

Security Expert: 'Keep the Sanctions in Place'

Dan Diker says one needs only to consider Iran's track record to predict what could happen if it gained nuclear weapons capabilities. Obviously, peace and diplomacy are not on the Iranian regime's agenda.

As the former senior policy analyst and director of the Institute for Contemporary Affairs at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs and now host of "National Security" on the Voice of Israel global radio network, Diker believes that a nuclear weapon in the hands of the Iranians could produce cataclysmic repercussions for Israel, the United States and other Western world powers. And the recent accord struck between Iran and the U.S. in Switzerland has done little to temper Diker's apprehensions.

"According to their religion of Islam, Iranians are commanded to engage in massive violence to bring about the shift in the world order that will lead to the appearance of their Imam," said Diker, who is also a research fellow at the International Institute for Counter Terrorism at the IDC Herzliya. "For Iranians, a quick path to heaven is the use of the atomic bomb. There is no ethic of self-preservation there whatsoever. It's that type of thinking that has Israel and should have many other countries around the world concerned."

Two major points of last week's nuclear deal remained unresolved, the *Wall Street Journal* reported this week. It still is not clear as to when current sanctions against Iran would be eased; nor was it determined how quickly Iran would be able to enhance its nuclear activity after the first decade of a 25-year period.

The deal allows Iran to keep enriching uranium, which

justifiably worries Israeli officials. American officials told the *Wall Street Journal* that the deal would “keep Iran at least a year from amassing enough nuclear fuel to develop a nuclear weapon.”

In return, the severe sanctions currently imposed against Iran that have cut that country’s oil exports in half for the past two years, would be lifted.

One thing is clear, Diker says, and that’s Iran’s intentions when it obtains nuclear weapons capabilities—the destruction of Israel. Those intentions, along with tumultuous history with Iran and terrorist organizations associated with it, certainly have the Israeli government more than on guard.

In 1947, Iran was one of 13 countries that voted against the U.N. Partition Plan for Palestine. In 1949, Iran voted against Israel’s admission to the United Nations. In 1979, Iran severed all diplomatic and commercial ties with Israel.

The terrorist organization Hezbollah was born out of Iran in 1982, and relations with Israel steadily worsened. In 1992, the Islamic Jihad Organization, linked to Iran and Hezbollah, claimed responsibility for a suicide bomber attack on the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in which four Israelis and many Argentine civilians, including children, were killed.

“Israel has had very negative experiences with the Iranian regime in the past,” Diker said. “This isn’t new. Israeli officials have been very suspicious of the Iranian regime for a long time, and the West should be just as suspicious of it if not more. This nuclear deal is dangerous, and western officials should see that.”

U.S. President Barack Obama is convinced the nuclear deal with Iran is a “historic understanding between the two countries.

“I am convinced that if this framework leads to a final,

comprehensive deal, it will make our country, our allies and our world safer," Obama was quoted as saying in the *Wall Street Journal* after the deal was struck last week. "This has been a long time in coming."

Members of the U.S. Congress and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vehemently disagreed with Obama. Netanyahu said the deal would "threaten the survival of his country," the *Wall Street Journal* said.

The deal could also, as some fear, ignite a nuclear arms race in the region.

"I recently had a 30-second conversation with a Jordanian official, and he said, 'Christians (the U.S.) have the bomb, Sunnis (Pakistan) has the bomb, Jews have the bomb. Why don't Shiites have the bomb? We deserve it too,'" Diker said.

An end-of-June deadline has been imposed to reach a final agreement with Iran. the *Wall Street Journal* reports that there is bipartisan support for a bill that could give Congress the right to review any deal before sanctions against Iran are lifted. President Obama has threatened to veto it.

"If there is one thing that can't be stressed enough, it's these five words: keep the sanctions in place," Diker said. "That is what will save the West and Israel from an undesirable outcome. These sanctions are crippling this criminal regime, and I think it would bring them to their knees if the sanctions were tightened."