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July 11, 2023

Why Biden's new "Iran Deal Lite" raises alarm from Congress and U.S. allies

Dear Friend of Israel, Dear Friend of FLAME:

Since Iran has defiantly rebuked recent U.S. efforts to renew the failed 2015 nuclear deal, President Biden is trying Plan C—a dramatically weakened strategy to “contain” instead of “prevent” Iran’s nuclear weapons development.

This new approach has alarm bells going off in the U.S. Congress and among America's allies, because it is even worse than the 2015 deal. It allows Iran to build nuclear weapons in a much shorter timeframe and gives the Iranians time to build facilities that can protect their nuclear program from attacks.

Preventing Iran from making further advances in their nuclear capabilities could become nearly impossible.

A senior official in the Biden Administration admits there have been ongoing, indirect talks with the Iranian government in Oman. The administration denies any deals were concluded, but former Iranian lawmaker Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh claims a deal was reached.

Under the terms of the supposed deal, Iran would pledge not to enrich uranium above its current level of 60% and would not add to the amount currently enriched to that level. Iran would also release dual U.S.-Iranian citizens currently in its custody. In exchange, the U.S. would provide Iran with about \$20 billion in sanctions relief.

Preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons has always been America's solemn, unyielding promise—from Obama and Trump to Biden.

While the stated goal of Obama’s 2015 JCPOA “Iran Deal,” was to “prevent” Iran *absolutely* from acquiring nuclear weapons, in fact his deal had a sunset clause that permitted Iran almost fully to return to nuclear weapons development by 2026.

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Now, because of Biden's failure to resuscitate Obama's failed "Iran Deal"—and his fallback to mere "containment"—America's allies feel compelled to take their own actions to protect themselves from a nuclear Iran.

If Iran is allowed to obtain nuclear weapons, other countries in the Middle East will follow suit. Moreover, the sanctions relief Biden is promising will also provide Iran massive funding for its belligerent agenda in the region.

In short, President Biden must recommit to preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. Failing to do so will destabilize the Middle East, encourage Iran's imperialist ambitions, and likely lead to a bloody regional conflict unlike the world has ever seen.

No wonder Biden wants his new, emaciated deal to be informal, allowing him to bypass Congress, where such an agreement would face stiff opposition. In fact, recently, 249 lawmakers—more than half the House of Representatives—sent a joint letter to Biden urging him to take additional steps to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons. The Senate also sent a similar letter.

U.S. lawmakers' opposition to Biden's new strategy is well-founded. For instance, 60% enrichment is much higher than the 3.67% limit imposed by the JCPOA, and much closer to the 90% enrichment level that is considered weapons grade. In fact, even at its current level of enrichment, Iran now has enough material to manufacture five nuclear bombs.

Furthermore, according to a top U.S. Defense Department official, Iran could make enough fissile material for one bomb in as little as 12 days.

The "understanding" Biden is trying to reach with Iran also gives the mullahs more time to build nuclear facilities impervious to attacks by the U.S. and its allies. This would make it nearly impossible to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons in the future.

Indeed, as we speak, in the Zagros Mountains of central Iran, the Iranians are building nuclear facilities so deep underground that they would likely be impervious to U.S. weapons.

In the face of the potential U.S. retreat, America's allies, including the UK, the EU and Israel, are raising alarms and seeking independent alternatives. Recently, for example, European diplomats informed the Iranians that they plan to maintain EU sanctions on Iran's ballistic missile program, which were scheduled to expire this October per the JCPOA.

Iran's missile program is a serious threat, as these missiles can be enabled to deliver nuclear weapons. Indeed, the Trump Administration cited Iran's high-powered missile program as one of the reasons for withdrawing from the JCPOA. Such missiles have previously been used to target U.S. troops in the Middle East.

Just this past May, Iran tested a missile with a range of 2,000 km (1,242 miles)—enough to hit most of the Middle East and parts of Israel. The Israeli

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government has said it will take unilateral military action to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons if the U.S. and its allies fail to do so.

Failing to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons will almost certainly push other countries in the Middle East to pursue their own nuclear weapons programs. In an interview with CBS, for example, Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman said, "Saudi Arabia does not want to acquire any nuclear bomb, but without a doubt if Iran developed a nuclear bomb, we will follow suit as soon as possible."

Other regional powers, including Egypt, Algeria and Turkey already have or are currently building facilities for producing materials for nuclear weapons. Turkey is also developing nuclear-capable missiles. Thus, containing Iran's nuclear program instead of preventing it will almost certainly provoke an arms race in the region that could lead to catastrophic consequences.

Iran will also most definitely use the \$20 billion in sanctions relief that Biden is offering to finance longer-range ICBMs, promote terrorism throughout the region, and extend its imperialistic hegemony.

Now, as always, the prospect of a nuclear-armed Iran is a nightmare. The Biden Administration must stick to its previous commitment to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons. Simply trying to contain Iran's nuclear ambitions is a recipe for regional instability, increased Iranian aggression and a potential Middle East war. The U.S. and its allies don't want it and cannot afford it.

A cliché though it may be, the adage about an ounce of prevention being worth a pound of cure seems particularly apt in the case of a nuclear-armed Iran.

I urge you in conversations with friends, colleagues and family—and in letters to the editor—to emphasize that Biden must never allow Iran to obtain nuclear weapons, and that his new strategy of containment will most certainly lead to disaster.

I hope you'll also take a minute, while you have this material front and center, to forward this message to friends, visit FLAME's lively [Facebook page](#) and review the P.S. immediately below. It describes FLAME's new *hasbarah* campaign—"Demand Justice for Jewish Students"—which exposes rising attacks on Jewish college students' identity and how these acts of antisemitism can be defeated.

Best regards,
Jason Shvili, Contributing Editor
Facts and Logic About the Middle East (FLAME))

P.S. You've surely seen headlines describing increasing attacks on Jewish students—in the classroom and in the public square—by radical anti-Zionist students, as well as faculty members. So far, university administrators have failed to prevent this kind of antisemitism on campus. At the heart of this discrimination, Israel's enemies outrageously claim that Zionism is not part of being Jewish. No wonder

more and more Jewish students are hiding their Jewish identities on campus. I think you'll agree that we supporters of Israel need to speak out. FLAME's new hasbarah—explanatory message—“[Demand Justice for Jewish Students](#)”—tells how recent law suits based on Title VI anti-discrimination laws are putting pressure on college administrators to protect Jewish students from such attacks. I hope you'll review this convincing, fact-based editorial, which FLAME recently published in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *New York Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Houston Chronicle*, *Star Tribune*, *Los Angeles Times* and *Newsmax*. This piece will also be sent to all members of Congress, Vice President Harris and President Biden. If you agree that this kind of public relations effort on Israel's behalf is critical, I urge you to [support us](#).

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PO Box 3460
Berkeley, CA 94703

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