

Trump and Iran. “President Trump is Willing to Pursue a Path of Aggression”

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

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United States President Donald Trump is attempting to set the scene for attacking Iran by continuing with his pre-election mantra of the “bad deal”. Since his assumption of office, he has continually referred to the Iranian state as a “sponsor of terrorism” and has also made his designs clear by referring to Hezbollah, Iran’s ally in Lebanon, as a terrorist organisation responsible for the massacre of American troops in Lebanon in 1983. His decision not to re-certify the ‘Five Plus One’ Agreement is pivoting America towards an armed confrontation with Iran.

1. Ratcheting tensions with Iran is an unmistakable attempt aimed at setting up the United States to fight a war on behalf of Israel, and, it would be remiss not to note, Saudi Arabia, a country with which Israel has developed a symbiotic relationship. Iran has not invaded another country for around 200 years, is a signatory nation to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty with attendant inspections and in addition to this has consented to the multinational ‘Five Plus One’ Agreement. It is also useful to remind that the intelligence community of the United States and even Israel’s Mossad have concluded that Iran has no military objectives related to the acquisition of nuclear power. The Iranian leadership debated this and decided as long ago as the early or mid-2000s not to pursue the nuclear option.

It is a manufactured crisis.

By inflicting the first defeat in recent memory on the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), former President Barack Obama resisted the Israel-Jewish lobby’s insistence on using the United States to mount a military attack on Iran by reaching the ‘Five Plus One’ agreement. This came after a concerted effort by Binyamin Netanyahu to undermine Obama’s position by accepting an invitation from Republican members of congress to speak before America’s legislative body without the express approval of the serving president, an abrogation of established US constitutional convention.

2. Donald Trump recently tweeted a reminder of Hezbollah’s alleged responsibility for murdering US Marines in Lebanon back in 1983. Vice President Mike Pence joined in, but neither man mentioned any other atrocity allegedly instigated by Hezbollah since the period of time when Lebanese militias were resisting what they perceived as the occupation of their country by foreign military powers. The problem with this focus on Hezbollah as an instigator of terrorism is that most of the atrocities committed against the United States and other Western nations by Muslim organisations have been by those of the Sunni-Wahhabist stripe whose

ideology emanates from America's ally Saudi Arabia. These organisations have in fact been covertly used by the United States to harass, destabilise and overthrow America's enemies in Chechnya (an anti-Russian endeavour), Syria and Libya.

While Trump and Pence invoke the name of Hezbollah in the killing of United States military personnel, neither man has ever publicly memorialised the American sailors who were deliberately murdered and maimed during an attack on the USS Liberty by the armed forces of the state of Israel in June 1967.

Both men will not acknowledge that Hezbollah was created out of the carnage that followed the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in the early 1980s, and that it was nurtured by the experience of combating Israel's 18-year occupation of southern Lebanon.

By threatening to abrogate the multilateral treaty with Iran, it appears that Trump is doing the bidding of the Israel lobby which has had its intentions so far as achieving the destruction of Iran manifested in a number of position papers including many produced by the neoconservative-orientated and now defunct Project for the New American Century (PNAC).

Iran and Hezbollah were also targets proposed in a paper submitted in 1996 to Binyamin Netanyahu during his first tenure as Prime Minister of Israel. Led by the American neoconservative Richard Perle, *A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm* proposed "rolling back" the Syrian state, a crucial ally of Hezbollah, by proxy warfare.

Further, the "[policy coup](#)" referred to by retired US General Wesley Clark which Clark had learned of on two visits to the Pentagon in the immediate aftermath of the September 11 attacks, outlined a neoconservative strategy of taking out "seven countries in five years" including Syria, Lebanon (meaning Hezbollah) and Iran.

Apart from Sudan and Somalia, none of the targeted entities, including Saddam Hussein's Iraq, shared the objectives of the Sunni extremist ideology that characterised the alleged instigators of the 9/11 attacks. Iraq and Syria were led by secular, nationalist governments with roots in the Baathist movement, Libya's ruling Jamahiriya Party was also a secular government, while Lebanon's Hezbollah and Iran represented bastions of the Shia Muslim world.

All had in common an implacable opposition to Israel.

Iran, Syria and Hezbollah in Lebanon together form the so-called 'Shia Crescent', an 'arc of resistance' which threatens Israel's military domination of the Middle East. This alliance also elicits fear and concern from Saudi Arabia, the leader of the Sunni Muslim world, and a nation with which Israel has developed closer, albeit informal relations.

The grand design of neutralising Iran and its allies is one which has continued unabated over the course of three successive United States administrations spanning those of George W. Bush, Barack Obama and now Donald Trump. The foreign policy of Obama did not vary much from that of Bush except in regard to Obama favouring covert action rather than overt foreign invasions by the American armed forces. Thus, the Syrian insurrection of 2011 through which foreign Islamist mercenaries were allowed to infiltrate Syria's borders with

the aid of America's allies in the region was a policy consistent with the overarching policy of weakening the Shia powers by attempting to isolate Hezbollah by destroying Syria, the conduit between Israel's Lebanese enemy and Iran.

Hezbollah, which like Iran has participated in [defending the Assad government](#), is the only military force in the Arab world that is willing and capable of confronting Israel's military machinery. It was responsible for Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000 after an almost two-decade-long occupation and they effectively defeated Israel in duels in the [intelligence](#) sphere and on the [battlefield](#) in the Lebanon War of 2006.

Israel has for long wanted to extend its frontier to the River Litani because it covets the resource the river provides. But the reclaiming of swathes of Syrian territory from Sunni Islamist groups such as Islamic State and Jabhat al-Nusra by the Syrian Arab Army with the help of Russian air power, Iranian advisors and soldiers provided by Hezbollah has frustrated the plan to cut Hezbollah off from Iran. It frustrates Israel's desired ability to act with impunity in Lebanon as well as achieving its goal of securing its illegal annexation of the Golan Heights on the basis that none of the successor statelets of a balkanised Syria would have a claim to that region.

Whereas President Obama refused to yield to Israeli pressure to sacrifice American lives in a military adventure against Iran, it appears that President Trump is willing to pursue a path of aggression. In a speech defending the nuclear deal he had reached prior to a congressional vote in 2015, Obama claimed that "many of the same people who argued for the war in Iraq are now making the case against the Iran nuclear deal." This was a not very veiled attack on the pro-Israel groups led by AIPAC, which sent hundreds of activists to lobby lawmakers to reject the deal.

Obama's claim, which he repeated on several occasions, led to expressions of concern by several American Jewish organisations that his rhetoric could lead to a backlash against American Jews who are sensitive to suggestions of warmongering or placing ties to Israel over the interests of the United States.

Yet it remains the case, as Obama put it, that the "choice we face is ultimately between diplomacy and some form of war". The joint statement issued earlier this month by the leaders of Britain, France and Germany affirming their support for the deal together with the words of the European Union's foreign policy chief asserting that the agreement was working well clearly demonstrate that Trump is working towards achieving a preconceived agenda.

That agenda is a war agenda and it would be a catastrophe for the US to wage war against Iran on Israel's behalf.

The malign results of the invasion of Iraq and the proxy war in Syria are apparent to all.

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