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How Will We Stop Iran?

Iran's global jihad seizes new ground, fortified by an obsessive quest for nuclear arms. Negotiations are failing. Do we need tougher sanctions?

Iran's Islamic fundamentalist leaders are sworn by their nation's constitution to pursue world conquest through jihad. Through global terror campaigns, Iran has already achieved dominance in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen. It openly threatens to destroy Israel. Despite decades of Western-imposed trade embargos and sanctions, as well as recent U.S.-led negotiations, Iran's drive to amass nuclear arms continues unabated, and its leaders vow not to give up their quest. What more must the U.S. and the world do to stop Iran's apocalyptic nuclear threat?

What are the facts?

Iran is by far the world's most aggressive perpetrator of terrorist acts. It provides direct funding and leadership to Islamic terror groups Hizbollah, Hamas, Houthi rebels in Yemen, and Shiite militias in Iraq, as well as the ruthless Assad regime in Syria. The Islamic republic also has been tied to bloody attacks on civilians in nations as far flung as India, Thailand, Saudi Arabia and Bulgaria, as well as an attempted assassination of the Saudi Ambassador in Washington, DC. Iran was recently implicated in the 1994 bombing of a Jewish center in Argentina and a murderous cover-up attempt. But Iran's most belligerent threats have been directed at Israel, which Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei vows to "annihilate."

Iran's terrorist tactics are motivated by its drive to become the dominant power in the Middle East. The Shiite ideology of Iran's leaders commands Muslims to wage global jihad, and their constitution commits them to "the establishment of a universal holy government and the downfall of all others." So far Iran's strategy has been successful, as its controlling influence now spreads over Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and most recently Yemen. More critically, Iran has an effective chokehold over the Gulf of Hormuz, through which much of the world's oil travels.

No wonder most of the world's nations, especially Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt, are horrified at the prospect of Iran acquiring nuclear weapons. In fact, a nuclear Iran threatens the worldwide balance of power, particularly in the inflammable Middle East. For Israel, a nuclear-armed Iran poses an imminent threat to its very existence.

Unfortunately, the West, and particularly the United States, must share the blame for allowing Iran to increase its hegemony and acquire nuclear weapons capability. The U.S. pulled out of Lebanon in 1983 after an Iranian-engineered bomb killed 241 Marines, facilitating the rise of Shiite Hizbollah terrorists. When the U.S. pulled out of Iraq in 2011, Iran stepped in, seizing control of Shiite militias and exerting decisive influence on the Iraqi government. Syria's

President Bashar Assad, roiled in a bloody civil war, has essentially become a proxy for Iran, and the Houthis, who just violently took control of former U.S. ally Yemen, are also on Iran's payroll. While the U.S. has designated Iran a state sponsor of terrorism and instituted a trade embargo in 1995, the Islamic republic's warlike acts against the U.S., Israel and many other nations have only increased. To halt Iran's nuclear weapons development, the West imposed sanctions in 2006, but Iran's centrifuges continue to spin defiantly.

"Of course we bypass the sanctions, and we take pride in it."

Iran's President Hassan Rouhani

Despite intense recent negotiations between the U.S. and

Iran to reach a peaceful resolution, several deadlines for settlement have passed, and Iran still refuses to cease nuclear weapons development. Indeed, recent investigations indicate that Iran has already violated existing agreements by establishing secret nuclear supply networks. Iran's President Hassan Rouhani boasts, "Of course we bypass the sanctions, and we take pride in it." No wonder a majority of the U.S. Congress urgently supports harsh new sanctions on Iran unless it immediately agrees to give up weapons-grade nuclear enrichment and ballistic missile programs. President Obama, however, promises to veto any such measure, arguing that increased sanction threats will frighten the Iranians from further negotiations.

What is the solution? Most Americans share the President's hopes that Iran can be persuaded to set aside its nuclear ambitions—and its vendetta against Israel—through diplomacy. But one thing is certain: *Iran is our enemy.* Appeasement will not work. It is only crippling Western economic sanctions, backed by the threat of force, that have driven Iran to the negotiating table.

Above all, Iran must decommission its nuclear weapons infrastructure now. To this end, Senators Robert Menendez (D-NJ) and Senator Mark Kirk (R-IL) have introduced the Nuclear Weapons Free Iran Act of 2015, which toughens sanctions if Iran refuses to comply, thus strengthening the U.S. hand in forging an agreement that peacefully eliminates the Iranian nuclear threat.

Since sanctions brought the Iranians to the table, sanctions are the most powerful, peaceful means for convincing them to abandon plans to acquire nuclear weapons. But because the Iranians continue to declare themselves implacably committed to nuclear development, it's time to ratchet up economic pressure. The Nuclear Weapon Free Iran Act should be passed now. The survival of the world is at stake.

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146

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