

# The Iran Deal: A Triumph of Irrationality

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*It took years of intense negotiations, travel by diplomats equal to 16 around-the-world trips and thousands of pages of position papers to solve a problem ... that never existed. Intelligence services of major powers, such as the 2007 U.S. National Intelligence Estimate, repeatedly concluded that Iran was not developing a nuclear weapon. Crude attempts to plant intelligence raising the spectre of the bomb were no more credible than earlier claims that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction.*

*As we know, that false intelligence led Western powers to attack and devastate Iraq. The emergence of the Islamic State is one of the consequences of that attack. Millions of refugees from the war is another.*

The signing of the accord in Vienna is highly instructive. The “Iranian threat” was invented in Israel and the United States and became a staple in Western media. In March 2007 the Israel Project, a Washington-based constituent of the Israel Lobby, distributed an “Iran Press Kit” to over 17,000 media professionals and 40,000 pro-Israel activists in the United States. It claimed that Iran is about to acquire nuclear weapons: “The Nuclear Clock is TICKING ... and time is running out.”.

The meeting of the main Zionist lobby, AIPAC, featured inflammatory rhetoric and sinister images targeting Iran and comparing its president with Hitler. Israel called the non-existent bomb “an existential threat” and vowed to bomb Iran. Its Prime Minister brandished crude schemes of the bomb at the United Nations and repeatedly, in the course of several years, claimed that Iran was just a few months away from developing a nuclear capability. The non-existent weapon of mass destruction has been used as a weapon of mass distraction, diverting world attention away from the wretched fate of the Palestinians and focusing it on Israel’s threats to bomb Iran. Israel was now free to deal with the Palestinians with total impunity. Which it did. The new “existential threat” also served to consolidate political support and move Israeli society further right.

Israel, which has attacked its neighbours several times in its short history, reportedly possesses over 200 nuclear weapons and refused to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. It accused Iran, a signatory of that treaty, which has not attacked another country for about three centuries, of plotting to develop a nuclear bomb. And the Western powers, aka “international community”, rather than ignore, let alone expose Israeli hypocrisy, took that accusation at face value. It helped that Iran is an Islamic republic often portrayed as irrational and irresponsible. It is somehow deemed inferior to Western powers, considered to be rational and responsible in spite of their record of two world wars and innumerable colonial wars, including recent unwarranted attacks on Iraq, Libya and other Arab countries. Racism is likely to have played a part. Iranians are Orientals, many of them of brownish complexion, and thus they cannot be trusted to play with matches.



This was not the first time racism affects decisions concerning nuclear weapons. It was in 1943, when German armies were deep on Soviet territory and the outcome of the war in Europe was far from certain, that President Roosevelt, in a conversation with General Groves, the head of the Manhattan Project, refused to consider dropping the atomic bomb on Germany. The Jewish émigré scientists, including Einstein, who had who prompted the U.S. government to produce nuclear weapons, wanted to prevent Germany from acquiring a nuclear monopoly. Many of them were horrified when Washington ordered to bomb Hiroshima and Nagasaki, causing massive civilian casualties. The racial explanation of the choice of Japan as the first nuclear test ground continues to divide the historians to this day. In any case, racism was then institutionalized in the United States, and its troops fighting the Nazis were racially segregated. More importantly, during the war Japanese Americans, seen less than human, were summarily uprooted and interned while this measure was applied only selectively to certain American citizens of German and Italian descent.

This racial thinking dovetails with the realities of a unipolar world. During the Cold War nobody in the West suggested that the Soviet Union did not have the right to develop nuclear weapons. Americans may have been upset, frightened and distressed that “the Russkies” broke the American nuclear monopoly but they never claimed they did not have the mental wherewithal needed to handle nuclear weapons. Now that the balance of power no longer exists Western powers routinely declare entire countries “rogue states” if their governments dare resist following Washington. Needless to say, Iran has been placed into that category for several decades.

The agreement signed in Vienna may defuse this burning non-issue. Predictably, Israel, which fabricated this issue to begin with, has denounced the agreement and reserved the right to attack Iran. Israel’s allies and agents in the United States will do their best to derail it. The drama may continue for months and years. But it is important to see not only the utter irrationality of the Western approach to Iran but also its colonial overtones. The “Iranian nuclear threat” embodies the Orwellian principle that some countries are apparently more equal than others.

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