



As Ukraine burns, Russia is manipulating Biden into accepting a weak new Iran nuclear deal. But haven't we learned that appeasement doesn't work?

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In a bombshell revelation, career State Department diplomats-turned-whistleblowers have allegedly told my former Trump administration colleagues that the new Iran nuclear deal being concluded in Vienna is so dangerous that they need to sound the alarm.

As the world is distracted by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and while President Joe Biden condemns Vladimir Putin on the world stage -- the U.S. is in talks with Kremlin negotiators to revive the agreement with the Islamic fundamentalist leaders of Iran.

And it is said to be 24 to 48-hours away from being finalized.

Former senior State Department official Gabriel Noronha blew the lid off of this earlier this week by publishing details of these alleged concessions on Twitter.

As reported, the terms of this new bargain are weaker than the agreement negotiated under President Barack Obama.

Biden's senior envoy for Iran, Rob Malley, is apparently so determined to deliver a 'win' for his boss that he's willing to make unprecedented concessions to get Tehran back into an agreement.

It is difficult to see how this new deal is driven by anything other than the Biden's administration's desire for a short-term political victory that they can tout to a domestic audience.

Unfortunately, it puts the world at greater risk.

For example, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) will be removed from the Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) list, and Iran's President, Ebrahim Raisi, will have his human rights-related sanctions removed.

Neither terrorism nor human rights abuses have anything to do with the nuclear program, but the Iranians are known to drive a hard bargain.

As the Senior Director and then Deputy National Security Advisor for the Middle East and North Africa at the White House when the IRGC was designated and Raisi sanctioned, both in 2019, I personally oversaw the interagency process that produced the FTO designation recommendation for President Trump.

This unprecedented designation of a foreign military was not an action we took lightly, and it was critical that all voices were heard and the strongest possible case was built.

In the end, the evidence that the IRGC had crossed the line from sponsoring terrorism to becoming the active implementer of the terrorism directed by the Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei was overwhelming.

From Lebanon to Iraq to Yemen, the IRGC under (then) Quds Force commander Qassam Soliemani was embedding with terrorist proxies to not only train and equip them, but also to participate directly in the attacks.

According to Pentagon, proxies sponsored by the IRGC killed at least 603 U.S. military personnel during the war in Iraq.

During the Trump administration, the IRGC targets included civilian infrastructure such as the Dubai Airport, energy infrastructure such as commercial shipping vessels in the Red Sea and Persian Gulf, and even gatherings of Iranian opposition groups in Paris.

And even as these infrastructure attacks were being plotted and in some cases executed, senior Iranian regime officials continued to meet with their former Obama administration counterparts to keep dreams of reviving the 2015 deal alive after President Trump exited it in 2018.

The case against Raisi, who has acted as Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's family enforcer for decades, was even more damning.

Under an executive order issued by President Trump in 2019, Raisi was sanctioned for the 1988 extra-judicial murders of some 5,000 people.

In addition, he was complicit in the brutal 2009 crackdown on the Green Revolution, the mass political movement that arose in Iran following another fraudulent presidential election.

Rather than holding him accountable, lifting the sanctions on him means that he will be able to travel to America for events such as the United Nations General Assembly and be able to engage with western media as his predecessor, Hassan Rouhani, did so effectively on behalf of the Supreme Leader.

But the reality is that the last time sanctions were relaxed on the regime in Tehran, we saw no improvement in either their practice of state-sanctioned terrorism or their abuse of human rights.

Rather, there was a direct corollary between the increased revenues coming into Iran due to increased oil sales and the regime's expenditures on offensive military capabilities and training and equipping proxies—as well as oppressing the long-suffering Iranian people, who saw none of these resources expended on the services they so desperately need.

In addition, we can have no confidence that the Supreme Leader's documented aspirations for a nuclear weapon have been assuaged.

Thanks to the Israeli exposure of the Iranian nuclear archive in 2018, we know that the original nuclear deal was based on a lie.

Throughout those negotiations, the Iranian regime insisted their nuclear program was peaceful and that they never wanted a bomb. But the carefully preserved and guarded plans for nuclear weapons discovered by the Israelis tell a different story.

Rather than giving these materials up to demonstrate their good faith when a deal was reached, the regime kept them secret so they could be revived once the sunsets on the nuclear deal expired.

Additionally, Noronha reports that the revived agreement will not extend the previously negotiated sunsets clauses, which stipulate how long provisions on Iran's nuclear program remain in place.

In the original 2015 deal, there were no restrictions to prevent Tehran from producing weapons-grade fuel for a nuclear bomb after 2031.

Reportedly, that timeframe has not been revised.

Observers of these negotiations are not entirely shocked.

In fact, one key member of the U.S. negotiating team, Richard Nephew, stepped down from his position in January over disagreements with Malley over the direction of the talks.

Additionally, Malley has a history of dealing with terror groups. He was terminated from his role as informal adviser to Obama's first presidential campaign when it was revealed that he was holding talks with Hamas.

The only thing that will slow Tehran down will be to deprive them of resources and hold them accountable for their crimes against America and our allies, as well as against their own people.

Yet the Biden administration insists on doing the opposite and is racing towards a deal that will not only legitimize but enrich the Iranians and give them the resources they will use to continue their pursuit of a bomb.

President Biden would do well to look at two embarrassing sanctions-related episodes from his first year in office to assess how badly these new moves may backfire: the removal of the Yemeni Iranian proxies the Houthi from the FTO list last March, and the refusal to uphold sanctions on Putin's Nord Stream 2 pipeline, then to lobby against the Congressional attempt to reimpose them.

The Houthi action was ostensibly taken to facilitate humanitarian assistance to Yemen but it was in fact a concession to their Iranian sponsors to tempt Iran back to the negotiating table in Vienna.

The removal of the NS 2 sanctions was ostensibly in deference to Germany, but it was in fact a concession to Russia to maintain the Russian delegation's participation in the nuclear negotiations in Vienna.

Instead of listening to our regional partners and critical ally Israel the administration has been listening to the Russians and Chinese, who have no doubt been pedaling appealing fictions about cementing Biden's legacy as a peacemaker to get into a deal they both want: China for the cheap gas and Russia for an enriched client state in the Middle East.

This deal will not only make the world less safe by financing Iranian terrorism, but even more dangerously will fuel Tehran in its race to build a nuclear weapon.

The US must return to the Trump administration's maximum pressure campaign so we can use leverage, rather than appeasement, to prevent Iran from getting a bomb.

In the end, however, there is no mechanism to ensure the provisions of this deal survive the Biden presidency unless it is passed as a treaty through the US Senate—which will not happen because the American people do not want this deal with the devil.

As the horror of Ukraine should demonstrate to us all, appeasement of the world's worst actors will only embolden them to pursue greater power and domination.

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