Advance readings for September 24, 2015 Foreign Affairs Discussion on “Iranian Nuclear Pact.”

Iran nuclear crisis: What are the sanctions?

30 March 2015

Since Iran's nuclear programme became public in 2002, the UN, EU and several individual countries have imposed sanctions in an attempt to prevent it from developing military nuclear capability. Iran insists its nuclear activities are exclusively peaceful, but the world's nuclear watchdog has been unable to verify this.

Iran and world powers agreed an interim deal in 2013 which saw it gain around $7bn in sanctions relief in return for curbing uranium enrichment and giving UN inspectors better access to its facilities. World powers also committed to facilitate Iran's access to $4.2bn in restricted funds.

What do the sanctions entail?

Several rounds of sanctions in recent years have targeted Iran's key energy and financial sectors, crippling its economy.

The four rounds of UN sanctions included:

- A ban on the supply of heavy weaponry and nuclear-related technology to Iran
- A block on arms exports
- An asset freeze on key individuals and companies.

The EU also imposed its own sanctions, among them:

- Restrictions on trade in equipment which could be used for uranium enrichment
- An asset freeze on a list of individuals and organisations that the EU believed were helping advance the nuclear programme, and a ban on them entering the EU
- A ban on any transactions with Iranian banks and financial institutions
- Ban on the import, purchase and transport of Iranian crude oil and natural gas - the EU had previously accounted for 20% of Iran's oil exports. European companies were also stopped from insuring Iranian oil shipments.

Japan and South Korea have also imposed sanctions similar to those of the EU.

As well as more recent sanctions aimed at Iran's financial, oil and petrochemical sectors, the US has imposed successive rounds of sanctions since the 1979 Tehran hostage crisis, citing what it says is Iran's support for international terrorism, human rights violations and refusal to cooperate with the IAEA.
The US sanctions prohibit almost all trade with Iran, making some exceptions only for activity "intended to benefit the Iranian people", including the export of medical and agricultural equipment, humanitarian assistance and trade in "informational" materials such as films.

What has been the effect of the sanctions in Iran?

As a result of the EU embargo and the US sanctions targeting other major importers, Iran's oil exports had fallen to 700,000 barrels per day (bpd) by May 2013, compared with an average 2.2 million bpd in 2011. In January 2013, Iran's oil minister acknowledged for the first time that the fall in exports was costing the country between $4bn and $8bn (£2.5bn-£5bn) each month. Iran is believed to have suffered a loss of about $26bn (£16bn) in oil revenue in 2012 from a total of $95bn (£59m) in 2011.

In April 2013, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecast that Iran's gross domestic product (GDP) would shrink by 1.3% in 2013 after contracting by 1.9% the previous year.

The White House estimated that Iran's oil exports would remain at a level of about one million bpd during the six months of the previous interim agreement. It estimated that Iran would accrue $1.5bn during that period from sales of petrochemicals, trading in gold and other precious metals, and the renewed transactions with foreign firms involved in the automotive sector.

How would lifting sanctions affect the Iranian economy?

The "P5+1" group (US, UK, France, Russia, China plus Germany) has said that in the event of a deal being reached, sanctions should be eased in a phased manner, with restrictions on imports of nuclear-related technology remaining for years.

Iran wants the UN sanctions suspended soon after any agreement is reached. The loss of oil revenue, which accounted for a half of government expenditure, and isolation from the international banking system, had caused Iran's currency, the rial, to lose two-thirds of its value against the US dollar and caused inflation to rise to more than 40%, with prices of basic foodstuffs and fuel soaring.

Many Iranians therefore see the lifting of the sanctions as an essential first step in improving the economy.

During his first election TV programme in 2013, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani was quoted as saying that "sanctions will... be resolved, and economic prosperity will also be created".

"I said it is good for centrifuges to operate, but it is also important that the country operates as well and the wheels of industry are turning," Mr Rouhani said, in a documentary broadcast in 2013.

Iran nuclear deal: Key details

14 July 2015

After 20 months of negotiations, Iran has agreed a long-term nuclear deal with the P5+1 group of world powers - the US, UK, France, China and Russia plus Germany - to limit its sensitive nuclear activities in return for the lifting of crippling sanctions.

The White House says that with the deal in place, the world can know that "tough, new requirements will keep Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon".

Iran says it has the right to nuclear energy - and stresses that its nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes only.

Uranium enrichment

There are two uranium enrichment facilities in Iran - Natanz and Fordo - where uranium hexafluoride gas is fed into centrifuges to separate out the most fissile isotope U-235. Low-enriched uranium, which has a 3%-4% concentration of U-235, can be used to produce fuel for nuclear power plants. But it can also be enriched to the 90% needed to produce nuclear weapons.

Iran currently has almost 20,000 centrifuges. Under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) agreed on 14 July, it will be limited to installing no more than 5,060 of the oldest and least efficient centrifuges at Natanz for 10 years.

Iran's uranium stockpile will also be reduced by 98% to 300kg (660lbs) for 15 years. It must also keep its level of enrichment at 3.67%.

In addition, research and development will take place only at Natanz and be limited for eight years. No enrichment will be permitted at Fordo for 15 years, and the underground facility will be converted into a nuclear, physics and technology centre. The 1,044 centrifuges at the site will produce radioisotopes for use in medicine, agriculture, industry and science.

Plutonium pathway

Iran has been building a heavy-water nuclear facility near the town of Arak. Spent fuel from a heavy-water reactor contains plutonium suitable for a nuclear bomb.

World powers had originally wanted Arak dismantled because of the proliferation risk. Under an interim nuclear deal agreed in November 2013, Iran agreed not to commission or fuel the reactor.

Iran has now agreed to redesign the reactor so it cannot produce any weapons-grade plutonium and presents less of a proliferation threat, according to the White House. All spent fuel will be sent out of the country as long as the reactor exists.
Iran will also not be permitted to build additional heavy-water reactors or accumulate heavy water for 15 years.

Covert activity

The White House is confident that the JCPOA will prevent Iran from building a nuclear programme in secret. Iran, it asserts, has committed to "extraordinary and robust monitoring, verification, and inspection".

Inspectors from the global nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), will continuously monitor Iran's declared nuclear sites and also verify that no fissile material is moved covertly to a secret location to build a bomb.

Iran has also agreed to implement the Additional Protocol to their IAEA Safeguards Agreement, which will allow inspectors to access any site they deem suspicious.

As part of their investigation into the possible military dimensions of Iran's nuclear programme, IAEA inspectors will also be able to request visits to military sites. However, access is not guaranteed and could be delayed. Iran will have the right to challenge the IAEA request and an arbitration panel will then decide on the issue.

'Break-out time'

As it stands, Iran has a large stockpile of enriched uranium and nearly 20,000 centrifuges, enough to create eight to 10 bombs, according to the White House. US experts believe that if Iran decided to rush to make a bomb without the deal in place, it would take two to three months until it had enough 90%-enriched uranium to build a nuclear weapon - the so-called "break-out time".

The White House says the JCPOA will remove the key elements Iran would need to create a bomb and increase its break-out time to one year or more.

Iran has also agreed not to engage in activities, including research and development, which could contribute to the development of a nuclear bomb.

Sanctions imposed by the UN, US and EU in an attempt to force Iran to halt uranium enrichment have crippled its economy, costing the country more than $160bn (£102bn) in oil revenue since 2012 alone. Iran stands to receive more than $100bn in assets frozen overseas, and will be able to resume selling oil on international markets and using the global financial system for trade.

Iran will not see sanctions lifted until the IAEA confirms that it has followed through with its end of the JCPOA. Should Iran violate any aspect of the deal, the UN sanctions will automatically "snap back" into place for 10 years, with the possibility of a five-year extension.
An eight-member Joint Commission comprising representatives of the P5+1 nations, the EU and Iran will be established to monitor compliance. If the commission cannot resolve a dispute, it will be referred to the UN Security Council.

Iran has also agreed to the continuation of the UN arms embargo on the country for up to five years, although it could end earlier if the IAEA is satisfied that its nuclear programme is entirely peaceful. A UN ban on the import of ballistic missile technology could also remain in place for up to eight years.

**Iran nuclear crisis**

14 July 2015

**We're at a pivotal moment**

**Lots of countries have nuclear weapons, but Iran's case is different**

It looks to some like Iran has been singled out - after all, many countries have nuclear programmes and at least eight possess nuclear weapons. The reason why such attention has been focused on Iran is because it hid a clandestine uranium enrichment programme for 18 years, in breach of the *Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty* (NPT).

Iran says the international community is displaying double standards by not doing anything about its arch-foe Israel, which is widely believed to have a nuclear arsenal - though Israel has neither confirmed nor denied this. Israel however, like nuclear-armed India and Pakistan, is not a signatory to the NPT.

**Some countries are unhappy about the deal**

A deal which leaves Iran with any capacity whatsoever to build a bomb has alarmed Israel and Iran's neighbours in the Gulf.

Iran believes Israel should not exist. Israel sees a nuclear Iran as a major threat to it and the wider world.

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the comprehensive accord was a "bad mistake of historic proportions" that would allow Iran to "continue to pursue its aggression and terror in the region".
He has previously warned that Israel will do everything necessary to thwart the prospect of Iran developing nuclear weapons.

Saudi Arabia, the Sunni-rulled regional rival to Shia Iran, also fears a compromise deal will not stop Iran eventually getting a nuclear bomb. Saudi Arabia also worries that an end to sanctions will embolden and strengthen Iran economically and militarily.

Both Israel and Saudi Arabia, key US allies in the region, feel Washington is putting a deal with Iran before their security needs.

**This is not the end of it**

Although a deal has been agreed, it still does not mean the crisis is over.

While an agreement might defuse the stand-off between Iran and world powers, Israel and Saudi Arabia have warned it could [fuel a nuclear arms race](https://medium.com/the-iran-deal/remarks-by-the-president-on-the-iran-nuclear-deal-1f2b6c250b69) in the Middle East. Under this scenario, countries such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia could seek to equip themselves with nuclear weapons before Iran gets a chance to.

There are also strong opponents to a deal in both Iran and the US. In Iran, hardliners will portray the deal as a defeat for Iran, while in Washington members of Congress, where scepticism is strong, will have to [approve the deal](https://medium.com/the-iran-deal/remarks-by-the-president-on-the-iran-nuclear-deal-1f2b6c250b69) before US sanctions can be lifted.

US President Barack Obama himself has said he will support fresh sanctions against Iran if it does not uphold any agreement.

**Remarks by the President on the Iran Nuclear Deal**

It is a great honor to be back at American University.

*Much verbiage has been edited out of the speech.*

The critics were wrong. The progress of Iran's nuclear program was halted for the first time in a decade. Its stockpile of dangerous materials was reduced. The deployment of its advanced centrifuges was stopped. Inspections did increase. There was no flood of money into Iran, and the architecture of the international sanctions remained in place. In fact, the interim deal worked so well that the same people who criticized it so fiercely now cite it as an excuse not to support the broader accord. Think about that. What was once proclaimed as a historic mistake is now held up as a success and a reason to not sign the comprehensive deal. So keep that in mind when you assess the credibility of the arguments being made against diplomacy today.
Despite the criticism, we moved ahead to negotiate a more lasting, comprehensive deal. Our diplomats, led by Secretary of State John Kerry, kept our coalition united. Our nuclear experts—including one of the best in the world, Secretary of Energy Ernie Moniz—worked tirelessly on the technical details. In July, we reached a comprehensive plan of action that meets our objectives. Under its terms, Iran is never allowed to build a nuclear weapon. And while Iran, like any party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, is allowed to access peaceful nuclear energy, the agreement strictly defines the manner in which its nuclear program can proceed, ensuring that all pathways to a bomb are cut off.

Here’s how. Under this deal, Iran cannot acquire the plutonium needed for a bomb. The core of its heavy-water reactor at Arak will be pulled out, filled with concrete, and replaced with one that will not produce plutonium for a weapon. The spent fuel from that reactor will be shipped out of the country, and Iran will not build any new heavy-water reactors for at least 15 years.

Iran will also not be able to acquire the enriched uranium that could be used for a bomb. As soon as this deal is implemented, Iran will remove two-thirds of its centrifuges. For the next decade, Iran will not enrich uranium with its more advanced centrifuges. Iran will not enrich uranium at the previously undisclosed Fordow facility, which is buried deep underground, for at least 15 years. Iran will get rid of 98 percent of its stockpile of enriched uranium, which is currently enough for up to 10 nuclear bombs, for the next 15 years. Even after those 15 years have passed, Iran will never have the right to use a peaceful program as cover to pursue a weapon.

And, in fact, this deal shuts off the type of covert path Iran pursued in the past. There will be 24/7 monitoring of Iran’s key nuclear facilities. For decades, inspectors will have access to Iran’s entire nuclear supply chain—from the uranium mines and mills where they get raw materials, to the centrifuge production facilities where they make machines to enrich it. And understand why this is so important: For Iran to cheat, it has to build a lot more than just one building or a covert facility like Fordow. It would need a secret source for every single aspect of its program. No nation in history has been able to pull off such subterfuge when subjected to such rigorous inspections. And under the terms of the deal, inspectors will have the permanent ability to inspect any suspicious sites in Iran.

And finally, Iran has powerful incentives to keep its commitments. Before getting sanctions relief, Iran has to take significant, concrete steps like removing centrifuges and getting rid of its stockpile. If Iran violates the agreement over the next decade, all of the sanctions can snap back into place. We won’t need the support of other members of the U.N. Security Council; America can trigger snapback on our own. On the other hand, if Iran abides by the deal and its economy begins to reintegrate with the world, the incentive to avoid snapback will only grow.

So this deal is not just the best choice among alternatives; this is the strongest non-proliferation agreement ever negotiated. And because this is such a strong deal, every nation in the world that has commented publicly, with the exception of the Israeli government, has expressed support. The United Nations Security Council has unanimously supported it. The majority of arms control and non-proliferation experts support it. Over 100 former ambassadors who served under Republican and Democratic Presidents support it. I’ve had to make a lot of tough calls as
President, but whether or not this deal is good for American security is not one of those calls. It’s not even close.

et some traction. So let me address just a few of the arguments that have been made so far in opposition to this deal.

First, there are those who say the inspections are not strong enough because inspectors can’t go anywhere in Iran at any time with no notice.

Well, here’s the truth: Inspectors will be allowed daily access to Iran’s key nuclear sites. If there is a reason for inspecting a suspicious, undeclared site anywhere in Iran, inspectors will get that access, even if Iran objects. This access can be with as little as 24 hours’ notice. And while the process for resolving a dispute about access can take up to 24 days, once we’ve identified a site that raises suspicion, we will be watching it continuously until inspectors get in. And by the way, nuclear material isn’t something you hide in the closet. It can leave a trace for years. The bottom line is, if Iran cheats, we can catch them and we will.

Second, there are those who argue that the deal isn’t strong enough because some of the limitations on Iran’s civilian nuclear program expire in 15 years. Let me repeat: The prohibition on Iran having a nuclear weapon is permanent. The ban on weapons-related research is permanent. Inspections are permanent. It is true that some of the limitations regarding Iran’s peaceful program last only 15 years. But that’s how arms control agreements work. The first SALT Treaty with the Soviet Union lasted five years. The first START Treaty lasted 15 years. And in our current situation, if 15 or 20 years from now, Iran tries to build a bomb, this deal ensures that the United States will have better tools to detect it, a stronger basis under international law to respond, and the same options available to stop a weapons program as we have today, including if necessary military options.

On the other hand, without this deal, the scenarios that critics warn about happening in 15 years could happen six months from now. By killing this deal, Congress would not merely pave Iran’s pathway to a bomb, it would accelerate it.

Third, a number of critics say the deal isn’t worth it because Iran will get billions of dollars in sanctions relief. Now, let’s be clear: The international sanctions were put in place precisely to get Iran to agree to constraints on its program. That’s the point of sanctions. Any negotiated agreement with Iran would involve sanctions relief. So an argument against sanctions relief is effectively an argument against any diplomatic resolution of this issue.

It is true that if Iran lives up to its commitments, it will gain access to roughly $56 billion of its own money—frozen overseas by other countries. But the notion that this will be a game-changer, with all this money funneled into Iran’s pernicious activities, misses the reality of Iran’s current situation. Partly because of our sanctions, the Iranian government has over half a trillion dollars in urgent requirements from funding pensions and salaries, to paying for crumbling infrastructure. Iran’s leaders have raised the expectations of their people that sanctions relief will improve their lives. Even a repressive regime like Iran’s cannot completely ignore
those expectations. And that’s why our best analysts expect the bulk of this revenue to go into spending that improves the economy and benefits the lives of the Iranian people.

Now, this is not to say that sanctions relief will provide no benefit to Iran’s military. Let’s stipulate that some of that money will flow to activities that we object to. We have no illusions about the Iranian government, or the significance of the Revolutionary Guard and the Quds Force. Iran supports terrorist organizations like Hezbollah. It supports proxy groups that threaten our interests and the interests of our allies including proxy groups who killed our troops in Iraq. They try to destabilize our Gulf partners. But Iran has been engaged in these activities for decades. They engaged in them before sanctions and while sanctions were in place. In fact, Iran even engaged in these activities in the middle of the Iran-Iraq War war that cost them nearly a million lives and hundreds of billions of dollars.

The truth is that Iran has always found a way to fund these efforts, and whatever benefit Iran may claim from sanctions relief pales in comparison to the danger it could pose with a nuclear weapon.

Moreover, there’s no scenario where sanctions relief turns Iran into the region’s dominant power. Iran’s defense budget is eight times smaller than the combined budget of our Gulf allies. Their conventional capabilities will never compare with Israel’s, and our commitment to Israel’s qualitative military edge helps guarantee that. Over the last several years, Iran has had to spend billions of dollars to support its only ally in the Arab World Bashar al-Assad even as he lost control of huge chunks of his country. And Hezbollah has suffered significant blows on the same battlefield. And Iran, like the rest of the region, is being forced to respond to the threat of ISIL in Iraq.

So contrary to the alarmists who claim that Iran is on the brink of taking over the Middle East, or even the world, Iran will remain a regional power with its own set of challenges. The ruling regime is dangerous and it is repressive. We will continue to have sanctions in place on Iran’s support for terrorism and violation of human rights. We will continue to insist upon the release of Americans detained unjustly. We will have a lot of differences with the Iranian regime.

But if we’re serious about confronting Iran’s destabilizing activities, it is hard to imagine a worse approach than blocking this deal. Instead, we need to check the behavior that we’re concerned about directly: By helping our allies in the region strengthen their own capabilities to counter a cyber-attack or a ballistic missile; by improving the interdiction of weapons shipments that go to groups like Hezbollah; by training our allies’ special forces so that they can more effectively respond to situations like Yemen. All these capabilities will make a difference. We will be in a stronger position to implement them with this deal. And, by the way, such a strategy also helps us effectively confront the immediate and lethal threat posed by ISIL.

Now, the final criticism’s is sort of a catch-all that you may hear is the notion that there’s a better deal to be had. If we should get a better deal that’s repeated over and over again. If a bad deal, need a better deal one that relies on vague promises of toughness, and, more recently, the argument that we can apply a broader and indefinite set of sanctions to squeeze the Iranian regime harder.
Those making this argument are either ignorant of Iranian society, or they're just not being straight with the American people. Sanctions alone are not going to force Iran to completely dismantle all vestiges of its nuclear infrastructure—even those aspects that are consistent with peaceful programs. That oftentimes is what the critics are calling "a better deal." Neither the Iranian government, or the Iranian opposition, or the Iranian people would agree to what they would view as a total surrender of their sovereignty.

Moreover, our closest allies in Europe, or in Asia much less China or Russia certainly are not going to agree to enforce existing sanctions for another 5, 10, 15 years according to the dictates of the U.S. Congress. Because their willingness to support sanctions in the first place was based on Iran ending its pursuit of nuclear weapons. It was not based on the belief that Iran cannot have peaceful nuclear power. And it certainly wasn't based on a desire for regime change in Iran.

And that's why this deal ultimately must be judged by what it achieves on the central goal of preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. This deal does exactly that. I say this as someone who has done more than any other President to strengthen Israel's security. And I have made clear to the Israeli government that we are prepared to discuss how we can deepen that cooperation even further. Already we've held talks with Israel on concluding another 10-year plan for U.S. security assistance to Israel. We can enhance support for areas like missile defense, information sharing, interdiction to help meet Israel's pressing security needs, and to provide a hedge against any additional activities that Iran may engage in as a consequence of sanctions relief.

But I have also listened to the Israeli security establishment, which warned of the danger posed by a nuclear-armed Iran for decades. In fact, they helped develop many of the ideas that ultimately led to this deal.

So to friends of Israel, and to the Israeli people, I say this: A nuclear-armed Iran is far more dangerous to Israel, to America, and to the world than an Iran that benefits from sanctions relief.

I recognize that Prime Minister Netanyahu disagrees; he disagrees strongly. I do not doubt his sincerity. But I believe he is wrong. I believe the facts support this deal. I believe they are in America's interest and Israel's interest. And as President of the United States, it would be an abrogation of my constitutional duty to act against my best judgment simply because it causes temporary friction with a dear friend and ally. I do not believe that would be the right thing to do for the United States. I do not believe it would be the right thing to do for Israel.

Thank you very much.

http://americanactionforum.org/research/irans-military-budget-after-the-nuclear-deal?gclid=COCCw4_tgMgCFYsYHwodiZgGVg

**Iran’s Military Budget after the Nuclear Deal**
By Rachel Hoff
August 5, 2015

Summary

- The Iran deal will provide the Islamic Republic with an estimated $140 billion in sanctions relief and unfrozen assets.
- Iran currently spends 3.4 percent of its total budget on defense.
- Iran spends 65 percent of its defense budget on the IRGC, its elite paramilitary force that actively supports terrorist organizations throughout the Middle East.
- If current budget trends persist, the Iran deal would mean at least $4.8 billion in additional Iranian defense spending and a 50 percent budget increase for the IRGC.

Peter Beaumont in Jerusalem

Tuesday 14 July 2015 05.07 EDT

Netanyahu denounces Iran nuclear deal but faces criticism from within Israel

Peter Beaumont in Jerusalem

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Israel’s prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, has denounced the historic deal on Iran’s nuclear programme as it became clear that Israel would continue to pressure allies in the US Congress to derail the agreement.

Heading a chorus of condemnation from Israeli politicians including members of his rightwing coalition, Netanyahu said the agreement was a "capitulation" and a mistake of historic proportions.

Iran is going to receive a sure path to nuclear weapons, Netanyahu said on Tuesday at a meeting with the Dutch foreign minister, Bert Koenders, in Jerusalem.

Many of the restrictions that were supposed to prevent it from getting there will be lifted. Iran will get a jackpot, a cash bonanza of hundreds of billions of dollars, which will enable it to continue to pursue its aggression and terror in the region and in the world. This is a bad mistake of historic proportions.

Netanyahu led a procession of senior Israeli politicians seemingly bent on outdoing each other with their rhetoric over the deal as Israel remained markedly alone in the stridency of its criticism.
The former foreign minister Avigdor Lieberman, who heads the hard right Yisrael Beitinu, described the deal as a “surrender to terror” while the defence minister, Moshe Yaalon, said it was built on Iran’s “lies and deceit.” He labelled the agreement a tragedy for all who aspire for regional stability and fear a nuclear Iran.

Most apocalyptic was the education minister, Naftali Bennett, leader of the far right Bayit Yehudi, who warned: “The history books have been rewritten again today, and this period will be deemed particularly grave and dangerous.”

He said: “Western citizens who get up for another day at work or school are not aware of the fact that about half a trillion dollars has been transferred to the hands of a terrorist superpower, the most dangerous country in the world, who has promised the destruction of nations and peoples.

“Today it may be us, tomorrow it may reach every country in the form of suitcase bombs in London or New York. Israel has done everything possible to warn of danger and in the end it will follow its own interests and will do whatever it takes to defend itself.”

Netanyahu is determined to encourage allies in the US Congress to try to block the deal. However, the comprehensive answers in the document to Democrats’ concerns – not least on the mechanism for reintroducing sanctions should Iran backslide on its commitments – are likely to make that effort an uphill struggle.

Barack Obama made clear on Tuesday that he would veto any attempt to block the deal in Congress.

Criticism of Netanyahu’s handling of the Iranian issue has grown over the past two days. Yair Lapid, head of the Yesh Atid party, denounced Netanyahu’s diplomatic campaign as a “colossal failure.”

“I also am not thrilled by Obama’s policies. But Netanyahu crossed a line that caused the White House to stop listening to Israel,” Lapid said. “In the last year we weren’t even in the arena, our intelligence cooperation was harmed, and the door to the White House was closed to us.

“I also am not thrilled by Obama’s policies. But Netanyahu crossed a line that caused the White House to stop listening to Israel,” Lapid said. “In the last year we weren’t even in the arena, our intelligence cooperation was harmed, and the door to the White House was closed to us.

“Netanyahu should resign, because if you promise for years that only you can prevent this deal and then it’s signed, you are responsible,” Lapid declared.

That criticism was echoed by other senior opposition figures, including the Zionist Union’s Isaac Herzog, who while opposing the deal criticised Netanyahu’s alienation of Obama’s White House. Shelly Yachimovich, a Zionist Union member of the Knesset, said Netanyahu should immediately cease and desist from confronting the Americans.

She said: “Now that this dangerous, damaging agreement with Iran has become a fait accompli, Netanyahu must stop disseminating prophecies of doom, come to his senses and regroup, in order to improve Israel’s position and defend its interests when the agreement is implemented.”
The increasingly harsh assessment of Israel’s failure to have any real leverage in the talks was echoed in the media.

Columnist Ben Caspit, a long-time Netanyahu critic, said: “No matter how we look at it, this is a personal failure for Netanyahu, who has been promoting himself for two decades now on one central agenda alone: preventing Iran from obtaining nuclear capability. That is the task that he promised he would perform, and he has failed.”

That was echoed in the Jerusalem Post by Yossi Melman, who, writing before a deal was formally announced, wondered whether it would be as bad as Netanyahu had said. “Israel exaggerated the Iranian threat and portrayed it in monstrous proportions,” Melman wrote. “The nuclear deal in the making is far from perfect,” he added, “but the skies are not going to fall tomorrow.”


**Kerry Promises Israel, Saudis Money In Wake of Iran Nuclear Deal**

BY: Adam Kredo
September 2, 2015 12:30 pm

Secretary of State John Kerry on Wednesday moved to reassure Congress that Israel and America’s Gulf State allies would be fully taken care of in the wake of the Iran nuclear deal, which Kerry acknowledged would not stop Iran’s support for terrorism, according to a letter sent by the secretary of state to lawmakers. Just moments after the White House secured enough votes to override a congressional veto of the Iran deal, a letter from Kerry appeared in the inboxes of congressional offices across Capitol Hill.

Kerry admits that, despite the deal, Iran will continue to back terrorist groups across the globe and promises to boost military support and funding to Israel and Gulf states such as Saudi Arabia, according to a copy of the letter obtained by the Washington Free Beacon.

Kerry then goes on to outline the ways in which the Obama administration will enhance security cooperation with Israel and Gulf State allies. Israel, for instance, will be the first country in the region to get a U.S.-made next-generation F-35 fighter aircraft in 2016. An additional $3 billion in U.S. aid also will go to secure Israel’s missile defense programs, such as the Iron Dome system. The administration also stands ready to enhance funding to next-generation missile defense systems, such as Arrow-3 and David’s Sling.

The administration, Kerry writes, recently offered Israel a $1.89 billion munitions resupply package that will replenish Israel’s inventories and will ensure its long-term continued access to sophisticated, state-of-the-art precision guided munitions. The administration will additionally work to secure a new 10-year Memorandum of Understanding with the Jewish state that
would cement for the next decade our unprecedented levels of military assistance, Kerry writes.

Gulf States, such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), also will benefit from increased arms shipments and new security deals, according to Kerry.