



The Geneva Interim Accord: A Bad Deal

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: The interim accord reached in Geneva regarding Iran's nuclear program is a bad deal. It enshrines Iran's status as a nuclear threshold state and paves, not impedes, Tehran's path towards a nuclear bomb.

You know that the accord reached in Geneva between the P5+1 and Iran is a bad deal when US Secretary of State John Kerry proclaims that the accord does not recognize Iran's "right to enrich" uranium, and five minutes later Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif says it does.

Woe to us that Zarif speaks with more credibility than Kerry. Officials in Washington have now confirmed the Iranian interpretation by commenting on the record that it is "not realistic" to expect, even in a further accord, that Iran will agree to zero enrichment.

You know it's a bad deal when John Kerry says that the accord's main purpose is to "put time on the clock," but Dr. Ephraim Asculai, a veteran of both the IAEA and the Israel Atomic Energy Commission, determines that the deal "does not do anything to change Iran's breakout time, except perhaps in a very minor way." Asculai says the interim agreement adds only "a few days" onto the regime's clock should it decide to sprint toward a bomb.

You know it's a bad deal when one of the most-ballyhooed Iranian "concessions" is its agreement – for the next six months – not to install plutonium production equipment in the heavy water reactor in Arak. But this is a joke, since the reactor is still under construction and will be so for at least another 12 months, and Washington now admits that the text of the accord

has a loophole which allows Tehran to build components off-site for later installation in the reactor.

You know it's a bad deal when the second most-celebrated Iranian "concession" is its agreement to temporarily halt enriching uranium to a 20 percent level (and convert what they have into fuel rods or uranium oxide), and to limit the number of centrifuges in Natanz by half and the number of centrifuges in Fordo by three-quarters.

But Israeli analysts term these restrictions almost meaningless. Iran already has more than eight tons of low-enriched uranium, enough for four to five atom bombs; and with nearly 18,000 fully-operational centrifuges, it can enrich uranium to any level it wants within a short period of time. So Iran is already a nuclear threshold country in terms of its ability to produce fissile material, and this situation won't change. The Iranians can quietly accept the freeze on high-enriched uranium, and make a swift run any day in the future towards the critical amounts needed for a bomb.

You know it's a bad deal when one of the much-touted-breakthroughs is Iranian agreement to supposedly "intrusive" IAEA inspections. But the IAEA has missed every major Iranian nuclear advance over the past twenty years, and been very slow to call-out the Iranians when it did find evidence of Iranian misdoing. Moreover, the hypothetically-intrusive international inspections do not include access to the places where Iran is suspected of working on nuclear weaponization, like Parchin. In fact, the interim accord doesn't restrict or relate at all to Iran's military programs in nuclear metallurgy, warhead design, and long-range missile production.

You know it's a bad deal when the year-long, until-now-secret, American-Iranian talks have reportedly not focused at all on Iran's awful behavior in the region, from supporting Hizballah and Syria's Assad, to its subversive activities in Egypt and Jordan, to its genocidal statements with regard to Israel. All of this is being swept under the carpet in a dangerously-enthusiastic rush to craft a new nuclear deal with Iran. Of course, it's a deal that may last long enough for Obama to serve out his presidential tenure without having to really confront the Iranians, so it's "worth it."

You know it's a bad deal when just about every administration spokesman has explained over and over again in recent weeks that war with Iran is not an acceptable option. Thus residual, ritual American incantations of the diplomatic formula that "all options remain on the table" – to wit, military action could still be contemplated if the Iranians don't follow through on their new commitments – ring totally hollow. It's clear that the Obama

administration has no intention of striking the Iranian nuclear military complex, ever, under any circumstances.

You know it's a bad deal when the Geneva accord may not really be much of an actual agreement at all. Former US National Security Council official Elliott Abrams has pointed out that the accord summary released by the White House is couched in "aspirational" terms, suggesting that actual "implementation" of Iranian commitments still need to be negotiated, and the White House now admits as much. Zarif has actually called the White House texts "invalid and one-sided interpretations of the texts agreed to in Geneva."

You know it's a bad deal when the French foreign minister and others are already saying that the so-called interim accord could be in place for a year or more, since talks on a longer-term agreement may be prolonged and difficult. And who knows whether Tehran will ever agree to a tougher accord. So Obama's "interim" accord could become a lasting arrangement; the worst possible scenario.

You know it's a bad deal when the US administration official in charge of the negotiations with Iran is none other than Wendy Sherman, US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs. Sherman was the Clinton administration's policy coordinator for North Korea when the flimsy 2005 and 2007 accords were signed – each of which was hailed as "historic and transformative" by Washington, only to be violated with impunity by the North Koreans again and again. Today the Kim regime has uranium enrichment facilities, has restarted (again) its plutonium-producing nuclear reactor at Yongbyon, has conducted a series of increasingly successful long-range missile tests, and has carried out three nuclear tests (in 2006, 2009, and 2013).

You know it's a bad deal when Obama and Kerry have taken to belittling Israel's concerns, and to battering American Jewish and congressional critics of the Geneva deal with insinuations of disloyalty, dual loyalty, and warmongering, instead of defending the accord on its own terms. But all is fair in Obama's drive for a new regional order in which Israel is a bit player and side concern, and America's grand reconciliation with the Islamic world is the paramount strategic objective.

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