east and U.S. carrier based weapons to the south.

Fourth, Pakistan is a Sunni state, Iran the principal Shia state. If the Pakistani Taliban ever took power in Islamabad, Iran could reasonable fear nuclear attack. One has only to recall the continuing violence between Sunni and Shia in Iraq and Syria. President Rafsanjani of Iran expressed this concern publically at the time of the Pakistan tests in 1998.

Iran today could probably build a nuclear weapon in a few months given its scientific expertise and the amount of low enriched uranium that it now has. Why did Iran choose to negotiate at this time?

First, there is a major demographic issue. At the beginning of the Islamic Republic women were encouraged to have as many children as possible. Then when the government saw how rapidly the Iranian population was increasing it completely changed that policy and urged small families. The result is that now there is a huge population bulge of people in their 20s with no jobs.

Second, sanctions have wrecked the economy, particularly oil and banking.

Third, the Iranian people are every tired of being isolated and Teheran doesn't want another Green Revolution.

Fourth, Iran is fearful that if it creates a nuclear weapon stockpile, Saudi Arabia would promptly acquire weapons from Pakistan - as the financier of their nuclear program—and deploy them on the missiles they possess which are easily capable of reaching Teheran. This would be a worse threat than Israel, and its Sunni vs. Shia again,

Now let us turn to a brief overview of the actual text of the JCPOA:

Enrichment

- 1 - Iran must reduce its number of deployed centrifuge machines by two-thirds. Iran may keep only 6,140 active centrifuges, only 5,060 operating for enrichment purposes

at Natanz, the remainder will be at Fordow but not operating. The excess centrifuges will be dismantled and placed in IAEA monitored storage. There will be enrichment at Natanz only and only with older type of centrifuges. These requirements will last for ten years.

- 2 - Iran may enrich only to 3.67 percent. It must reduce its current stockpile of enriched uranium from 10,000 kilos to 300 kilos of 3.67 percent enriched uranium. No new enrichment plant may be built. These requirements will last for 15 years,
- 3 - Fordow will be made into a science center, no enrichment there for 15 years.
- 4 - Arak Reactor: It will be converted into a new type altogether and will produce almost no plutonium.
- 5 - Thus, Iran must eliminate 98 percent of the enriched uranium it possess, including all of the 20 percent enriched; two thirds of its centrifuges will be dismantled and stored under IAEA monitoring; the Arak reactor will be disabled and converted; and enrichment at Fordow will be terminated. These are the requirements for initial implementation.

Verification and Enforcement

There will be very intrusive countrywide IAEA inspections on an almost continuous bases as well as a robust dispute resolution process with snapback sanctions if there is judged to be a violation.

Sanctions

Some Iran nuclear sanctions will be lifted, upon initial implementation as described above. Some of the major sanctions will be lifted after the passage of eight years and a declaration by the IAEA that Iran's program is transparent and peaceful and the remainder after 10 years as the UNSC declares the completion of its supervision of the issue.

Procurement

Procurement for the Iran nuclear program will be closely monitored. Uranium production will be monitored for 25 years.

Research and Development

There will be strict limits on research and development of the Iran program for ten years. The phasing in of modern centrifuges at Natanz can begin after 10 years.

The period of time in which Iran could break out of the Agreement and build a nuclear weapon has been increased from the present few weeks to 10-12 months. And also one of the preambular paragraphs in the Agreement should be mentioned in which "Iran reaffirms that under no circumstances will Iran ever seek, develop or acquire nuclear weapons." It should be noted that no other country in the world has made such an unequivocal and unconditional commitment.

What are the benefits of the Agreement?

First, it reaffirms American world leadership.

Second, the JCPOA places well defined limits on Iran's nuclear program lasting between 10 and 15 years, immeasurably enhancing confidence during the Agreement's term that Iran will not seek or acquire a nuclear weapon.

Third, it provides the basis for transparency of procurement and verification of nuclear activities so that the IAEA is enabled to determine that Iran's program is fully understood as exclusively peaceful.

What are the possible negative consequences of the Agreement and the risks if Congress blocks U.S. participation? The principal negative of the Agreement is the \$50 - 100 billion of Iran's own money that will be unfrozen after all these years, this money could be used to support aggressive actions in the Middle East. But this amount is a pittance compared to the money that will flow as the sanctions are removed, particularly on oil and banking. And the sanctions will come off either immediately should Congress block U.S. participation in the Agreement and the Agreement collapses - all of the U.S. negotiating partners have made clear they will no longer support the sanctions if the U.S. withdraws from the Agreement - or gradually pursuant to the operations of the JCPOA.

Second, Iran could violate the Agreement. If Iran violates the Agreement, we would know it and the sanctions would return.

The risks if the U.S. Congress rejects the Agreement and prevents the President from lifting the sanctions as required by the Agreement would include:

It would signal the beginning of the end of U.S. world political leadership, we would become irrelevant, we would never be able again to put together a coalition like the present P-5+ 1 coalition;

Iran would be completely unconstrained - unlike now. The sanctions regime since 2010 - the first effective one on Iran - put together by the U.S. including the P-5+1, the European Union and the rest of the world was based on the U.S. leading the world to seek a diplomatic solutions to the Iran nuclear issue. If Congress rejects the Agreement all that would be gone and would not return.

On August 6 the Deputy Ambassadors in Washington of the others of the P-5+ 1 the United Kingdom, France, Russia, China and Germany briefed 25 Democratic Senators. Every

one of these five diplomats said that if the President is prevented from lifting sanctions as required under the JCPOA by Congress rejecting the Agreement:

- 1- International sanctions would collapse.
- 2- Iran would ramp up its nuclear program - probably to the 190,000 centrifuges of which the Supreme Leader spoke.
- 3- There would be no possibility of getting Iran back to the negotiating table - Iran might become a nuclear power or near nuclear power
- 4- Europe, Russia and China all see rich trading profits in Iran and want to begin trading right away. A German trade delegation of 100 prominent business leaders has already been to Tehran to be shortly followed by a 70 - 80 person delegation of French businessmen. It should be noted that the U.S. 1996 attempt to enact third country sanctions - that is any firm that trades with Iran, can't trade with the U.S. - failed because the European Union adopted legislation prohibiting any European company from cooperation with this U.S. legislation and threatens to take a complaint against the U.S. to the World Trade Organization dispute process.

And military action is no solution. The American people do not want such a war, it would be far larger than the Iraq war.

Robert Gates, the former U. S. Defense Secretary has said a military attack on Iran by the U.S. could:

- 1 - bring together a divided nation, determined to get the bomb;

- 2 - the Iran nuclear weapon program would go deeper and be more covert and Iran would get the bomb;
- 3- diplomacy and economic pressure is the best course, everything else is a two to three year solution;

Congress he said should approve the Agreement even if it doesn't like it.

Israeli hints at a simple military "haircut" for Iran every now and then, like they do to Gaza is an illusion - Iran is not Gaza.

The bottom line is:

Do we want to make it very difficult perhaps impossible for Iran to acquire nuclear weapons - then support the Agreement; do we want to make it easy and virtually certain that Iran will get the bomb - then reject the Agreement.

A final thought, support the Agreement but as Ronald Reagan said "Trust but Verify".