

Anatomy of a Done Deal: The Fight over the Iran Nuclear Accord

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UNTIL TRUMPED BY ANTI-IMMIGRANT AND BORDER SECURITY ISSUES (THEREBY jettisoning the Republican 2012 “autopsy” calling for greater tolerance and inclusion), it was presumed that Republican foreign policy strategy in the run-up to the 2016 presidential elections would question Democratic policies on the threat posed by ISIS and Iran, as well as the halting approach to making America number one in energy production via fracking and the Keystone XL pipeline. But the Obama administration’s recent nuclear accord with the Islamic Republic of Iran removes the Iranian dimension to that strategy. It represents a return to President Obama’s initial foreign policy promise of engaging rather than confronting adversaries (if not ending “the mindset that got us into war”) and fulfilling the popular mandate to extract the United States from costly wars abroad. Critics of the deal refuse to recognize Iran as an equal in the international system of states, make the policies of right-wing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s Likud Party the litmus test for being pro-Israel, and identify Israeli national interests with US interests.

Beyond its staggering oil and gas reserves, Iran is about to emerge as one of the world’s most technologically developed nations, boasting a successful space program, and is already contending for regional leadership along with Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey. However, Israel’s nuclear arsenal and public promotion of regime change in neighboring countries create disequilibrium and the impetus to neutralize US and Israeli nuclear weapons, or at least to maintain the option of developing them in the future. Following the Iran accord, Egypt and other Arab and Muslim states reintroduced a resolution to subject Israel’s nuclear facilities to international supervision at the International Atomic Energy Agency’s General Conference in mid-September 2015. The non-binding resolution calls for an international conference on making the Middle East a nuclear-weapons-free zone. In the past, Israel has defeated similar resolutions (proposed by Iran and Egypt), with the aid of the United States, Britain, and Canada.

When fully implemented, the nuclear agreement may have a far-reaching impact for the prospects of peace in the region and beyond. The United States fashioned the accord along with the four other permanent members of the UN Security Council—Britain, France, China, Russia—and Germany. Each has a stockpile of nuclear weapons, except for Germany, which, like Turkey, is a nuclear sharing

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power within NATO. The UN Security Council endorsement of the accord under Chapter VII of the UN Charter legally binds all member states, including the United States. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), signed on July 14, 2015, limits nuclear proliferation and lifts punishing UN, multilateral, and certain national sanctions against Iran's 80 million citizens. For its part, "Iran reaffirms that under no circumstances will Iran ever seek, develop, or acquire any nuclear weapons,"¹ while asserting its right to nuclear power autonomy under the Non-Proliferation Treaty—that is, the right to develop an exclusively peaceful, indigenous nuclear program, just as any other non-nuclear weapons state is free to do. Indeed, Saudi Arabia plans to construct 16 nuclear power reactors over the next 20 years, built by the United States, France, Russia, South Korea, China, and Argentina. Of course, the best option for the planet would be wide-scale adoption of renewable solar power (as Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Jordan plan to do, while Saudi Arabia has delayed its plans by eight years), along with the worldwide elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Vienna accord represents a de-escalation of threats of aerial bombings of Iranian facilities, covert CIA and Joint Special Operations Command actions aimed at inciting potentially restive minorities within Iran to bring about regime change, and other disguised forms of warfare.² Sanctions are another name for economic warfare, or collective punishment, especially targeting Iran's Central Bank and its energy sector. The sanctions regime caused a sweeping devaluation of Iran's currency, froze \$130 billion in Iranian assets held in financial institutions, excluded Iran from participating in the international banking system via the private SWIFT system (thereby undermining Iran's internal capacity to exchange money and buy goods, including medicines), and since late 2011 has barred Iran from selling oil and natural gas in international markets. Cyberwar was unleashed with the US–Israeli Stuxnet malware attack against Iranian nuclear enrichment facilities (as well as against the computers of Iranian officials using the Flame malware). Moreover, the extrajudicial murder of Iranian professors and nuclear scientists took place at the hands of Israeli-financed terrorists from the People's Mujahedin of Iran. This limited war continually threatened to become full-scale war.

The UN Security Council voted 15–0 on Resolution 2231 in support of the JCPOA. Approval of the Iranian Parliament will likely follow, with key elements of Iran's religious, political, and military leadership giving their assent (despite strident internal opposition from some powerful players). Yet employing this rare diplomatic, negotiated approach over the catastrophic neoconservative agenda in the Middle East has predictably angered the champions of a militarized, moralistic foreign policy in the tradition of political philosopher Leo Strauss and Pentagon éminence grise Fritz Kraemer, as well as liberal interventionists. Although Democrats lined up the 41 Senate votes needed to prevent a vote on the Republican resolution of disapproval, for the period of congressional review and through the election cycle the Right will harp on the themes of appeasement, genocide, and the Holocaust, purportedly in support of Israel. Nonetheless, "most American Jews

want Congress to approve the deal,” as do the Jewish Voice for Peace and J Street, a pro-peace Washington lobbying group on issues concerning Israel.³

Well-Financed Contenders

Influential sectors within Israel, including the architects of Israeli defense and leaders of its high-tech sector, broke with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on this issue. In an open letter to the prime minister, 67 signatories, most of whom were high-ranking officers and intelligence officials, including Netanyahu’s commander of the Israeli Defense Force, endorsed a statement that referred to the Iran agreement as an “accomplished fact,” and urged the Israeli government to renew trust between Israel and the United States, to take immediate steps to implement the accord, and to move politically toward credible Israeli support of a two-state solution in the Palestinian conflict, while establishing a moderate Sunni–Western axis.⁴ *Haaretz*, Israel’s oldest daily newspaper, published a scathing editorial condemning Netanyahu’s obsession with Iran and Likud’s obstructionist mobilization of the US Congress against the White House regarding the Iran nuclear accord. Moreover, Rabbis for Human Rights and Malcolm Hoenlein, Executive Vice Chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, criticized Netanyahu’s call on American Jewry to mobilize in support of Israel’s opposition to the nuclear accord.⁵ In the end, opposition to the accord proved to be neither pro-Israel nor pro-Jewish.

In the United States, 29 scientists with top-secret clearances strongly endorsed the accord, stating that it will advance the cause of peace and security in the Middle East. Its technical features are stringent, they noted, and the agreement bans research on nuclear weapons “rather than only their manufacture,” all without shaming Iran. The accord includes important long-term verification procedures that last until 2040, and others that last indefinitely under the Non-Proliferation Treaty and its Additional Protocol. Among the signatories were six Nobel laureates, the scientist who directed the Los Alamos weapons laboratory, a physicist who helped design the world’s first hydrogen bomb, and another who leads the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the world’s largest general scientific society.⁶

Antagonistic relations between the Iranian and US governments are deeply engrained. Significant bureaucratic inertia exists within the many layers of the Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Both planned and carried out a succession of attacks against Iran, dating to the 1953 coup against Iranian Prime Minister Mossadegh in support of Anglo-American oil interests and maneuvers accelerated with the overthrow of the US-installed police state upholding the Pahlavi monarchy. During the Iran-Iraq war, the Reagan administration supported Iraq, turning a blind eye to Iraq’s use of chemical weapons. President Obama’s latest Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter (formerly an adviser to Goldman Sachs) has doubted the value of a direct military strike, while calling for a strategy of containing and punishing Iran, including military action, in the event that Iran

continued to pursue its nuclear program. General Martin Dempsey (the outgoing chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) agreed that a negotiated deal was preferable to launching a military strike against Iran, but said he would “sustain the military options in case that becomes necessary.”

In an open letter, three dozen retired US generals and admirals affirmed General Dempsey’s stand and highlighted the necessity of exhausting diplomatic options before moving to military ones. (California Representative Nancy Pelosi is credited with mobilizing support from former military officials and top nuclear physicists.) Revealing a deep fissure, opponents quickly lined up other former military men to denounce the accord, such as Lt. Gen. William G. “Jerry” Boykin, who previously characterized US military operations against Islamist extremist organizations as a Christian fight against Satan, and members of Ronald Reagan’s rollback team, Major General Richard Secord and Vice Admiral John Poindexter, who were implicated in Iran-Contra scandal and convicted of multiple felonies in the case of the latter.⁷

However, Obama’s latest military appointments suggest that the Iran deal may lack a wider geopolitical resonance. As James Carden has argued, “the faction led by Senator John McCain (R-AZ), Defense Secretary Ashton Carter, Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland, and NATO Supreme Allied Commander Philip Breedlove has, to date, successfully pushed the president towards taking a more hawkish line towards Russia.” President Obama’s nominee as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Joseph Dunford, believes that Russia poses “the greatest threat” to US national security, while General Paul J. Selva, the prospective vice chairman, is a defense hawk who believes that Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea represent greater threats than Islamist jihadists do.

Within the intelligence bureaucracy, current CIA Director John O. Brennan supported the Iran agreement, stressing that the sanctions regime compelled Iran to accept the deal, that the path to an Iranian atomic weapon has been definitively curtailed, while observing the surprising reasonableness of the Iranian leadership. In the larger perspective, the question became whether the United States and Iran could collaborate on issues such as Afghanistan, with Brennan acknowledging an “alignment of some interests” between the United States and Iran in the anti-ISIS fight. A CIA intelligence assessment tried to assuage a recalcitrant Congress by stating that sanctions relief (possibly \$56 billion in the near term) would be devoted to Iran’s strangled economy and would not alter the regional balance of power.⁸ Director of National Intelligence James Clapper also signaled approval of the JCPOA because it afforded better intelligence on the entire industrial infrastructure of the Iranian nuclear capability.

Former CIA Middle East analysts have argued for rapprochement with Iran, including Graham E. Fuller (once the vice chairman of the CIA’s National Intelligence Council) and Ray McGovern (who chaired the National Intelligence Estimates and previously prepared the president’s daily brief). Neoconservative Reuel Marc Gerech, a denizen of the CIA’s Iran desk at the clandestine Director-

ate of Operations in the 1980s, offered vigorous opposition to the JCPOA, while Kenneth M. Pollack, a liberal hawk with intimate AIPAC links who was formerly a CIA intelligence analyst on Middle East affairs and is currently associated with the center-right Brookings Institution, gave his unenthusiastic but firm support. For his part, Robert Baer, who spent years running the Iranian opposition for the CIA, enrages neocons and other War Party Republicans like Steve Forbes by recognizing Iran as a rising power in the region and insisting upon détente and an eventual US-Iranian strategic alliance. Baer implicitly backs the JCPOA since he favors putting “Middle East nuclear arms under international supervision, including Israel’s. Once again, this speaks to the core issue of fairness in applying international laws.”⁹ The Soufan Group, an intelligence-gathering firm staffed by former FBI, CIA, and British MI6 officials, argues that the JCPOA “has begun to reshape strategic alignments and calculations in the Middle East” and that the “nuclear agreement opens new opportunities to enlist Iran in efforts to resolve regional conflicts.”¹⁰ Thus, high-ranking US military and intelligence officials and analysts tend to favor the accord and have consistently opposed overt military engagement with Iran.

In terms of other vital states in the Middle East, *Al Jazeera* commentators initially gave the impression that, like the Israeli government, Saudi Arabia and other members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)—Kuwait, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, and Oman—feared that the JCPOA would speed the decline in their strategic value vis-à-vis the United States. Saudi Arabia’s leverage over the United States had already declined as US oil production soared due to fracking, though plunging oil prices could make it unprofitable. Oman, however, has facilitated secret dialogue between the United States and Iran. The Persian Gulf Sunni monarchies grudgingly endorsed the accord as the best option for making the region safer and more stable, to paraphrase Qatar’s foreign minister, Khalid al-Attiyah, while hosting a meeting of the Gulf Cooperation Council. Calculating that little was to be gained by opposing an agreement certain to be implemented, the quid pro quo was US agreement to expedite military support and training efforts, flexibility about the future composition of the Syrian government, and \$5.4 billion of Patriot missiles and other military equipment for Saudi Arabia. The Obama administration has been supplying advisors, armaments, logistical support, and intelligence for the Saudi-UAE hot war in Yemen, contributing to the humanitarian crisis there.

Thus, one negative outcome of the accord will be increasing militarization of the Saudis and Israelis, in an effort to enhance their margins over the Iranians. Iran’s military capacity already lags seriously behind that of its neighbors, requiring expenditures of at least \$40 billion to bring its conventional military into parity with the GCC counties, which Britain, France, and the United States nurture. Iran, which consistently budgets around 3 percent of its GDP on military spending (versus 25 percent of Saudi government spending), will remain outarmed and outspent by a factor of eight by the GCC counties. As Peter Dale Scott has

observed, Saudi arms sales are a structural feature of the US-Saudi relationship to offset the flow of US dollars payments for Saudi oil. And the US-Israeli relationship reflects a mammoth influx of military aid to Israel, nearly \$100 billion since 1962, contributing 3 percent of Israel's GDP between 1950 and 2013, and today surpasses \$10 million every day.¹¹

Friends and Foes in Opposition

President Obama asked critics of the agreement whether they preferred war instead. The echo chamber decrying the Vienna accord relies on funds and an ideological apparatus that enable a strident combination of pro-Likud lobbies, Republican kingmakers, and members of Congress who are aligned with Christian evangelicals and are advised by neoconservative think tanks with overlapping boards of directors. Liberal interventionists like Hillary Clinton mildly supported the JCPOA as an important step, but one of her foreign policy advisers, Robert Kagan, has argued that it is a "poor deal," while urging Republicans to buttress their criticisms. (Bernie Sanders made a stronger statement on his website, calling the JCPOA "a victory for diplomacy over saber-rattling" that "could keep the United States from being drawn into another never-ending war in the Middle East.") President Obama's former State Department envoy to Iran, Dennis Ross, has been a pro-Netanyahu proponent of military action against Iran and a prominent part of the lobby against the accord. He equivocated as the congressional vote turned against him, unlike his co-ideologue Joseph Lieberman at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP), an AIPAC spinoff. Ross has been a member of Bipartisan Policy Center's "Iran Task Force," which as Jim Lobe of the Inter Press Service observed, has been dominated for years by neoconservatives. Notwithstanding Ross's claim with the recently scandalized General David H. Petraeus to be undecided on the issue, their ambiguous "support" implies that this is a bad deal and they recommend threatening Iran with military strikes at every turn, preferably delegating the bloody task to Israel by giving its military the 30,000-pound massive ordnance penetrator (MOP) bunker-buster bomb and the means to deliver it, while fortifying key Sunni Arab partners.¹² This is hardly a recipe for promoting peace in the Middle East and bridging the Sunni-Shiite sectarian divide. Legislatively, this position was incorporated in Senator Ben Cardin's "Iran Policy Oversight Act of 2015."

Given the fanfare surrounding the Republican presidential campaigns, Las Vegas Sands casino empire multi-billionaire Sheldon Adelson figures large as the GOP's single biggest donor.¹³ He provided nearly one-third of the 2013 revenue of United Against Nuclear Iran (UANI), believes that there is no point to negotiations, and publically stated in 2013 that the United States should preemptively attack Iran with a nuclear weapon if its leadership failed to dismantle Iran's nuclear program. Adelson is also a major funder of the aggressively anti-Iran Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD). He has consistently supported Benjamin Netanyahu and finances Israel's largest-circulation (free) newspaper, *Israel Hayom*. Along with

other billionaires, Adelson underwrites Marco Rubio's (R-FL) presidential bid. Repealing the Iran accord is a key element of Rubio's platform, as is his refusal to consider negotiations. He proposes even more severe sanctions and potential military action. An ad critical of the JCPOA, which highlights Iran as the "world's leading sponsor of state terrorism," dovetails segments by Netanyahu and Rubio. The Conservative Solutions Project, a Rubio funding instrument, produced the ad. Oracle founder Larry Ellison also contributed \$3 million to Rubio's super PAC.

Not to be outdone, Republican presidential candidates Ted Cruz and Donald Trump scheduled a joint attack on the nuclear agreement at a rally sponsored by the Tea Party Patriots, Center for Security Policy, and the Zionist Organization of America. Senator Lindsey Graham, who has consistently promoted regime change in Iran, decried the accord with customary hyperbole as "a possible death sentence for Israel" and "a virtual declaration of war against Sunni Arabs." John McCain and his first-choice as a running mate in 2008, Joe Lieberman, have advocated for contiguous US wars spanning Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan, against the council of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and US military commanders. Every Republican candidate is more or less bellicose on the issue. The favorite of the Koch brothers, the clearly unpopular Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker, said he would terminate the Iran deal immediately, impose even more crippling sanctions, and stated that "the next president could be called on to take aggressive actions, including military actions, on their very first day in office." Meanwhile, a Bloomberg Markets investigation in 2011 states that "Koch Industries—in addition to being involved in improper payments to win business in Africa, India and the Middle East—has sold millions of dollars of petrochemical equipment to Iran."

On the lobbying front, Citizens for a Nuclear Free Iran (CNFI), the nonprofit backed by the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), allocated some \$30 million with other pro-Likud groups for an ad campaign in 40 states on the Iran nuclear accord and efforts to fashion a poison pill.¹⁴ AIPAC had been the most powerful "pro-Israel" lobbying force on US-Israel security issues. For instance, David Brooks's opposition to the accord in the *New York Times* relied on a document authored by Foreign Policy Institute (FPI) analyst Tzvi Kahn, AIPAC's former assistant director for policy and government affairs. J Street's chief lobbyist, Dylan Williams, views AIPAC as a fading elite staffed by Netanyahu-allied neoconservatives that is out of step with American Jewish opinion.

AIPAC's crass partisanship in a massive failing effort that produced only a symbolic vote will leave a lasting negative impression. The opposite is true of the J Street coalition with the Ploughshares Fund, a San Francisco-based global security foundation. Its president, Joseph Cirincione, was formerly vice president for national security and international policy at the Center for American Progress, which has had close ties with the Obama administration. Ploughshares receives funding from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and maintains close links with the Atlantic Fund, the Rand Corporation (via Alireza Nader), and fading luminaries such as Leslie Gelb

and George Shultz. According to a *Wall Street Journal* article, Ploughshares spent “over \$7 million in the past four years funding think tanks, media organizations, and activist groups focused on championing diplomacy with Iran,” in contrast to \$13 million by the anti-agreement side over a shorter time horizon.¹⁵

When the United Against Nuclear Iran (UANI) mobilized against the accord, this triggered the resignation of its president and cofounder, Gary Samore. A former nuclear adviser to President Obama, Samore believed that Obama’s strategy of using economic leverage to bring about Iranian nuclear concessions had succeeded. In the reshuffle, Joseph Lieberman, who also sits on the boards of two other groups fighting the deal (WINEP and CNFI), became chairman.¹⁶ UANI works in tandem with the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies (FDD) and the FPI, the latter being the reincarnated form of the Project for the New American Century. The FDD’s Mark Dubowitz has advocated bringing about the wholesale collapse of Iran’s economy by destroying its economic infrastructure. Such a course would aggravate the critical dilemma Europe now faces with immigrants fleeing war and economic catastrophe in the Middle East and North Africa.

Right-wing media have amplified the reach of this cottage industry of anti-Iran think tanks. Rupert Murdoch’s instruments, from Fox News to the *Wall Street Journal*, *Weekly Standard* (now owned by petroleum driller Philip Anschutz), and in the UK *The Sun*, offered a steady drumbeat of stories on Obama’s “bad deal” and “false choices.” Murdoch’s News Corp.-backed network Farsi 1 even broadcasts into Iran via Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates. Murdoch’s partner at Farsi 1 is the Moby Group’s Saad Mohseni, whose Afghan network is funded primarily by USAID. Also shaping perceptions of the Middle East is the Middle East Media Reporting Institute (MEMRI), which was founded by a former colonel in Israeli military intelligence and whose board of advisers includes neoconservatives like former CIA directors James Woolsey and Michael Hayden. MEMRI cherry-picks the Arabic press and supports political positions representative of the extreme right of Likud.¹⁷

The accord represents a watershed moment by removing preventive war as a legitimate tool of anti-proliferation, at least in the near term. Given the rightward drift in American politics, it is unlikely that the highly fractured corporate and political elite will abandon aggressive post-Cold War unilateralism. The polarization process spurred by the triumph of the ultraconservative and neoconservative wings of the Republican Party—rooted in the inner West and South, with its strident opposition to tax increases, labor unions, income redistribution via the safety net, disdain for negotiating and arms limitations, and deep infatuation with military and police power in the defense of power, wealth, and privilege—has sidelined Republican internationalists or realists (the Rockefeller wing). Former Secretary of State Colin Powell, who abandoned the Republicans for Obama in 2008 and 2012, supported the Iran accord. Richard Haass, the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) president and a self-defined realist who worked with Powell, publically advocated

regime change in Iran, but then shifted from being a skeptic to a mild supporter of the agreement. (Another CFR analyst, Micah Zenko, argues that the accord makes it easier for defense planners to achieve US military hegemony in the Middle East.) Brent Scowcroft, who served under two Republican presidents, advised President Obama on his national security team, and has a long association with The Atlantic Council, referred to the signing of the accord as an “epochal moment,” comparable to Ronald Reagan’s arms control reductions with the Soviet Union and President Nixon’s rapprochement with the People’s Republic of China. Scowcroft endorsed the Iran deal along with a bipartisan collection of 60 senior national security leaders in a letter organized by the New York-based Iran Project, which was started in 2002 by the United Nations Association of the USA and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund (which also funds J Street).¹⁸

This foreign policy current is now unwelcome in the Republican Party, whose leadership espouses particularly virulent positions during times of crisis. In James Joyner’s view, neoconservatives and liberal interventionists have led post-Cold War US foreign policymaking, although “traditional realists continue to dominate the academic study of security policy and even the rank-and-file military and intelligence communities.” Aside from the Iran nuclear deal, the Obama administration confirms this pattern. If history is a guide, American voters respond negatively to cavalier attitudes toward the use of nuclear weapons. Barry Goldwater’s insurgent candidacy was overwhelmingly defeated in 1964, not the least because he suggested that tactical nuclear weapons should be used in Vietnam and against the leadership of the Soviet Union, despite a climate in which China had exploded its first atomic weapon.

Iran’s Reentry into the Global Economy

Thanks to the deal, \$100 billion from previous Iranian oil sales will be released from escrow accounts and the multinational trade embargo has evaporated. However, the US legal framework for most sanctions remains in place, as does the US trade embargo on Iran. Transnational corporate interests and national policy appear to diverge since significant restrictions prevent US-based firms from conducting business in Iran, investing in Iran, or partnering with companies in Iran.¹⁹ Policing the international financial system occurs via the US Treasury Department’s Office of Foreign Assets Control, and in the case of trade sanctions, via the Department of Commerce’s Bureau of Industry and Security. The Internal Revenue Service, the assistant attorney general for national security, and the FBI’s Counterintelligence Division are also involved.

A cascading series of sanctions and trade restrictions against Iran have been anchored in national security doctrine and permanent states of emergency, beginning with Jimmy Carter’s International Emergency Economic Powers Act, augmented by Bill Clinton’s Executive Orders 12957, 1295, and 13059, and then fully integrated into an ill-conceived war on terror in the Cheney-Bush USA Patriot

Act of 2001. The use of coercive economic power as a lever in interstate conflict creates hardships for ordinary people but eludes neoconservative dreams of regime change, much less democratic openings. Sanctions have been subject to quixotic reasoning in terms of counter-proliferation efforts. For instance, to secure support for the US-led war on terrorism in 2001, the Bush administration lifted sanctions previously levied on India and Pakistan over their acquisition of nuclear weapons. Those countries, unlike Iran, have yet to join the Non-Proliferation Treaty. During the Obama administration, the Justice Department increasingly targeted multinational companies and banks (as well as digital financial services such as PayPal), which face financial penalties (criminal fines and forfeitures of illegal profits) for sanctions violations.²⁰ Since many sanctioned countries are oil producers, even the world's largest oil-field services company, Schlumberger Ltd., was heavily fined for violations in Iran.

Not surprisingly, most influential US business lobbying groups have displayed caution concerning Iran, in contrast to their work toward easing sanctions against Cuba and Russia. The Business Roundtable, made up of chief executives of the largest US firms, including Boeing and ExxonMobil, remained unengaged on the Iran issue. Only the Emergency Committee for American Trade pointed to the difficulties sanctions pose for US-based firms, since the European Union, concerned over its precarious economic recovery, has been leading the way in Iran since mid-2014 and is swiftly lifting sanctions and normalizing economic relations with Iran (as are Asian countries). Before 1978, the United States was Iran's main trading partner, but relinquished that role once it chose the course of economic warfare; next, the sanctions regime demoted the European Union (especially Italy, Germany, France, and the UK), and by 2015 China, Iraq, the UAE, India, and Turkey topped the list. Like China, India has largely ignored US sanctions against Iran.

When Tea Party Republican Senator Tom Cotton organized a letter with 47 other senators to Iranian leaders, the intent was to undermine the diplomatic process and President Obama's authority. He then spoke before the National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA), an industry association for defense contractors that lobbies for ever-increasing defense budgets. In 2011, the president's base budget for the Department of Defense and spending on "overseas contingency operations" amounted to \$664.84 billion, while overseas weapons sales by the United States totaled \$66.3 billion, or more than three-quarters of the global arms market, driven by fears in the Persian Gulf over Iran.²¹ The JCPOA offers little of interest to US arms manufacturers on the Iran side of the ledger: among its restrictions are arms and ballistic missile embargoes for five and eight years, respectively. Cotton's comments were off the record, but he undoubtedly shared the message of his main benefactors, including William Kristol's Emergency Committee for Israel and hedge-fund billionaire Paul Singer, a significant donor to the FDD and MEMRI. Even so, Boeing, a major defense contractor, has already begun selling parts in Iran.

Defense and intelligence budgets have contributed more to the success of the US high-tech sector, whether Internet companies or chipmakers, than is generally acknowledged.²² Yet these companies tend to support Democrats and have their reasons for normalizing relations with Iran, including a thirst for technical talent and Iran's youthful, educated market (two-thirds of Iranians are under age 30). Apple, the world's largest company by market capitalization, and with extensive manufacturing and sales experience in China, entered talks with Iranian distributors in October 2014.²³ Though Apple is allowed to export iPhones to Iran, the problem all US firms face is that transferring payments into or out of Iran has been nearly impossible (that should change when Iran regains access to the SWIFT global electronic banking system). A group of 24 prominent Americans of Iranian descent signed an open letter in support of the JCPOA. Among the signatories were Omid Kordestani, Google's chief business officer, and Hadi and Ali Partovi, Facebook and Dropbox investors. Google now employs over 70 former students from the highly respected Sharif University in Tehran. The primary obstacle to wider hiring has been severe limitations on H-1B visas for Iranians, due especially to the Enhanced Border Security and Visa Reform Act of 2002, which stipulates that the State Department must determine whether each prospective employee from Iran poses a threat to national security (so long as Iran is considered a sponsor of terrorism). H-1B visas and immigration reform are a continuing concern of the tech lobby, Fwd.us, which was cofounded by Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg. Its president, Todd Schulte, was previously chief of staff at Priorities USA Action, the Super PAC supporting President Obama's reelection. Although Facebook remains banned in Iran, President Hasan Rouhani has argued that Internet censorship does not serve Iran's interests.

Before the sanctions regime, 21 countries bought Iranian oil. With the restrictions, only China, India, Japan, South Korea, Turkey, and Taiwan were allowed to do so, with payments tied up in local-currency escrow accounts.²⁴ Iran's proven oil and natural gas deposits are among the world's largest, ranking fourth for oil and second for natural gas reserves. For over three decades, sanctions have excluded US oil companies from Iran, despite multiple Iranian overtures. European companies left in the early 2000s. Due to this delinking, the Iranians developed considerable internal expertise in the extraction business, just as it has in developing Internet start-ups. When negotiations on the nuclear deal got started, ExxonMobil hired former Oklahoma Republican Senator Don Nickles's lobbying firm to "monitor" activity related to Iranian sanctions, but not to "lobby." Ayn Rand Republican Rex W. Tillerson, who heads ExxonMobil — until November 2014 the largest company in the world by market value — is a practitioner of realpolitik. The company publicly opposed the imposition of sanctions against Russia after the Ukraine coup, with Tillerson saying, "we always encourage the people who are making those decisions to consider the very broad collateral damage of who are they really harming with sanctions."²⁵

In the future, Iran will likely prioritize exporting to Asia. China already buys nearly half the oil produced in Iraq. Ironically, according to Michael Makovsky, a George W. Bush Defense Department official, “the Chinese had nothing to do with the war, but from an economic standpoint they are benefiting from it, and our Fifth Fleet and air forces are helping to assure their supply.”²⁶ PetroChina and South Oil Company entered into a partnership to develop the second largest field in the world, located in southern Iraq. ExxonMobil, with large investments in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Abu Dhabi, and in Iraq’s rich oil fields near Shiite Basra, has formed a partnership with the Russian petroleum firm Rosneft. For two decades, ExxonMobil has had a continuous business presence in Russia. ExxonMobil and Rosneft have co-mingled assets: as part of the original 2011 Arctic deal, Rosneft obtained part ownership of ExxonMobil acreage in Alaska, the Gulf of Mexico, and US shale oil fields. Vladimir Putin and Rex Tillerson are personally close and likeminded on the subject of sanctions. In July 2015, Putin said that punitive financial and economic sanctions around the world should be “excluded from the international economic vocabulary.”

The Evolving Multipolar World

Commenting candidly on the perils of undoing the Iran accord and seeking to impose new sanctions on US allies, their banks, and businesses, Secretary of State Kerry warned that one consequence might be that the dollar could cease to be the reserve currency for the world. “Huge antipathy” to US leadership exists, he said, and “a big bloc out there”—with the Russian Federation and China joining forces with rising, nonaligned powers—is not “waiting for the United States to tell them what to do.”²⁷ An unintended consequence of the sanctions regime and of the neoliberal policies of international financial institutions has been the formation of an alternate bloc in the interstate system. That group has called for the introduction of a new international currency, the creation of credit mechanisms in local, non-dollar currencies, and petroleum sales outside the petrodollar system. Before concluding negotiations on the JCPOA, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani attended the meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Ufa, Russia. With the signing of the accord, Iran advanced from observer status to prospective full SCO membership. The SCO is a Eurasian political, economic, and military organization (it does not stress the last feature). The countries participating at all levels represent over three and one-quarter billion people.²⁸ When combined with the overlapping BRICS group of rising economic powers (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, which also met at the merged Ufa summit), the numbers approach half of the humans on the planet in 2014. Among them are four of the top 10 oil producers from 2015 and four members of the nuclear club. The key components are the Eurasian Economic Union, the Asia Infrastructure Investment

Bank, and the BRICS's New Development Bank (with \$400 billion in capital), which will finance infrastructure projects within the BRICS sphere and in other developing nations. Programmatically, the call has been issued to form a real counterterrorism coalition, featuring the United States, Iran, Russia, China, and Europe, as well as an SCO-based regional anti-drug campaign.

Fairytale prescriptions for Middle East policy were spun by neoconservatives Paul Wolfowitz ("the road to peace in the Middle East goes through Baghdad") and by David Wurmser (Dick Cheney's Middle East advisor), who wrongheadedly proposed that by razing Saddam Hussein's Baathist regime and creating a Shiite alternative in Iraq, the "socialist" Iranian revolution and Iran's regional allies would be sabotaged.²⁹ The time has come to embrace a one-world conception, transcending the postwar idea of a "free world" that married liberal anticommunists to proponents of rollback, followed by Bernard Lewis and Samuel P. Huntington's post-Cold War clash of civilizations. Yet as Jeff Halper argues in his forthcoming book, *War Against the People* (Pluto Press, 2015), the near-term future will probably offer a permanent state of emergency and endless warfare as wealth and power become increasingly de-territorialized. With the rise of securocratic warfare, or the human-security state, Israel has outgrown its former role as a US surrogate and parlayed its expertise in controlling the occupied territories to become a key player in the "global pacification" industry, "advising and assisting militaries, police forces, and homeland security agencies around the world." Such security politics form the basis of the alliance between Israel and Saudi Arabia, upon which ISIS has depended for financial support.³⁰

Perhaps rapprochement with Iran could move from economic integration to active participation in regional security arrangements. The accord could portend political solutions to Kurdish and Palestinian national aspirations, and address the grievances of disenfranchised Sunnis in what formerly constituted Iraq and Syria, which ISIS has exploited (its officers come predominantly from Saddam Hussein's former military and intelligence corps). Perhaps the US and European occupation armies will leave (even the CIA's Brennan believes "we can't kill ourselves out of this war"), allowing international and regional organizations to fashion guarantees that assure the participation of the region's religious and social minorities in their own governance, as well as their social autonomy. Perhaps in the "new normal" a humbled Likud Party will no longer insist on forcing Arab countries to accept Israel's territorial conquests and its nuclear hegemony. Perhaps the region will experience some relief from permanent war and destabilization, from the posttraumatic stress experienced by multiple generations, from the brain drain associated with its fleeing humanity, and from the ecological catastrophe war always brings in its wake. Even in this best of all possible worlds, though, with Peak Oil proving to be a mirage, enough oil remains to fry us all, as George Monbiot has bleakly observed.

NOTES

1. See "Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action," Vienna, July 14, 2015: 1. Israel cannot truthfully make this claim, with its stockpile of plutonium for 100 to 200 warheads, and 80 warheads readily deliverable via strategic bombers, intercontinental ballistic missiles, and submarine-launched ballistic missiles. The United States has a total inventory of some 7,200 warheads; as we are reminded every year in the first week of August, the United States is the only country to use nuclear weapons, killing more than 200,000 people, most of them civilians, in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, in 1945.

The quick involvement of the Security Council made a decisive difference in terms of internal law. Recognizing that the United States would be branded an international lawbreaker if it were to renounce the Security Council's obligations concerning the JCPOA, David Rivkin of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies outlined a legal strategy for resisting the accord, including state-by-state adoption of renewed sanctions using the Constitution's Commerce Clause (similar to the fight against Obama's Affordable Care Act) and, in international law, invoking the specious claim that Iran is committed to Israel's elimination and thus has contravened the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (David B. Rivkin Jr. and Lee A. Casey, "The Lawless Underpinnings of the Iran Nuclear Deal," *Wall Street Journal*, July 26, 2015). It should be recalled that in 2009 Rivkin and Casey defended John Yoo and Jay Bybee's torture memos as proof of limited waterboarding and the absence of CIA torture, while presenting the Bush administration's Justice Department as cautious and deeply attentive to staying within the law ("The Memos Prove We Didn't Torture," *Wall Street Journal*, April 20, 2009).

2. See Seymour M. Hersh, "Preparing the Battlefield: The Bush Administration Steps up Its Secret Moves against Iran," *The New Yorker*, July 7, 2008. George W. Bush's Presidential Finding dedicated \$400 million dollars to destabilize Iran's religious leadership by funding Baluchi Sunni fundamentalists, the Mujahideen-e-Khalq (M.E.K), and a Kurdish separatist group, the Party for a Free Life in Kurdistan, or PJAK. Vice President Dick Cheney persistently sought to attack Iran over the objections of military commanders and intelligence officials. See also Seymour M. Hersh, "Our Men in Iran?" *The New Yorker*, April 6, 2012. Stuxnet was part of a program code-named Olympic Games that was jointly run by Israel and the United States. See Nicole Perlroth and David E. Sanger, "U.S. Embedded Spyware, Report Says," *New York Times*, February 17, 2015: B1; David E. Sanger, "Obama Order Sped up Wave of Cyberattacks against Iran," *New York Times*, June 1, 2012. The privately owned, Brussels-based Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) system enables financial institutions worldwide to send and receive information about financial transactions.

3. "Poll: Most of American Jews Think Congress Should Approve Iran Deal," *Haaretz*, July 24, 2015, at www.haaretz.com/beta/1.667593; Ron Kampeas, "AIPAC, J Street Face Off over Iran Deal," *Haaretz*, July 23, 2015; "J Street vs. AIPAC: Main US Pro-Israel Lobbies Disagree on Iran Deal," *Jerusalem Post*, July 14, 2015. J Street donors include Credo, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the Middle East Peace Dialogue Network, the Foundation for Middle East Peace, and George Soros (see the organizations Annual Reports on its website).

4. See "Enough with Netanyahu's Iran Deal Hysteria," *Haaretz*, Editorial, July 16, 2015. On the thinking of former and sitting members of Israel's security and military establishment, see J.J. Goldberg's columns in *The Forward*. Among the group that opposes precipitate action against Iran and denies that it represents an existential threat to Israel are "a former chief of military intelligence, Amos Yadlin, who now heads Israel's main defense think tank; a former chief of arms technology, Yitzhak Ben-Yisrael, who now chairs both the Israel Space Agency and the science ministry's research and development council; a former chief of military operations, Israel Ziv; an near-legendary architect of Israeli military intelligence, Dov Tamari; a former director of the Shin Bet domestic security service, Ami Ayalon, and a former director of the Mossad intelligence agency, Efraim Halevy" (J.J. Goldberg, "Israel Security Establishment Breaks with Bibi on Iran Deal," *Forward*, July 23, 2015). On the 67 supporters of the accord, see "Former Top Brass to Netanyahu: Accept Iran Accord as 'Done Deal,'"

Haaretz, August 3, 2015, at www.haaretz.com/beta/1.669390.

5. See "340 US Rabbis Call on Congress to Endorse Iran Nuclear Deal," *Jerusalem Post*, August 18, 2015; "Hoenlein Criticizes Netanyahu's Call on American Jews to Oppose Iran Deal," at www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/premium-1.669986. Lining up against these currents are the Anti-Defamation League, the American Jewish Committee, and the right-wing Zionist Organization of America.

6. See William J. Broad, "Scientists Support Iran Deal in Letter to Obama," *The New York Times*, August 8, 2015: 8.

7. See Helene Cooper and Gardiner Harris, "Top General Gives 'Pragmatic' View of Iran Nuclear Deal," *New York Times*, July 29, 2015; Karen DeYoung, "Outgoing Joint Chiefs Chairman Dempsey Offers 'Pragmatic' Nod to Iran Deal," *The Washington Post*, July 29, 2015; Karen DeYoung, "Dozens of Retired Generals, Admirals Back Iran Nuclear Deal," *New York Times*, August 11, 2015; Carol Morello, "Retired Generals and Admirals Urge Congress to Reject Iran Nuclear Deal," *The Washington Post*, August 26, 2015; James Carden, "Is Russia Really 'the Greatest Threat' to US National Security?" *The Nation*, July 14, 2015; Brendan McGarry and Michael Hoffman, "Nuclear Deal's End to Iran Arms Embargo Worries Pentagon, Analysts," *Military.com*, July 14, 2015.

8. See Brian Bennett, "Iran Unlikely to Spend Most of Its Post-Sanctions Funds on Militants, CIA Says," *Los Angeles Times*, July 16, 2016; David E. Sanger, "President of Iran Opened Path to Nuclear Talks, C.I.A. Chief Asserts," *New York Times*, April 9, 2015; "A Conversation with CIA Director John Brennan," interviewed by Graham Allison, Director of the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard University, April 8, 2015, at www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z11BMr5JJ-U. Graham E. Fuller's analysis can be found in *Al-Monitor*, September 2014 ("Former CIA Officer Says US Policies Helped Create IS") and at his blog, e.g., "Can Washington Meet Iran's Deepest Challenge—to US Hegemony in the Middle East?" July 21, 2015.

9. See especially the Epilogue in Baer (2009). Forbes, who suggests that President Obama's playbook on Iran derives from Baer's book, highlights "Netanyahu's stunning electoral victory in Israel," and castigates "Obama's deep belief that the U.S. has been a malignant force in the world and that we should now behave as if we were Albania" (Steve Forbes, "Understanding Obama's Perverse View of the World," *Forbes*, April 12, 2015). Baer's proposals are far bolder than anything President Obama might consider, including redrawing borders in favor of the region's two most politically stable countries, Iran and Israel. Gerech, who came to the anti-Iran Foundation for the Defense of Democracies with Michael Ledeen (of Iran-Contra fame) after leaving the American Enterprise Institute, has consistently advocated for war with Iran (see Ben Armbruster, "GOP Megadonor's 'Nuke Iran' Comments Highlight Links to Influential Think Tank," *Think Progress*, October 25, 2013).

10. See Soufan Group, "TSG IntelBrief: The Middle East's Shifting Politics," August 7, 2015. A Eurasia Group monograph predicted that no agreement would be reached; see "Top Risks 2015," January 5, 2015.

11. See "Why Saudi Arabia and Israel Oppose Iran Nuclear Deal," *Al Jazeera*, April 14, 2015. Then see Michael R. Gordon, "John Kerry Wins Gulf States' Cautious Support for Iran Deal," *New York Times*, August 3, 2015. On military spending, see Trita Parsi and Tyler Cullis, "The Myth of the Iranian Military Giant," *Politico*, July 10, 2015; Bryan Bender, "How the Pentagon Got Its Way in Iran Deal," *Politico*, July 14, 2015; Moti Bassok, "Hellfire in Perspective: U.S. Military Aid to Israel Exceeds \$100 Billion," *Haaretz*, August 18, 2014. As part of the 2016 presidential campaign, an organization called If Americans Knew has placed billboards in Iowa stating that "\$10 Million A Day To Israel? Our Money is Needed in America!" (Mike Kuhlenbeck, "Controversial Israel Billboards Go Live in Des Moines," *Iowa Free Press*, August 3, 2015). See also Scott (2014, 173).

12. On liberal interventionists, see Robert Kagan "Republicans Need to Back up Their Complaints of the Iran Nuclear Deal," *Washington Post*, July 16, 2015. For deeper analysis, see Fitzgerald & Ryan (2014). Chapter 5 details how neoconservatives (John McCain, Joe Lieberman, and Lindsey Graham) and liberal interventionists (Hillary Clinton and Obama national security advisors Samantha Powers

and Susan Rice) joined forces to militarize the Arab Spring in Libya under the cover of preventing genocide. Then Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, Vice President Joe Biden, and National Security Advisor Tom Donilon dissented, with Gates arguing that he opposed “attacking a third Muslim country within a decade to bring about regime change, no matter how odious the regime” and that the fallout could not be “stage managed,” as McCain believed (p. 98). The dissenters were correct on this, given that Libya has become a failed state with ISIS-aligned jihadists mostly in control. On Ross and Petraeus, see Dennis Ross and David H. Petraeus, “How to Put Some Teeth into the Nuclear Deal with Iran,” *Washington Post*, August 25, 2015. They insist that Iran has earned this bellicosity because it is “one of three countries designated by the United States as a state sponsor of terrorism.” This argument is clearly propagandistic, since Petraeus argued a few days later that the United States should give arms to members of al-Nusra Front, an al Qaeda offshoot, to defeat ISIS (Shane Harris, “Petraeus: Use Al Qaeda Fighters to Beat ISIS,” *The Daily Beast*, August 31, 2015; Trevor Timm, “David Petraeus’ Bright Idea: Give Terrorists Weapons to Beat Terrorists,” *The Guardian*, September 2, 2015).

13. On Adelson, see Maya Shwyder, “Adelson: US Should Drop Atomic Bomb on Iran,” *Jerusalem Post*, October 24, 2013; Eli Clifton, “GOP Mega-Donor Sheldon Adelson Funds Mysterious Anti-Iran Pressure Group,” *The Nation*, January 14, 2015; Eli Clifton and Jim Lobe, “Iran Deal Heads toward Showdown with Adelson’s GOP,” *LobeLog.com*, July 15, 2015; Joe Garofoli, “Larry Ellison Gave \$3 million to Marco Rubio,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 4, 2015; Stephen Braun, “Money Men: Who Are Top 5 Donors to Romney?” Associated Press, *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 1, 2012. According to the last article, by 2012 Adelson, who was under investigation by the Justice Department and the Securities and Exchange Commission, had contributed to the Republican Jewish Coalition, which had spent \$920,000 since 2002 backing bills aimed at pressuring Iran and enhancing US security cooperation with Israel. On the Koch brothers, see Asjlynn Loder and David Evans, “Koch Brothers Flout Law Getting Richer with Iran Sales,” *Bloomberg Business*, October 3, 2011.

14. See Ron Kampeas, “AIPAC, J Street Face Off over Iran Deal,” *Haaretz*, July 23, 2015; “J Street vs. AIPAC: Main US Pro-Israel Lobbies Disagree on Iran Deal,” *Jerusalem Post*, July 14, 2015; Francine Kiefer, “Iran Deal Sparks Battle between Two Jewish Lobbies—and Worldviews,” *Christian Science Monitor*, July 29, 2015.

15. See David Brooks, “3 U.S. Defeats: Vietnam, Iraq and Now Iran,” *New York Times*, August 7, 2015; Tzvi Kahn, “FPI Analysis: What U.S. Officials Required, What the Iran Deal Concedes,” at www.foreignpolicy.org/content/fpi-analysis-what-us-officials-required-what-iran-deal-concedes#shash.MV4HxAYA.dpuf, and Julie Hirschfeld Davis, “Influential Pro-Israel Group Suffers Stinging Political Defeat,” *New York Times*, September 10, 2015. The classic work on the lobby is Mearsheimer (2007); see also Marrar (2008). On the role of Nancy Pelosi and the Ploughshares Fund, see Carol E. Lee and Siobhan Hughes, “Obama Methodically Wooed Democrats to Back Iran Nuclear Deal,” *The Wall Street Journal*, September 11, 2015; see also the Ploughshares Fund’s Annual Report 2014, entitled “Taking the Lead.”

16. See Michael R. Gordon, “Head of Group Opposing Iran Accord Quits Post, Saying He Backs Deal,” *New York Times*, August 11, 2015.

17. On Murdoch, see Dexter Filkins, “TV Channel Draws Viewers, and Threats, in Iran,” *New York Times*, November 19, 2010; Reza Aslan, “Murdoch’s Iranian Invasion,” *The Daily Beast*, October 9, 2010; Roy Greenslade, “Iran Nuclear Deal: What Britain’s National Newspapers Think,” *The Guardian*, July 15 2015. On MEMRI, see Jeff Stein, “Has the ISIS Crisis Pushed the CIA into Bed with Hezbollah?” *Newsweek*, October 1, 2014. See also the excellent Institute for Policy Studies website, Right Web.

18. On the factional struggle to dominate the executive branch and manage the ideology and practice of empire, see Colodny & Shachtman (2009), Lind (2005), Mizruchi (2013), and Schurmann (1974). See also James Joyner, “How Perpetual War Became U.S. Ideology,” *The Atlantic*, May 11, 2011, and independent investigative journalist Gareth Porter’s “The Warpath to Regime Change,” Right Web, November 5, 2007. On the systematic distortion of the nature of the Iranian nuclear program by

Israel and the Bush administration, see Porter (2014). On the support of former or current Republicans for the accord, see Jim Lobe, "Bipartisan Group of 60 Senior National Security Leaders Endorse Iran Deal," *LobeLog on Foreign Policy*, July 20, 2015; Brent Scowcroft, "The Iran Deal: An Epochal Moment that Congress Shouldn't Squander," *The Washington Post*, August 21, 2015; The Iran Project, at <http://iranprojectfcsny.org>; Richard Haass, "Haass: Regime Change Is the Only Way to Stop Iran," *Newsweek*, January 21, 2010; Micah Zenko, "The Big Winners of the Iran Nuclear Deal: Why Pentagon Planners Should Be Thrilled," *Foreign Policy*, July 15, 2015.

19. See Muna Shikaki, "How U.S. Firms Can Benefit from Iran's Nuclear Deal," *Al Arabiya News*, July 27, 2015; "What Lifting Iran's Sanctions Means for U.S. Businesses," NPR, July 17, 2015; Yeganeh Torbati, "US Businesses May Be Big Losers of the Iran Nuclear Deal," Reuters, July 15, 2015; Michael Birnbaum and Carol Morello, "European Companies Beat US to Iran Business after Nuclear Deal Reached," *The Guardian*, August 25, 2015.

20. See Don Melvin, "U.S. Companies Violated Iran Sanctions, Indictment Says," CNN, April 18, 2015; Nicole Hong, "Schlumberger Unit to Plead Guilty to Violating Iran, Sudan Sanctions," *Wall Street Journal*, March 25, 2015.

21. See Thom Shanker, "U.S. Arms Sales Make Up Most of Global Market," *New York Times*, August 26, 2012

22. As is well known, in 1973 the US Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) initiated a research program that led to the Internet; when Fairchild Semiconductor, whose core group went on to found Intel, introduced its first commercial integrated circuit, the product was too expensive for the market. President Kennedy's space program guaranteed its success by contracting for chips for NASA's Apollo Guidance Computer. Silicon Valley prospered because of the synergy between the electronics and defense industries. See "American Experience: Silicon Valley," PBS Program Transcript, and Brandon Bailey, "Silicon Valley Long Has Had Ties to Military, Intelligence Agencies," *San Jose Mercury News*, June 24, 2013. The CIA made Oracle's success and Larry Ellison's fortune possible. See Julie Bort, "Larry Ellison Is a Billionaire Today Thanks to the CIA," *Business Insider*, September 29, 2014. Edward Snowden's revelations indicate the extent to which Internet services and mobile device makers were integrated into the NSA's surveillance apparatus, willingly or not.

23. See Benoît Faucon, "Apple in Talks to Sell iPhone in Iran: Company Considers Joining Other Western Firms as Sanctions Ease," *Wall Street Journal*, October 29, 2014; Arik Hesseldahl, "Iranian-American Tech Execs, Investors Support Nuclear Deal," *Re/code*, August 10, 2015; Robert McMillan, "Iran Deal Could Help U.S. Tech Recruiters: U.S. Nuclear Accord with Iran Could Boost Silicon Valley Technical Talent," *Wall Street Journal*, July 20, 2015.

24. See Indira Lakshmanan and Anthony Dipaola, "Growing Iran Oil Exports Challenge U.S. Nuclear Sanctions," *Bloomberg Business*, June 12, 2014; Javier Blas and Joe Carroll, "Exxon Deploys More Sanction Watchers as Iran Nuke Deal Looms," *Bloomberg Business*, May 21, 2015.

25. See Daniel Gilbert, "Sanctions over Ukraine Put Exxon at Risk: Deal with Russia's Rosneft to Drill in Arctic Is Crucial to Oil Company," *The Wall Street Journal*, September 11, 2014; Indira Lakshmanan and Joe Carroll, "Putin Oil Deals with Exxon, Shell Imperiled by Sanctions," *Bloomberg Business*, September 10, 2014; David M. Herszenhorn, "Putin Calls for End to Use of Sanctions and Criticizes U.S. in Afghanistan," *The New York Times*, July 10, 2015; Steve LeVine, "How ExxonMobil Swayed US Sanctions and Strengthened Putin's Hand," *Quartz*, September 30, 2014.

26. Tim Arango and Clifford Krauss, "China Is Reaping Biggest Benefits of Iraq Oil Boom," *The New York Times*, June 2, 2013.

27. Karen DeYoung, "Dozens of Retired Generals, Admirals Back Iran Nuclear Deal," *The Washington Post*, August 11, 2015.

28. The SCO's permanent members are China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan, with India and Pakistan slated to become members in 2016. Iran, Afghanistan, and Mongolia are observer states, while Turkey, Sri Lanka, and Belarus are "dialogue partners." See "Top 10 Oil Producing Countries in the World: Where's the Greatest Petroleum Dominion?" at <http://fnancesonline>.

com/top-10-oil-producing-countries-in-the-world-where-the-greatest-petroleum-dominion. For more on Iran's regional alliances, see M.K. Bhadrakumar, "Iran's 'Look East' Policy Takes Wings," *Asia Times*, July 17, 2015; Pepe Escobar, "Historic Iran Nuke Deal Resets Eurasia's 'Great Game,'" *Asia Times*, July 14, 2015; Jonas Bernstein, "Putin: Russia Wants International Anti-Terror Coalition," *Voice of America*, September 4, 2015.

29. To quote from Wurmser (1999, 98–100): "Launching a policy and resolutely carrying it through until it razes Saddam's Ba'athism to the ground will send terrifying shock waves into Teheran... Ridding Iraq of Ba'athism can sabotage the Islamic revolution and its regional allies... Iran must be severed from its Shi'ite foundations. And this can be accomplished by promoting an Iraqi Shi'ite challenge... Iran must be severed from its Shi'ite foundations. And this can be accomplished by promoting an Iraqi Shi'ite challenge.... At the core of Iran's tyrannical revolution within a revolution was a very socialist concept: to place the state at the disposal of, and as the extension of, the revolutionary elite."

30. See Jonathan Cook, "Halper's New Book Sheds Light on the Arms Industry, Arguing That Israel Is Now the Go-To Nation for Armies and Police Forces around the World," *Middle East Eye*, August 29, 2015.

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Abstracts

Anatomy of a Done Deal: The Fight over the Iran Nuclear Accord Gregory Shank

This article explores the political forces most involved in the contest over the Obama administration's landmark signing, on July 14, 2015, of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, along with the permanent members of the UN Security Council, plus Germany. The accord codifies in international law Iran's reaffirmation to refrain from seeking, developing, or acquiring nuclear weapons, in exchange for relief from Western sanctions. It represents a departure from the post-Cold War dominance of neoconservatives and liberal interventionists over US foreign policymaking, but the 2016 presidential campaign will keep the issue in the limelight. The author suggests alternative future directions for US foreign policy in the Middle East, the inertia toward war versus containment in the military, intelligence, and national security bureaucracies, as well as the contradictory interests of transnational corporations, many of which will continue to chafe under a sanctions regime that has freed up European and Asian firms. So long as Congress does not reverse states of emergency, including anti-Iran measures in the Patriot Act, true détente and full reintegration of Iran in the world economy will remain elusive. A powerful constellation of states is ready to move on without the United States to stabilize the Middle East.

Keywords: nuclear nonproliferation, sanctions, Iran, foreign policy, neoconservative-Likud nexus, Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), oil, BRICS, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, 2016 election

Absolutely Sovereign Victims: Rethinking the Victim Movement Ronnie Lippens

This article attempts to rethink the emergence and subsequent development of what could be called the victim movement, or victim culture, which has crystallized in the latter half of the twentieth century. The author argues that a great variety of elements have, in the wake of World War II, come together to create a new form of life, one of whose manifestations is a pervasive victim culture. At the heart of this newly emerged form of life resides a radical desire for, or will to, absolute personal sovereignty, and a related radical desire for, or will to, absolute control. This form of life, and the desire and will that fuel it (however imaginary, or illusory this desire and this will) are neither homogenous nor monolithic.

Keywords: control society, World War II, consumer society, victimization, Belgium