

The Iran Nuclear Deal – August 11

Dr. Robert Friedmann was the speaker on this overall Middle East perspective with emphasis on the Obama Administration's attempt to create a legacy of newfound peace with Iran and deferring their emergence as a nuclear state. He is Professor Emeritus of Criminal Justice at Georgia State University and Director of the Georgia International Law Enforcement Exchange.

Historical Perspective

He started with a review of what happened towards the end of the First World War, when Britain and France created countries that had never really existed before - namely Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan via the Sykes-Picot Agreement. This region had throughout history (before the discovery of the New World) been strategically situated as a connecting focal point near the developed continents of Asia, Africa and Europe. So it was geography and not just religion that created controversies there. Jerusalem being claimed as an important city for Jews, Christians and Muslims.

Also noted was that Iran and Turkey have become powerful non-Arab Muslim countries and rivals in the region.

Iran was a sophisticated military power for centuries, so when it became a Shiite state after the fall of the Shah, things turned for the worse. Some blame was placed on President Carter who misread the dangerous nature of that new Islamist State ("Khomeini is a noble cleric"). Carter then refused to exert American power to free the 52 hostages taken from the American Embassy in 1979. It took less than a day in 1981 for the new President Ronald Reagan to get them released. The implication is that the Middle East mentality respects power and senses the original action void as weakness by the U.S. This is viewed as crucial to the current Obama Administration getting out-negotiated by Iran by a wide margin.

Not just Jimmy Carter, but many Westerners were fooled by the intensity of the fundamentalist Muslims in intending to recapture their Caliphates and even desiring to take over the whole world.

The Deal - Why It's So Bad

The principal reason is the very fact that Iran agreed to it, as they never intended to give up on their original intent to become a nuclear power. Friedmann's view is that Obama and Kerry were so intent on having a deal that they virtually conceded on every major point. There is a general view among those familiar with the participants close to this "Deal" is that the U.S. got virtually nothing.

Obama's assertion that only one nation publically expressed opposition to the Deal, Israel, is very misleading as all of Iran's foes in the region privately are aghast at it, but will not publicly say so.

One reason offered for the one-sidedness of this Deal is that the U.S. tends to negotiate in good faith, respecting contracts, while the other side is totally duplicitous. "Taqiyya" in Islam means you are encouraged to lie to non-believers to achieve ultimate Islamist goals. Further proof that we got hoodwinked in the Deal was Secretary Kerry's astonishing admission that he had not read the "secret" bilateral side deal arranged between Iran and the IAEA. Iran

can now declare any site as military and thwart inspection completely. Before that the “agreement” that Iran had 24 days to cover up a site before inspectors could get in. Did we learn anything when Bill Clinton’s team of negotiators botched the North Korean negotiations to prevent nuclear expansion, and now North Korea has the bomb?

Audience Questions

In the Q&A session, Friedmann first explained why the U.S. Jewish community has not supported the Israeli abhorrence to this treaty. There is still an historical liberal view of American politics, stemming from thousands of years of fearing a persecuting establishment, so they are reluctant to criticize Democratic politicians. Reaction to NY Senator Chuck Schumer’s opposition to the deal shows how his fellow partisans question his loyalty.

On whether Israel, as a formidable military power in the region, will allow an Iranian bomb to be developed, he warned against unilateral Israeli action as inadvisable, as many others have an equal stake in preventing a nuclear Iran. Surprising alliances are starting up among Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the Emirates, aligned with Israel against this Iran power play.

Will Iran be reluctant to bomb Israel for fear of retaliation? Not likely as they have little regard for life in general. During the Iran-Iraq war, they marched 40,000 young Iranians through an Iraqi minefield to clear it for their own military to then march through. Also even if nuclear radiation prevents Iranian invasion subsequently for 50 years, they have a very long perspective to their ultimate desire to expand the Caliphate, willing to wait centuries if they are convinced of ultimate victory. Be wary America.

And how naive is the Obama/Kerry view that being friendly with Iran will serve to inspire them to join the community of modern nations that prefer peace rather than war?

There is also the Islamic State threat (Friedmann eschews the terms ISIS and ISIL) that may create unusual alliances in the Middle East. (As for precedence in flip-flopping alliances, he referred to the Soviet Union and Germany and the Allied Powers in WWII.)

A final observation was made by Friedmann that the U.S. congress opposition to the Deal was crucial even if it is overridden by an Obama Veto. It sets the dynamic for a new president’s actions in 2017, if the Republicans win.

And if the Deal rejection survives an Obama veto, that will be a major opportunity to renegotiate. It will likely get support from the U.S. allies that caved in the past negotiation (England and Germany). Russia and China may even come around a bit as the U.S. still has formidable pressure points around the globe on trade and financial sanctions.