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Trump and Iran



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As U.S. President Donald Trump runs amok on the world stage, there seems to be a global focus more on his erratic behavior, than on what it is he proposes. We must not overlook his oppression of the Palestinians, bombing of school children in Yemen or support for terrorists in Syria. But our own focus today will be on his treatment of, and attitude towards, Iran.

U.S. history with Iran is fraught with crime and repression. The decades-long reign of the U.S. puppet, the Shah of Iran, only came about after the U.S. orchestrated the overthrow of Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh, who had been elected in 1952, and who promptly nationalized the oil industry. This was unacceptable to the U.S. government, which cared nothing at all about the will of the Iranian people. So instead of living with their democratically-elected leaders, the people of Iran endured twenty-six years of repression brought about by the U.S., which elevated the Shah to power. During those long decades, the U.S. got all the oil it wanted, and pulled the strings as the brutal Shah oppressed the people of Iran.

In February of 1979, a popular people's revolution ended the reign of the Shah, and the Islamic Republic of Iran began. The U.S. was blindsided by the overthrow, and never expected the revolution's leaders to sustain a government for any length of time. When it became apparent that those leaders had the support of the people, were quite capable of governing, and weren't interested in following the demands of the Imperial U.S., the U.S. attempted to destabilize Iran, without success.

These unsuccessful attempts were greatly encouraged by another brutal government leader, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. For decades, Netanyahu has 'cried wolf', saying that Iran was always close to developing nuclear weapons. U.S. politicians, bought and paid for by pro-Israel lobbies, dance to his tune, and supported unjust sanctions for years.

During the second administration of U.S. President Barack Obama, the U.S. and several other nations (China, Russia, France, Germany) and the European Union, reached an agreement with Iran whereby Iran would limit its nuclear development program, in exchange for the lifting of sanctions. This concession on Iran's part was hardly necessary, because Iran's leaders have always said that their nuclear program was for peaceful purposes.

Nevertheless, the agreement, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was signed by all parties and endorsed by the United Nations. Part of the agreement was that United Nations inspectors would visit Iran's nuclear development sites to assure that Iran was adhering to its part of the agreement. In exchange, monies belonging to Iran which had been frozen would be released, and sanctions would be terminated.

In the U.S., it was also required that the president certify to Congress quarterly that Iran was in compliance, based on the reports from the U.N. Each quarter, the U.N. certified Iranian compliance, and each quarter through the end of the Obama administration, and

into the Trump administration, the U.S. president reported to Congress that Iran was, in fact, compliant.

Yet Trump didn't like the agreement, so in May of this year, he violated international law, and further damaged U.S. credibility, when he said he would no longer abide by the agreement. Without exception, the other signatories to the agreement condemned Trump's actions, and asked him to reconsider, to no avail. Additionally, he advised the U.S.'s allies that they faced sanctions if they continued in the JCPOA.

Trump immediately reinstated all sanctions, causing economic hardship on the Iranian people. His naïve expectation is that this will cause the people to demand a new government, when it is obvious that it isn't the Iranian government that is the source of the economic difficulties, but the U.S. Reza Pahlav, the son of the infamous Shah, recently stated that protests in Iran indicate the Iranians' dissatisfaction with the government, and show that they seek 'regime change'. Yet the protest have always been about economic problems, not 'regime change'. When hundreds of thousands of people protested the U.S. government in the days following the inauguration of Trump, one wonders if Reza Pahlav and others were quick to say that this indicated that the U.S. citizenry wanted to overthrow the government, when they were actually protesting government policies.

In addition to its own, criminal, covert activities, the U.S. government supports terrorist groups that seek the overthrow of the Iranian government. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has actually endorsed the so-called People's Mojahideen-e Khalq (also know as MEK, among other names). Once listed as a terrorist organization, that designation was removed at the behest of then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in 2012. It is estimated that the MEK is responsible for at least 12,000 deaths in Iran since the Revolution. Why would the U.S. remove the terror designation from such an organization?

We will summarize, to see what sense, if any, can be made from U.S. actions:

- + The U.S. overthrew the government of Iran in the 1953.
- + The U.S. then installed the brutal Shah of Iran, who oppressed the people of Iran for twenty-six years.
- + In 1979, a people's uprising in Iran overthrew the Shah, and ushered in the Islamic Republic of Iran.
- + The U.S. has tried, since 1979, to bring about 'regime change' in Iran, through economic sanctions, and attempts to paint Iran as a 'terrorist' government, despite the fact that the U.S. has killed at least 20,000,000 people since the end of World War II, and is currently

bombing seven countries, and supporting terrorist groups in Syria and Venezuela. It also supports known terrorist groups that seek the overthrow of the government of Iran.

+ After agreeing to remove sanctions based on concessions given by Iran, and with which Iran has complied, the U.S. reneged on its word, and reinstated sanctions, along with threatening some of its closest allies with sanctions if they, too, don't violate the JCPOA.

What possible reason can the U.S. have for such aggressive and bizarre behavior? Iran, as a nation, is growing in power and influence, especially in the Middle East. Yet Israel, which unlike Iran, has refused to sign the international Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, seeks to be the only powerful country in the region. Additionally, Iran is oil rich, and the U.S. is well-known for invading and destroying oil-rich nations. Between the powerful, pro-Israel lobby groups in the U.S. (special interest groups being the only constituency that U.S. elected officials respect), and lust for oil, Iran has, for generations, been a target of the U.S.

What will happen next? Will the U.S. actually invade Iran, risking retaliation by Iran's powerfully ally, Russia? Will it continue to support terrorist groups inside and outside of Iran? Donald Trump is an erratic and unstable man, and he has surrounded himself with advisors who have the same, skewed world view that he has.

It is hoped that someone within U.S. governance has sufficient influence with Trump to prevent what would be a disaster for the Middle East, and possibly for the entire planet. Iran would prevail, but the cost to the world would be staggering.