

A New Era Beckons in the Mideast as Iran Could Be Compelled To Abandon Its Nuclear Ambitions

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By Conrad Black

It is increasingly clear that President Trump has played a cautious but effective game in the great enterprise of denying military nuclear status to the psychotic and supreme terrorism-supporting, pseudo-theological regime in Iran. He has warned repeatedly that the United States would not allow the present government of Iran to arm itself with nuclear weapons.



Iranians walk in a park with missiles in the background on January 20, 2024 at Tehran. Majid Saeedi/Getty Images

When presented with indisputable evidence that Iran was on the verge of having an atomic bomb, if not an atomic warhead that could fit on a missile, he did not disagree with Prime Minister Netanyahu's determination to attack Iran's nuclear program from the air.

Yet everyone knew that Israel did not have the military capability of destroying the laboratories and other facilities at deep underground sites. The fact that Israel has destroyed all other aspects of the program and has set back nuclear military deployment for a long time, even if the war ceased now, has prompted Al Jazeera and other militant Islamic and pro-terrorist sites to crow that Israel's attempt to destroy the Iranian nuclear program has failed.

This is the background for Mr. Trump's statement that Iran would be wise to come back to the negotiations with the United States, "while they still have something to negotiate." He has certainly not withdrawn his promise that Iran would not be permitted to become a military nuclear power, and he is

ultimately the only person who can prevent it.



President Trump at the G7 Summit, June 16, 2025, at Kananaskis, Canada. AP/Mark Schiefelbein

It is clear that he is offering to persuade Israel to accept a cease-fire in exchange for the verified dismantling of the most sophisticated and heavily protected elements of the Iranian nuclear program, failing which he will feel free to carry out his pledge to ensure that Iran does not develop and deploy such a weapon, by using the B-2 bombers at Diego Garcia to deliver 15-ton bombs on the deep sites.

In the meantime, Iran is a sitting duck, defenseless against Israeli air attack everywhere, except in the bowels of the earth, where the principal aspects of their nuclear program are being advanced. Every country in the world wishes Iran to be denied a nuclear weapon and it will happen.

It is a notorious fact that the great majority of the population of Iran detests the primitive and terroristic regime riveted on its back, and it may be assumed that the air war will shortly focus on the facilities of the Revolutionary

Guard that enforces this odious, totalitarian anomaly in Tehran. Israel and others are openly inviting the Iranian people to rise up against this and it is impossible for those lacking comprehensive direct intelligence of the subject to be confident about how vulnerable it is.

Although the usual range of wafflers and appeasers are already snuggling towards the various echelons of antisemites from the socially disdainful to the pathological Jew-baiters, nobody is expressing sympathy or solidarity with the abominable Iranian government. It is well known that all of the Arab powers believe that if Iran were allowed to develop and deploy nuclear weapons, the principal Arab powers would have to do the same.



Missiles at an Iranian military base at northern Tehran, April 17, 2024. AP/Vahid Salemi

This would assure the complete collapse of the non-proliferation system, and the attempt to discourage nuclear proliferation would give away to a regime of deterrence in which the majority of the world's remotely advanced countries would develop sufficient deliverable nuclear capability to provide them with deterrence.

It must be said that if Iran was a respectable government and could be trusted to have, but not be reckless about, nuclear weapons, it would have a legitimate grievance that the nuclear powers had declared themselves to be worthy holders of such immense destructive power while discouraging the other 190 nations in the world from adding that particular cubit to their stature.

Since it appears almost inevitable that one way or another Iran will have to abandon its nuclear military ambitions, as well as its sponsorship of Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis, we may finally be entering a new era in the Middle East of a genuine cooperation between the Arab powers and Israel. There may also be some broader significance in President Putin's putting himself forward as a mediator.

The Israelis couldn't trust him, and he has utterly no credentials as any kind of a peacemaker, but he could front negotiations really carried out under the auspices of the United States if it would assist him in the eyes of his own countrymen, who cannot be too delighted with the Putin record, including a million casualties in his insane and unsuccessful aggressive war in Ukraine.



President Putin at Moscow, March 13, 2025. AP/Alexander Zemlianichenko

A comprehensive settlement in central Europe may also be coming closer, based on minor territorial concessions by Ukraine to Russia but ironclad international guarantees of Ukraine as a legitimate sovereign country with accepted borders, all in the context of a nonaggression agreement between North Atlantic Treaty and Russia. This could be a framework for Russia gradually to take its distance from China and have a rapprochement with the West where it rightfully belongs, as the greatest Russian leaders starting with Peter the Great have understood.

The initial response of Mr. Trump's domestic opponents has been to blame him for renouncing the fatuous agreement that the Obama administration sponsored, under which Iran would now be perfectly free to develop and deploy nuclear weapons. Mr. Trump's opponents would do well to remember that it was the pacifistic Jimmy Carter who forced out the Shah of Iran, ("threw him out like a dead mouse," said his national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski). This plunged Iran into the dark

ages and unleashed nearly half a century of terrorism-
sponsorship on the world.

On the heels of that geopolitical coup, President George W. Bush, Vice President Cheney, Secretary Powell, Secretary Rumsfeld, and Secretary Rice and others gave us the theory that democracies don't initiate wars and that therefore elections must be held everywhere. None of them knew enough to realize that sometimes the most popular political movements in politically immature countries are anti-democratic, and we got the elevation of Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Egyptian Islamic brotherhood, with the blessing of President Obama, and "free" Iraq ultimately became a satellite of Iran.



Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill confer at Yalta, Crimea, February 1945. Via Wikimedia Commons

Mr. Obama, for his part, apologized for the wartime performance of Churchill and Roosevelt, the world's two

greatest war leaders since Lincoln, for President Truman's use of the atomic bomb, which saved a million Allied lives and probably more Japanese and which was hardly unprovoked and was used after Japan ignored warnings, and for President Eisenhower's role in overthrowing the Mossadegh regime in Iran, which was the most benign development in modern Iranian history, at least until last week.

The American record in the Middle East between Truman's recognition of Israel and Nixon's opening of relations with Anwar Sadat, and except for Camp David and the Abraham accords since, has produced more problems than solutions. All wars are nasty and dangerous, but the Israel-Iran war contains the potential for great progress.

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