

How Is Restoring Iran Nuclear Pact Vital for Global Energy Security?

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Last June, the [Associated Press reported](#) [1] the largest warship in the Iranian navy caught fire and later sank in the Gulf of Oman under unclear circumstances. The blaze began around midnight and firefighters tried to contain it, but their efforts failed to save the 207-meter Kharg, which was used to resupply other ships in the fleet at sea and conduct training exercises. The Fars News Agency reported 400 sailors and trainee cadets on board fled the vessel, with 33 suffering injuries.

The ship sank near the Iranian port of Jask, some 1,270 kilometers southeast of Tehran on the Gulf of Oman near the Strait of Hormuz — the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf. Photos circulated on Iranian social media showed sailors wearing life jackets evacuating the vessel as a fire burned behind them.

Meanwhile, a massive fire broke out at the oil refinery serving Iran’s capital, sending thick plumes of black smoke over Tehran. Similarly, last April, an Iranian ship MV Saviz believed to be an Iranian Revolutionary Guard base and anchored for years in the Red Sea off Yemen was targeted in an attack suspected to have been carried out by Israel.

Among the major attacks to target Iran, none have struck deeper than two explosions in July 2020 and then again in April last year at its Natanz nuclear facility. Former chief of Israel’s Mossad intelligence service Yossi Cohen offered the closest acknowledgment yet that his country was behind the attacks targeting Iran’s nuclear program and the assassination of a military scientist.

While Cohen was being interviewed in investigative program Uvda of Israel’s Channel 12 in a segment aired last June, the interviewer, journalist Ilana Dayan, offered a detailed description of how Israel snuck the explosives into Natanz’s underground halls.

The man who was responsible for these explosions, it became clear, made sure to supply to the Iranians the marble foundation on which the centrifuges were placed, Dayan said. “As they install this foundation within the Natanz facility, they have no idea that it already

includes an enormous amount of explosives.”

They also discussed the November 2020 killing of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, an Iranian scientist who began Tehran’s military nuclear program decades ago. While Cohen on camera didn’t claim the killing, Dayan in the segment described Cohen as having “personally signed off on the entire campaign.” Dayan also described how a remotely operated machinegun fixed to a pickup truck killed Fakhrizadeh and later self-destructed.

A [joint American-Israeli program](#) [2], involving a series of short-of-war clandestine strikes, aimed at taking out the most prominent generals of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) and targeting Iran’s power stations, industrial infrastructure, and missile and nuclear facilities has been going on since early 2020 after the commander of IRGC’s Quds Force General Qassem Soleimani was assassinated in an American airstrike at the Baghdad airport on January 3, 2020.

Besides pandering to Zionist lobbies in Washington, another purpose of these subversive attacks has been to avenge a string of audacious attacks mounted by the Iran-backed forces against the US strategic interests in the Persian Gulf that brought the US and Iran to the brink of a full-scale war in September 2019.

In addition to planting limpet mines on oil tankers off the coast of UAE in May 2019 and the subsequent downing of the American Global Hawk surveillance drone in the Persian Gulf by Iran, the brazen attack on the Abqaiq petroleum facility and the Khurais oil field in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia on September 14, 2019, was the third major attack in the Persian Gulf against the assets of Washington and its regional allies.

The “sacrilegious assault” on the veritable mecca of the oil production industry was an apocalypse for the global oil industry, because the Persian Gulf holds 800 billion barrels, over half of world’s total 1,500 billion barrels crude oil reserves.

The subversive attack sent jitters across the global markets and the oil price surged 15%, the largest spike witnessed in three decades since the First Gulf War after Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1990, though the oil price was eased within weeks after industrialized nations released their strategic oil reserves.

Alongside deploying several thousand American troops, additional aircraft squadrons and Patriot missile batteries in Saudi Arabia in the aftermath of the Abqaiq attack, several interventionist hawks in Washington invoked the Carter Doctrine of 1980 as a ground for mounting retaliatory strikes against Iran, which states:

“Let our position be absolutely clear: an attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force.”

Although the Houthi rebels based in Yemen claimed the responsibility for the September 2019 complex attack involving drones and cruise missiles on the Abqaiq petroleum facility and the Khurais oil field in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, Washington dismissed the possibility. Instead, it accused Tehran of mounting the strikes from Iran’s territory.

Obviously, the audacious attack was Iran’s retaliation in sheer desperation to the Trump

administration reneging on its predecessor's pledge and unilaterally canceling the Iran nuclear deal in May 2018.

It's noteworthy that the Iran nuclear sanctions that were re-imposed by the Trump administration in 2018 after the revocation of the JCPOA were "third-party sanctions," implying that any state or business organization doing business with Iran wouldn't be permitted to engage in commercial activities with the US government and commercial enterprises based in the US, thus practically excluding Iran's economy from the global financial system led by the US.

After being elected president, Biden has kept his statements deliberately ambiguous in order to fill the gaps in his Iran policy. Nevertheless, even if we assume Biden is sincere in restoring the nuclear pact, considering the influence of Zionist lobbies in Washington, which literally forced the Trump administration to abandon the deal in May 2018, Biden would find it a daunting task to follow through on his pacifist rhetoric with tangible policy decisions.

His predecessor Donald Trump repeatedly complained during the four years of his presidency that the Iran nuclear deal, signed by the Obama administration in 2015, was an "unfair deal" that gave concessions to Iran without giving anything in return to the US.

Regrettably, there is a grain of truth in Trump's statements because the Obama administration signed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran in July 2015 under pressure, as Washington had bungled in its Middle East policy and wanted Iran's co-operation in Syria and Iraq to get a face-saving.

In order to understand how the Obama administration bungled in Syria and Iraq, we should bear the background of Washington's Middle East policy during the recent years in mind. The decade-long conflict in Syria that gave birth to myriads of militant groups, including the Islamic State, and after the conflict spilled across the border into neighboring Iraq in early 2014 was directly responsible for the spate of Islamic State-inspired terror attacks in Europe from 2015 to 2017.

Since the beginning of the Syrian conflict in August 2011 to June 2014, when the Islamic State overran Mosul and Anbar in Iraq, an informal pact existed between the Western powers, their regional allies and jihadists of the Middle East against the Iranian resistance axis comprising Iran, Syria and their Lebanon-based proxy Hezbollah that posed an existential threat to Israel's regional security. Therefore, in accordance with the pact, militants were trained and armed in the training camps located in the border regions of Turkey and Jordan to battle the Syrian government.

This arrangement of an informal pact between the Western powers and the jihadists of the Middle East against the Iran-allied forces worked well up to August 2014, when the Obama Administration made a volte-face on its previous regime change policy in Syria and began conducting air strikes against one group of militants battling the Syrian government, the Islamic State, after the latter overstepped its mandate in Syria and overran Mosul and Anbar in Iraq from where the US had withdrawn its troops only a couple of years ago in December 2011.

After this reversal of policy in Syria by the Western powers and the subsequent Russian military intervention on the side of the Syrian government in September 2015, the momentum of jihadists' expansion in Syria and Iraq stalled, and they felt that their Western

patrons had committed a treachery against the jihadists' cause, hence they were infuriated and rose up in arms to exact revenge for this betrayal.

If we look at the chain of events, the timing of the spate of terror attacks against the West was critical: the Islamic State overran Mosul in June 2014, the Obama Administration began conducting air strikes against the Islamic State's targets in Iraq and Syria in August 2014, and after a lull of almost a decade since the horrific Madrid and London bombings in 2004 and 2005, respectively, the first such incident of terrorism occurred on the Western soil at the offices of Charlie Hebdo in January 2015.

Then the Islamic State carried out the audacious November 2015 Paris attacks, the March 2016 Brussels bombings, the June 2016 truck-ramming incident in Nice, and three horrific terror attacks took place in the United Kingdom within a span of less than three months in 2017, and after that the Islamic State carried out the Barcelona terrorist attack in August 2017.

Keeping this background of the quagmire created by the Obama administration in Syria and Iraq in mind, it becomes abundantly clear that the Obama administration desperately needed Iran's cooperation in Syria and Iraq to salvage its botched policy of training and arming jihadists to topple the government of Bashar al-Assad in Syria that backfired and gave birth to the Islamic State that carried out some of the most audacious terror attacks in Europe from 2015 to 2017.

Thus, Washington signed the JCPOA in July 2015 that gave some concessions to Iran, and in return, former hardline Prime Minister of Iraq Nouri al-Maliki was forced out of power in September 2014 with Iran's tacit approval and moderate former Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi was appointed in his stead, who gave permission to the US Air Force and ground troops to assist the Iraqi Armed Forces and allied militias to subdue the Islamic State in Mosul and Anbar.

The Iran nuclear deal, however, was neither an international treaty under the American laws nor even an executive agreement. It was simply categorized as a "political commitment." Due to the influence of Zionist lobbies in Washington, the opposition to the JCPOA in the American political discourse was so vehement that forget about having it passed through the US Congress, the task the Obama administration faced was to muster enough votes of dissident Democrats to defeat a resolution of disapproval so that it couldn't override a presidential veto.

The Trump administration, however, was not hampered by the legacy of the Obama administration, and since the objective of defeating the Islamic State had already been achieved in October 2017, therefore Washington felt safe to unilaterally annul the Iran nuclear deal in May 2018 at former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's behest, and the crippling "third-party sanctions" were once again imposed on Iran's oil and financial sectors.

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Notes

[1] [Iran's largest warship catches fire, sinks in Gulf of Oman](#)

[2] [Long-Planned and Bigger Than Thought: Strike on Iran's Nuclear Program](#)

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