

Can Israel Survive Obama's Presidency?

When, in 2012, I authored a cautionary tale about the dangers of a nuclear Iran, I never imagined a U.S. president who would, just a few years later, actively try to strengthen Iran's geopolitical and financial position while providing international legitimacy to the Iranian nuclear program. But sometimes truth is scarier than fiction.

In my thriller, 35 Israeli submariners must decide what to do after Iran gets the bomb. In an unexpected twist on fiction, a small group of undecided members of Congress may similarly have to determine the course of history. They represent the last chance for a democracy to reject the nuclear appeasement of the Ayatollahs. There are reportedly 26 Senate Democrats currently in favor of President Obama's Iran deal; so eight more are needed to sustain Obama's veto of a Congressional resolution disapproving of the Iran agreement.

But as ineptly negotiated as the Iran agreement is, defeating it would probably be worse, given the political realities. The best possible outcome, at this point, would be a Congressional resolution that rejects the Iran deal but then gets vetoed by Obama.

Why? Because if Congress overrides Obama's veto and defeats the deal, Iran will likely use that as an excuse to abandon whatever limited and temporary constraints it accepted under the agreement. Iran can then—at a time of its choosing—race toward nukes while Obama is still in office, secure in the knowledge that Obama wouldn't dare to stop Iran militarily.

If Obama cowered from enforcing his no-chemical-weapons “red line” against the far-weaker Syrian regime in 2013, there is no chance Obama would militarily confront Iran over its

nuclear program (and he essentially admitted as much in an Israeli television interview). Lest anyone doubt Obama's enforcement laxity, he has already accepted Iran's brazen violations of existing sanctions.

Incidentally, Obama claimed that "diplomacy" could handle the Syrian chemical weapons threat more effectively than force could, but now ISIS is gassing the Kurds with impunity, which undermines any notion that diplomacy will prevent nuclear abuses. In the Middle East, strength is far more respected than diplomacy, and it's clear that Obama projects weakness to foes and friends alike. Indeed, senior Iranian military leaders have openly laughed at the emptiness of Obama's military threats.

Not only will Obama fail to take any military action against Iranian nukes, he will probably thwart any Israeli operations to that effect. The Obama administration reportedly floated the idea of attacking Israeli jets en route to destroy Iran's nuclear program. Incredibly, Obama's Iran deal arguably obligates the U.S. to help Iran protect its nuclear program from an Israeli attack.

The Islamic Republic couldn't have a greater ally in the White House, and therefore would probably exploit a Congressional defeat of the Iran deal in order to race towards a nuclear weapon with impunity.

American Jews would also be harmed by the defeat of Obama's Iran deal: Obama and his supporters would fuel anti-Semitism by alleging excessive Jewish power even more than they already have, and Jews and Israel would be blamed if Iran abandoned the agreement and dashed toward nukes—particularly if any military conflagration ensued.

As dangerous and risky as it is for Israel to undertake a unilateral military strike on Iran's hardened and dispersed nuclear sites, such an operation is effectively impossible as

long as Obama is in office. During Operation Protective Edge last summer, Obama reminded Israel that he could endanger the tiny state in the middle of war by refusing to resupply its military, and his FAA isolated Israel by imposing a ban on flights to Israel after just 13 days of conflict (it took about three years of war in Syria for the FAA to take the same action there).

On the diplomatic front, Obama has already threatened to withhold diplomatic support for Israel at the U.N. on the Palestinian issue, so on the Iranian nuclear issue—his legacy foreign policy “achievement”—he would be far more dangerous to Israel at the U.N.

The Obama administration has also leaked highly sensitive information to Israel’s detriment, from Israel’s attacks on Syrian weapons transfers to Hezbollah, to details about Israel’s nuclear program.

In addition to the already abundant evidence of Obama’s anti-Israel animus, Michael Oren, Israel’s former ambassador to the U.S., detailed Obama’s hostility towards Israel in his recently published memoir, *Ally*.

Given the Obama administration’s willingness to harm Israel, the Jewish state simply cannot risk a major military operation as long as Obama is in office. Thus, the pro-Iranian nuclear deal is now, thanks to Obama, the only way to stop Iranian nukes until Obama leaves office.

Fifty-six percent of Americans think Congress should reject the deal with Iran, and 60 percent disapprove of Obama’s handling of the U.S. relationship with Iran, according to the latest CNN/ORC poll. Congressional rejection of the deal will officially reflect these sentiments and undermine the deal’s legitimacy (despite Obama’s subsequent veto)—particularly because Obama purposely rammed the accord through the U.N. Security Council in order to make it a fait accompli that

deprives Congress of any meaningful constitutional role in the process.

But if Congress officially rejects Obama's disastrous deal and it survives only by Obama's veto, the next president can more legitimately rescind it and—with the help of traditional Mideast allies—stop Iranian nuclear ambitions and hegemony.

Unfortunately, Obama's policies have made the job of his successor much harder. The next president will face a far stronger and less isolated Iran, economically empowered by a world rushing to do business with the Ayatollahs. Iran's \$150 billion post-sanctions windfall will increase Iranian financial support for terrorist groups (as Obama officials now concede) and boost Iran's military capabilities. (Russia just agreed to sell Iran its advanced, S-300 long-range, surface-to-air missile systems, complicating future missions to destroy Iranian nukes.)

Until the 45th president assumes office on Jan. 20, 2017, those concerned about Obama's reckless and feckless foreign policy and his increasingly imperial presidency need to keep him on the defensive by focusing public attention on Obama administration controversies, many of which involve abuses of power that should interest the mainstream media. The busier Obama is defending his prior excesses, the less he can commit new ones during the rest of his tenure.

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