

Michael Oren on Obama and the pending Iran Nuclear Deal



**President Obama and former Israeli Ambassador Michael Oren,
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Source: White House

We could be shortly witness and historically dangerous P5+1 agreement with Iran that many believe the Islamic republic may already be on the brink, if not in possession of a nuclear weapons capability. Israel, America and the world are anticipating that an agreement may be announced imminently. Based on leaks by Iranian and US 'senior officials, that may be fraught with concessions demanded by Ayatollah Khamenei. Those include lifting of both UN and US sanctions against nuclear enrichment not permitting inspections of military sites, acquiring conventional weaponry including ICBMs and releasing an estimated \$150 billion in funds. All without permitting unscheduled intrusive inspections of both known and unknown nuclear technology sites and leaving the Islam republic of Iran thousands of centrifuges and infrastructure in place. If that occurs, it will trigger a 60 day Congressional review of a very complex agreement teeming with insoluble technical matters in various appendices. An agreement that could be well in excess of 100 pages.

Tomorrow, President Obama will travel to Capitol Hill to ostensibly make the pitch for why the P5+1 agreement are a "good deal" versus the "very bad deal" that Israeli Prime Minister spoke of before a Joint Meeting of Congress on March 3, 2015. Obama will likely contend that he "has Israel's back," something that virtually of all Israel believes is not the case. This despite the political divide in its parliament,

The Knesset. While the President will be trying to make a convincing case to the Democratic members of Congress. He will be concentrating his appeal on a group of 14 skeptical Senate Democrats who could make the difference in an ultimate veto proof vote under the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015 (INARA).

This past weekend, Jacob Heilbrunn, editor of the liberal monthly, *The National Interest*, [published](#) his *New York Times Sunday Book Review* of [Ally; my journey across the American-Israeli Divide](#), the memoir of former Israeli Ambassador to the US, Michael Oren, now a member of the Knesset centrist party, Kulanu. Oren is an American Israel and a *Times* bestselling author of two previous works [Six Days of War: June 1967 and The Making of the Modern Middle East \(2003\)](#) and [Power, Faith, and Fantasy: America in the Middle East, 1776 to the Present \(2007\)](#). He holds a PhD from Princeton University in Middle East Studies. He is former combat veteran of an elite unit IDF that fought in the 1982 Lebanon War. He later [served](#) in the IDF Spokesperson Office for the IDF during the Second Lebanon War 2006 and the 2008-2009 IDF Operation Cast Lead against the Hamas rocket war in Gaza. Heilbrunn used the occasion of his *Times* review of Oren's *Ally* to take exception to Oren's views on Obama's quest for a nuclear deal with Iran.

Heilbrunn [wrote](#) in the conclusion of his *New York Times Sunday Book Review*:

The pity of it all is that Oren has been a political moderate, at least in the context of Netanyahu's inner circle. According to Oren, he often counseled prudence in dealing with America. Netanyahu would have none of it. Oren says, "my approach ran counter to Netanyahu's personality – part commando, part politico and thoroughly predatory."

But what Oren, much like Netanyahu himself, refuses to countenance is that Obama's focus on reaching a deal with

Iran isn't based on wishful thinking but on cold strategic considerations. Oren concludes by saying that Israel should not take America for granted and that he wants to help restore ties between the two. If so, he has a funny way of going about it. "Ally" does not strengthen the alliance but could further erode it.

The Middle East Forum released a video of an interview of Oren by Dr. Daniel Pipes at the Free Library in Philadelphia on June 24, 2015. Oren addresses a number of issues, among them the diplomatic daylight between the two allies, Israel and the US under Obama, evidence of the American Jewish divide over Israel, the importance of Muslim influences on Obama's transformative policies with regard to the global *ummah* and most troubling, acceptance of Iran's right to nuclear energy development. At one point in the discussion between Pipes and Oren, the matter of the pending Iran nuclear deal was brought up.

Oren's reply addresses what he believes are the concerns of most if not virtually all Israelis. That the Joint Plan of Action doesn't change the behavior of the Islamic regime as a global sponsor of terrorism and Iran under the terms of the agreement could breach the nuclear threshold. He explains that this is one of the express purposes for why he brought out *Ally*, in June. He also endeavors to disabuse the vindictiveness and ad hominem accusations against his memoir of critics. Pipes noted the criticism from some American Jewish leaders with Democratic affiliations among them former California Congressman Melvin Levine and outgoing ADL head Abe Foxman. Oren points out that the book had to go a thorough vetting by Israeli security echelons including the military censors, Mossad and others for both security reasons and fact checking. Oren probably has the final say on these criticisms including Heilbrunn's in the *New York Times Sunday Book Review*. Oren says forthrightly in the MEF interview with Pipes:

That in a week or so there is liable to be an agreement signed between the United States, other permanent members of the Security Council and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Which the State of Israel, not my party, not the Prime Minister, but the State of Israel views as a terrible deal that deeply endangers us. There is no way that I could be derelict in my duty but to tell this story right now. I am telling you straight out... The book had to come out now to trigger the type of conversation we are precisely having tonight. Otherwise, what do they expect from us, to go silently into the night with the signing of this agreement? We can't do that, as a Jewish people we can't do that.

[Watch](#) this Middle East Forum video interview with Michael Oren by Dr. Daniel Pipes:

We may shortly witness a Joint Plan of Action signed by the P5+1 with Iran. An agreement that will trigger the kind of intense discussion and debate by Congress under the 60 day review period authorized by INARA. Will that review overturn what Oren, PM Netanyahu, virtually all Israelis and many Americans consider a "very bad deal"? Stay tuned for developments.