

The Iran Deal Will Bring Danger

By September 17, 2015, the United States Senate must vote on a “resolution of disapproval” of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the nuclear arrangement with Iran. It is appropriate that the senators discuss whether the agreement is, as the Obama administration argues, the best available strategy to block Iran from acquiring nuclear weapon capability. It is not appropriate for the members of the Obama administration to attack the critics of the agreement with suggestions of their double loyalty and to question their motivation.

The senators should discuss and vote accordingly not only on the details of the nuclear agreement but also on appraisal of the negative consequences of Iran’s behavior as a result of the deal. The confident Iranian regime has already begun to illustrate that behavior by its increased funding of terrorist organizations, dedicated to the destruction of the State of Israel. The U.S. State Department in a 2014 report stated that Iran continues to support terrorist groups around the world. As a result of the nuclear deal, the possibility of enhanced Iranian sponsored belligerence will be escalated. It will bring less, not more security to the Middle East.

No one can doubt that the agreement is both complex and controversial in its immediate and future effects. It is arguable that the agreement does not enhance international security or end or reduce the threat of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. We know that Iran will be allowed to enrich uranium and to develop advanced centrifuges. It is highly likely that the agreement, as Joseph Lieberman argued, ultimately allows Iran to become a nuclear weapon state, and indeed legitimizes Iran’s possession of nuclear weapon capability.

The history of Nazi Germany has shown that arms agreements are easy to break and always difficult to enforce. Uncertainty reigns not only on this issue, but also on the question of international inspection of Iranian sites. The 24-day notice requirement for inspection of sites provides the opportunity for cheating, at which Iran has proved it is a master. This particular issue seems to have turned into farce with the revelation of a secret agreement by which Iran is allowed to use its own experts to inspect a controversial nuclear site.

It is imperative that the senators demand that contents of all side agreements between Iran and the IAEA be revealed.

What are certain are the benefits that Iran will obtain from the agreement, and policy consequences that will follow.

Paraphrasing the words of Winston Churchill about the Munich Agreement of 1938, Iran, instead of snatching all the victuals from the table, has been content to have them served to it course by course.

The most important benefit, to be obtained in the near future, is the end of the embargoes on conventional arms and ballistic missiles, and the removal of international sanctions, which will allow Iran to recover \$150 billion held in overseas accounts.

That money will be used for different positive purposes, but it will also be used for negative ones. This is already the case, with the Iranian regime providing financial assistance for the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) movement, the second strongest armed movement that operates in the Gaza Strip – though its headquarters are in Damascus, which is almost entirely dependent on Iranian funding.

PIJ is a more extreme group than Hamas, dedicated to the destruction of Israel by violent means. According to the Council on Foreign Relations, it approaches the Arab-Israeli conflict as an ideological war, not as a territorial dispute.

It is recognized as a terrorist group by a number of

countries including the United States, the U.K., and the EU.

Iran has shown its intentions and preferences. In the past, Iran gave Hamas more than \$1 billion, as well as providing military support and training, but reduced its support when Hamas did not get involved in the fighting in Syria. It is indicative that Iran is not funding, or has reduced its funding for, the political wing of Hamas, which has made overtures to Saudi Arabia, Iran's rival. Instead, it is funding Hamas's military win and has given much more to PIJ.

For a time Iran stopped its support for the jihadists because they had not adopted a clear position in support of Iran's involvement in Yemen. Islamic Jihad had supported the Assad regime in Syria but took a neutral position regarding Yemen.

The issue was related to the religious and geo-political rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia, which had begun an operation, called Storm Resolve, against the Shiite rebels in Yemen. PIJ, like its rival Hamas, is a Sunni movement, so, not surprisingly, it would not necessarily agree with the Shiite Iran on all issues

However, Iran has resumed its funding and operation support for PIJ. To make the issue more complex, Iran has also been funding a smaller group, called as-Sabirin (the patient ones), a breakaway group from PIJ and led by a former PIJ military operative.

Iran has been active in supporting recent attacks on Israel.

The Iranian Revolutionary Guards have been responsible for the rocket fire, not simply mortar shells, on August 20, 2015 on northern Israel, the Upper Galilee, and the Golan Heights from Syria. The attacks were orchestrated by the Palestinian division of the Iranian al-Quds Force, led by Saeed Izadhi and carried out by PIJ. Iran is making the Golan Heights a battleground.

In an earlier attack, PIJ fired rockets at southern Israel

from the Gaza Strip, landing in the Eshkol Regional Council. In addition, four members of PIJ were arrested for plotting to attack Jewish worshipers visiting Joseph's tomb in Nablus.

As a result of the benefits Iran gets from the nuclear deal, and the money available to fund its proxies, the likelihood is of more Iranian-funded attacks on Israel, which has already had the first taste of a bitter cup.

The nuclear deal will lead to danger for Israel. With the withdrawal of sanctions in the near future, Iran will continue to escalate its belligerence and its funding and support of terrorist activities. No one can say that the U.S. senators have not been forewarned about the danger ahead.

First published in the