

Colin Imm

Mr. Rutherford

Oxford Scholars

11 November 2015

Oxford Scholars Essay

“Nothing has made the world more dangerous in the last fifteen years than the foreign policy of the United States.” This is a quote that I recently heard on one of my favorite TV shows, Homeland, which captured my attention. Although it is a fictitious show, that statement really resonated with me because I believe it is true. The United States has continually made diplomatic mistakes in the Middle East that have impacted the world in a mostly negative way. The Iran Nuclear Arms Deal that the United States and members of the United Nations have recently agreed to is an incredibly controversial attempt to improve relations with the Middle East. The Iran Nuclear Deal is an extremely important agreement that could potentially change the world for better or for worse, therefore making it one of the most critical issues in the 2016 presidential election.

Since the Iran Nuclear Deal has been agreed upon, it has been widely covered by the media across the world. However, the average American most likely doesn't know exactly what the Nuclear Deal entails. Generally speaking, the agreement states that in exchange for suspending their Nuclear Arms program, Iran will have economic sanctions lifted from them and will also receive over \$100 billion in frozen assets from the United States and other members of the United Nations Security Council. The deal can be broken down in more specific terms. For a 15-year period,

Iran is required to export 97% of its enriched uranium, the vital ingredient at the core of a nuclear bomb. 14,000 of Iran's 20,000 centrifuges, which enrich uranium, will be placed in storage. Iran can still enrich uranium, but at an inadequate level for bombs, and must give up enriching plutonium altogether. The result of these measures will put Iran 12 months away from having sufficient uranium to create a nuclear bomb. The current time is believed to be two to three months. The Deal also includes safeguards to monitor Iran's compliance. Iran is to allow weapons inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to monitor their nuclear plants over the next 15 years. If they cheat, then the U.S. will impose sanctions again. How does Iran benefit from the deal? All oil and trade sanctions imposed on Iran by the United States and the European Union will end. In addition, over \$100 Billion in frozen Iranian assets will be released back to Iran by removing sanctions on their banking systems.

The Iran Nuclear Deal has been a prevalent topic discussed in this year's presidential race, with major political players voicing their strong opinions on the Iran Deal and what it means for the United States and the rest of the world. Most of the support has come from Democrats who believe that the Deal has begun a new chapter for the Middle East. Journalist Alon Ben-Meir wrote in an article on the Huffingtonpost.com about some of the positives of the Iran deal. "(The Iran Nuclear Deal) potentially delays Iran's ambition to acquire nuclear weapons for at least 10 years; ... disables the Arak facility from producing weapons-grade plutonium, reduces the number of centrifuges by two thirds, converts the Fordow facility into a research center, and allows for unprecedented intrusive inspections." Supporters of

the Deal hope that Iran will turn its focus to another direction now that it cannot legally create nuclear weapons. Like much of the Middle East, Iran is still a poverty stricken country, which the Iranian government largely attributes to the economic sanctions placed on them by the United States and its allies. By releasing \$100 billion dollars in Iran's frozen assets, supporters of the Deal believe that the money will be used on internal improvements, education, and other positive efforts to increase Iran's economy.

The opposition to the Iran Nuclear Deal has been prominent, mostly coming from Republicans. How could people be opposed to the Iran Deal with all the cutbacks it is forcing Iran to make on its nuclear program? Simply because they do not trust the Iranian government and its Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. In order for the Iran Deal to be considered a success, Iran must comply by the rules agreed upon in the Deal. However, it would be very difficult for Iran to be caught cheating due to the agreed upon terms in the Deal, which in some cases would give Iran a twenty four day notice before an inspection of a nuclear facility. There are also four military facilities in Iran that are off limits for inspection no matter what the circumstance. Republicans have also exposed a clause in the Deal that allows the Iranians to inspect themselves.

Iran has also sparked controversy because of its direct threats toward Israel. "I'd say (to Israel) that they will not see (the end) of these 25 years," the Islamic Republic News Agency quoted Khamenei as saying (CNN). In addition, Al Khamenei has recently called Israel "little Satan" and the United States "great Satan". Iran has been a strong supporter of the destruction of Israel ever since its creation, and has

been fiercely opposed to the United States since the overthrow of the wildly unpopular Shah in 1979. Critics of the deal believe the biggest flaw is that it doesn't completely eliminate Iran's nuclear program. Opponents of the Iran Deal are afraid that the \$100 billion that the United States is giving Iran will go directly to funding Islamic extremist groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah, which Iran has controversially supported for decades. In the September Republican presidential debate, Ted Cruz summarized what many opponents believe. "Giving \$100 billion to Al Khamenei makes the United States the world's leading funder of radical Islamic terrorism." In fact, some even believe the deal could accelerate Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons by infusing cash into the economy with the lifting of sanctions. An economically stronger Iran could be a dangerous Iran, now enabled to covertly continue to foster a nuclear program that would make security in this region, and the world, more precarious than it currently is.

Although the deal has been politicized and will continue to be as the election approaches, the facts stand clear. After researching the topic extensively, I believe that the Iran Nuclear Deal threatens the United States, Israel, and the rest of western civilization. Why would we give \$100 billion to a country that has killed and kidnapped Americans, directly funded Islamic terrorists groups, and called for the destruction of the United States and its allies? I believe that the United States does not have enough leverage with this agreement and that this agreement places too much trust in a country that history has shown us we simply can't trust. We need to reestablish our relationship with Israel, which has been weakened by the Obama administration in an attempt to appease the Middle East. The best deterrent against

Iran would be a strong relationship between the United States and Israel. Iran is a country that the United States and the rest of the world cannot afford to trust at this point in time, and should definitely not be given resources that could put western civilization at risk.

Works Cited

Beinart, Peter. "Why the Iran Deal Makes Obama's Critics So Angry." *The Atlantic*.

Atlantic Media Company, 14 July 2015. Web. 10 Nov. 2015.

Ben-Meir, Alon. "The Good, The Bad and the Ugly About the Iran Deal." *The*

Huffington Post. TheHuffingtonPost.com. Web. 10 Nov. 2015.

"Iran's Khamenei: Israel Won't Exist in 25 Years - CNN.com." *CNN*. Cable News

Network. Web. 10 Nov. 2015.