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A Flawed Deal

An Assessment of the Iranian Nuclear Agreement

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Tom Wilson

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Summary

- The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on the Iranian nuclear programme fundamentally fails to meet the international community's primary objective of ensuring that Iran is definitively blocked from making further progress toward gaining nuclear weapons capabilities. At the same time, the concessions made to Iran in the form of sanctions relief and the lifting of the arms embargo, risk further emboldening Iranian regional ambitions. This would be to the detriment of regional stability and global security.
- Proponents of the agreement with Iran had initially assured that the international negotiators would secure rigorous monitoring arrangements with Iran, and spoke of "anytime, anywhere" inspections. Yet, when the agreement was announced, officials instead explained that Iran would be given a 24-day notice period prior to inspections of key facilities. However, further study of the JCPOA text reveals that there could in fact be a period of several months of consultation with Iran, prior to the 24-day notice period coming into effect.
- In addition to the arrangements officially set out in the JCPOA text, it has been alleged that there are a number of side agreements that have not been made available to the public. Information about one such side deal made between the IAEA and Iran indicates that at highly sensitive sites such as Parchin, international inspectors may not be allowed to be present, and that instead Iran will conduct its own inspections of these sites.
- As part of his defence of the JCPOA, President Obama has claimed that in the event that Iran were to breach the agreement, mechanisms will be in place that would trigger the immediate return of sanctions; a sanctions snapback. But in reality the procedures set out by the JCPOA mean that at best, restoring sanctions would take a number of months, and there is no guarantee that this move might not meet with opposition from key international powers. Additionally, sanctions snapback would likely lead to Iran abandoning any remaining remnants of the agreement, which would itself represent a disincentive for returning to sanctions.
- While the agreement sets limits on Iran's ability to enrich uranium, much of the agreement is only temporary. This is despite the fact that sanctions on Iran are envisaged as being lifted in perpetuity. With most of the restrictions on Iran only being put in place for a ten to fifteen-year period, the fear is that after that time Iran could resume work on gaining nuclear weapons capabilities.
- The JCPOA also allows for an eventual lifting of the international arms embargo that is currently imposed on Iran. With this coming at the same time as the lifting of economic sanctions, many observers have expressed concerns that this will provide Iran with the means and the liberty to strengthen its own conventional military capabilities, while also allowing the regime to increase its sponsorship of terrorist organisations and client states, such as Syria.

- If the JCPOA ultimately fails to prevent Iran from advancing toward nuclear weapons capabilities then this would have a profoundly detrimental impact on efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation globally and would almost certainly encourage other Middle Eastern states to seek the equivalent capabilities.

Introduction

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) agreed upon by Iran and the P5+1 powers (United States, Russia, China, France, Britain and Germany) in July 2015 sets out an agreed upon plan for limiting Iran's nuclear activities with the intention of preventing Iran from being able to acquire nuclear breakout capabilities. This undertaking has not been without considerable controversy. Iran is regarded by much of the international community as a pariah, and its past record of breaking international agreements, flouting international law and concealing prohibited nuclear activities contributed to staunch opposition to the prospect of undertaking negotiations with Tehran.

From the beginning of Barack Obama's presidency in 2009, US policy became oriented toward pursuing a diplomatic solution to the confrontation with Iran, providing an early indication that the Obama administration was seeking a more far reaching form of rapprochement with Iran. During Obama's first term in office, during which time Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was still president of Iran, little diplomatic progress was made. Many in the international community and the US Congress pushed for the implementation of further sanctions in an effort to pressure Iran to show greater cooperation on the nuclear issues.

With the election of Hassan Rouhani as president of Iran in June 2013, some in the West claimed that this represented an opportunity for encouraging greater moderation on the part of the regime and argued that Rouhani was a partner for cooperation and dialogue. In November 2013, Iran and the P5+1 countries announced the Interim Geneva agreement on Iran's nuclear programme. This agreement would grant Iran some limited sanctions relief in return for reducing its levels of nuclear enrichment, as well as permitting International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors to monitor its nuclear infrastructure. The interim agreement also obliged all parties to reach a final agreement ready for implementation by July 2014. However, negotiators were unable to meet this deadline and instead created a new timetable which included a commitment to reach a framework agreement, announced in early April 2015. Nevertheless, senior Iranian officials subsequently appeared to walk back many of the commitments that they were supposed to have agreed to in the framework agreement.

While the deadline for a final agreement in early July was missed, on 14th July Iran and the P5+1 powers finalised the JCPOA, which was broadly in line with what had been detailed in the framework agreement from April. The one addition was a provision that allowed for the lifting of the arms and ballistic missile embargos that Iran has been subject to. This aspect of the agreement was an unexpected dimension for many observers, not least because the negotiations had been officially restricted to only dealing with nuclear matters.

There are aspects of the agreement that remain unknown to the public. It is understood that there are some unwritten and classified arrangements in place concerning inspections by the IAEA, and that some 17 undisclosed documents that Members of Congress have access to but that have not been made available for public scrutiny. Nevertheless, the core of the agreement is known and has elicited a wide range of reactions internationally. This has included some strong criticism, with serious allegations being made that the JCPOA fails to meet the international community's own objective of preventing Iran from becoming a nuclear breakout power, while also making concessions to Iran that have the potential to have long-lasting and potentially highly damaging ramifications.

1. Flaws in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action – Inspections, Snap-back, & the Sundown Clause

The international community's exclusive and stated objective in initiating negotiations with Iran was to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons capabilities. Specifically, the P5+1 states sought to ensure that Iran would not become an established nuclear threshold power, a status that many feared Iran was already on the verge of acquiring when the interim agreement was signed in November 2013. The US government has expressed its belief that the terms of this agreement, through its restrictions on Iran's permitted levels of uranium enrichment, will bring Iran back to being at least a year from weapons breakout during the ten-to-fifteen-year period within which the International Joint Plan of Action is fully operational.

Despite this, there are a number of factors that give cause for serious concern that the Iran agreement will not be able to meet its own most basic objective of preventing Iran from further progressing towards nuclear weapons capabilities, and indeed at some point producing nuclear weapons. The concerns in this regard relate to three basic areas of the agreement. The first is the question of whether or not the agreement sets out adequate provisions for inspections of Iranian nuclear sites and other facilities in Iran that might be of concern. The second area relates to the matter of sanctions relief, and specifically the concern that, through the lifting of sanctions, the international community may lose its ability to ensure Iranian compliance. In the event that Iran breaches an aspect of the agreement, the Obama administration has argued that sanctions could be easily and rapidly put back in place. This claim has been disputed, and there are concerns as to whether the reimposition of sanctions could realistically be expected to do anything to prevent Iran from disregarding the agreement if it so chose. Finally, the temporary nature of the deal has been identified as problematic. For while Iran ultimately receives indefinite sanctions relief, critics have claimed that once the terms of the deal have expired, there would be little to prevent Iran from resuming progress towards weapons capabilities.

1.1 Inspections

The matter of verification is one of the most critical factors for any deal of this nature. In many respects, the agreement is only valid if international powers can be sure that it is being implemented. A number of the provisions in the agreement, such as those relating to the lifting of sanctions and embargos, are themselves stipulated as being dependent upon Iran's implementation of the terms of the agreement. Furthermore, given that the agreement envisages

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keeping Iran only one year away from achieving breakout capabilities, the window within which the international community could act in the event of an Iranian breach is extremely narrow. As such, a breach would need be known well in advance for there to be time for international powers to act. Accordingly, it is essential that an agreement of this kind sets in place a rigorous and robust inspection regime that would not allow for scenarios in which Iran could break the agreement without the knowledge of international observers.

Under the terms of the agreement, international inspectors from the IAEA are granted extensive access to Iran's declared nuclear sites, with the agreement allowing for 24-hour surveillance of Iran's known nuclear infrastructure. However, it was also anticipated that inspections would go much further. Given that Iran had previously concealed nuclear facilities at secret sites, it was widely believed that monitors would be permitted the freedom to carry out inspections anywhere in the country. Specifically, there was an emphasis placed on granting inspectors access to Iranian military sites—with French diplomats particularly insisting on this point—on account of the fact that it is the possible military dimension of the Iranian nuclear programme that has always caused the greatest international concern.

Additionally, it was recommended that for the inspections regime to be robust, it would have to allow for inspectors to conduct unannounced and surprise visits to sites so as to ensure that Iran was not concealing or transferring prohibited material and apparatus from sites where inspections were scheduled in advance. Out of these expectations emerged the commonly used phrase “anytime, anywhere inspections.”

Following the release of the framework agreement in early April 2015, Obama administration spokespeople and advisors had assured that a final agreement would include provisions for “anytime, anywhere 24/7” access. However, the administration has explicitly denied that it ever sought “anytime, anywhere” inspections, and that it instead favoured “managed access.” Indeed, the US government subsequently celebrated having been able to secure inspections “where necessary, when necessary.”

At the time of announcement that the agreement had been signed, US officials outlined that the terms of the deal would allow for international inspectors to be guaranteed access to Iranian military facilities within 24 days of requesting to visit a particular site – a period of time that was viewed by critics of the agreement as a fundamental flaw. Indeed, the concern here is that this arrangement would allow Iran a number of weeks in which to cover up any prohibited activities at military sites. However, a more careful reading of the details set out in the agreement reveals that the period of time that Iran would have to potentially conceal a breach of the agreement would be significantly longer than 24 days.

Under the terms of the Vienna agreement, if inspectors wish to be granted access to Iranian military sites, then they must first undergo a drawn out and complicated series of consultations that may not necessarily even guarantee being admitted to that site by the end of that process. The terms of the International Joint Plan of Action concerning suspected, but as yet undeclared, nuclear sites obliges IAEA inspectors to first submit an outline justifying the grounds for their concern. Presenting this request in no way obliges Iran to grant access to the sites of concern but rather Iran would simply be expected to respond with an explanation addressing inspectors' concerns. If the IAEA finds the Iranian explanation unsatisfactory, only then can a process begin

that might ultimately lead to a direct inspection. However, the agreement outlines no time limit within which Iran would have to have provided a response to the IAEA.

In the event that Iran is unable to provide the IAEA with a credible explanation fully addressing monitors' concerns, in order to begin the process for being granted access to suspect sites, inspectors would have to produce a document detailing information and evidence of the specifics and technicalities relating to their concerns. This would not only provide Iran with further time within which to conceal potential activities, but also the information specifying what they should seek to conceal. Only in the event that this does not lead to a resolution of the problem would a 24 day consultation period in which the concerns of the IAEA would be brought to a Joint Commission, of which Iran is itself a member, presenting further doubts that the Joint Commission would be able to reach a consensus on granting inspection access. Furthermore, the details of the agreement allow for various points at which there could be an extension of the consultation period, meaning that instead of being accessed within 24 days, it would more likely be a 40- to 60-day period. This would only be able to begin following a potentially much lengthier stretch of time in which the IAEA would have to demonstrate its concerns to Iran before eventually being able to pursue its request for access before the Joint Commission.

Some of the most critical questions about inspections arrangements extend beyond the text of the main agreement. From the outset of the period of the Congressional review of the JCPOA, concerns had been raised about the existence of various side agreements and undisclosed additional documents relating to the deal. While it was understood that these side agreements were between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency, the nature of these agreements were also disclosed to the P5+1 powers. As such, the JCPOA accepts the IAEA's arrangements for inspections and, in an essentially uncodified way, incorporates them into the arrangements that the deal establishes between Iran and the international community.

The details of these agreement have not been made publicly available but on the 19 of August, the Associated Press released information about an additional documents. Titled simply "Separate Arrangement II" this document specifically pertains to the inspections procedures for the Iranian military site at Parchin. The question of inspections at Parchin is particularly critical because the international community has long suspected that Iran has previously conducted activities relating to a nuclear weapons programme at that site. Subsequently, satellite imagery has appeared to show evidence of efforts to destroy evidence of such activities. Accordingly, rigorous inspection procedures at sites such as Parchin, were anticipated to be a key part of any final agreement with Iran.

What "Separate Arrangement II" is reported to outline is an arrangement between Iran and the IAEA in which Iran will be permitted to select its own inspectors and machinery for carrying out surveillance at Parchin. Indeed, it appears that IAEA inspectors may not even be present for inspections at the site, nor for the taking of soil samples there. While the Obama administration and IAEA have down played the significance of this side agreement, these procedures are widely understood to be unprecedented arrangements. Indeed, such a policy of 'self-inspection' by a country under investigation by the IAEA must be considered highly irregular and has only contributed to alarm among those already sceptical of the JCPOA.

Since the document leaked by the Associated Press is understood not to be the only such side agreement, further concerns remain about what else may have been agreed to. However, with these additional documents remaining undisclosed to the public, it will be difficult for observers to make a full and comprehensive assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the agreed upon inspections regime.

1.2 Sanctions Snap-Back

In the event that inspectors are able to demonstrate that Iran has breached the agreement directly, or if Iran openly breaches the agreement by preventing inspections from taking place, then there would be the need to for a swift and effective response. The Obama administration has argued that such a breach by Iran would trigger the automatic “snap-back” of sanctions. However, under the terms set out in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the procedure for reimplementing international sanctions would be neither swift nor immediate. As with the case of inspectors requesting access to Iranian military and undeclared sites, the agreement puts in place a long and complex series of procedures before sanctions can be put back in place.

If, despite the relatively weak inspections procedures, the IAEA is able to determine that Iran has breached the terms of the agreement, then the complaint would have to once again be referred to the Joint Commission. Technically, the commission has 15 days in which to consider the complaint. However, the members of that committee—which include Iran—can decide to extend the period of consideration. If these deliberations are still unable to resolve the matter, then any party that remains unsatisfied would then have to refer the matter to the foreign ministers of the P5+1 countries, who would then also have an extendable 15-day period of further deliberation. Failure to reach a consensus at this stage would then open the way for either the US or Iran to refer the matter to a special three member advisory board; consisting of a member appointed by the US, a member appointed by Iran, and a third independently appointed member. Once again, this group would have 15 days within which to issue an opinion on the complaint. That opinion will then be referred back to the Joint Commission, which will be allowed five more days for further deliberation on the matter.

Only after this process, which could continue for 35 days at the very least, can the matter then be taken to the United Nations and referred to the Security Council. However, the JCPOA also specifies that this should only happen where a breach constitutes “significant non-performance” on Iran’s part. There has been some scepticism about whether or not an international consensus could be rebuilt for returning to the sanctions regime that predated the interim negotiations. Under the terms of the agreement, failure by the Security Council to restore sanctions within 30 days of the matter being referred to the UN body would result in their automatic reimplementation.

While this stipulation should theoretically ensure that restoring sanctions could not be blocked by either a Russian or Chinese veto, the agreement does in fact allow for the Security Council to reject the reimplementation of sanctions after the additional 30-day period, stating simply that the automatic reimplementation of sanctions would take place “unless the UN Security Council decides otherwise.” Therefore, as can be seen from the details of the agreement, the snap-back of sanctions is by no means guaranteed and is far from immediate or automatic. Assuming that

sanctions were not overturned at the UN, then according to the terms of the JCPOA, the process for agreeing to restore sanctions against Iran would take two months at the very least.

Even if the claim that the agreement allows for a rapid sanctions snap-back was more robust than it appears to be, there is still considerable debate about what returning to sanctions could realistically achieve. In the past, sanctions, and particularly the long-term impact of sanctions, have brought Iran to the negotiating table for the purpose of initiating a diplomatic process. It is therefore questionable whether sanctions would be effective in this regard in the event that Iran had already chosen to break a negotiated settlement. It is important to understand that sanctions are never an end in themselves and that on their own they cannot be expected to slow down Iran's progress toward breakout if the regime decides to abandon the terms of the deal.

Critics of the deal have even suggested that the snap-back of sanctions could in fact be counterproductive, because Iran could in turn employ a form of retaliatory "nuclear snap-back." That is to say that once the US or the international community had chosen to reimplement sanctions, there would be nothing to stop Iran from abandoning its other commitments under the agreement, meaning that Iran could suspend inspections and return to prohibited nuclear activities. The prospect of Iranian nuclear snap-back may well prove a strong enough disincentive to dissuade world powers from restoring the previous sanctions regime.

These concerns pertaining to the viability of sanctions snap-back fit into a broader critique of the international community's negotiating strategy with Iran, with opponents of the agreement accusing the P5+1 countries of leaving themselves with no alternative strategies should the current agreement fail to be properly implemented or prove ineffective.

1.3 The Sundown Clause

While there has already been considerable debate regarding the specific strengths and weaknesses of the procedures put in place by the Vienna agreement, there has also been criticism of the fact that under this agreement, most of its conditions are set to expire after a ten to fifteen-year period. This so-called "Sundown Clause" has been identified by many as a significant failing on the part of the diplomats who formulated the agreement. The concern here has been that even if the provisions put in place are adequate for preventing Iran from progressing toward breakout capabilities, after a decade the restrictions will begin to be lifted and Iran might then be free to pursue weapons capabilities with greater freedom than was the case prior to the implementation of the JCPOA.

The problem here is essentially one of asymmetry. This agreement permanently lifts the sanctions currently placed on Iran, yet it only requires Iran to comply with the full range of inspection procedures and the limitations on enrichment facilities for a designated and temporary period of time. Opponents of the agreement have even alleged that, by the time the JCPOA expires, Iran's breakout time will have been dramatically reduced, with the permitted research and development aspects of the agreement advancing Iran's knowledge and technical capabilities within the nuclear sphere.

Fears about the long-term implications of the Sundown Clause have led to suggestions that the agreement could be made more effective by making its terms indefinite, much like those of a

treaty. The proposal here being that, as with sanctions relief, the terms relating to restrictions on enrichment (and the inspections monitoring Iranian compliance) would also remain in place for an open ended period of time.

2. Lifting of the Arms Embargo

During the months of negotiation that eventually culminated in the release of the JCPOA, the P5+1 powers, as well as many voices in the Iranian leadership, insisted that the terms of the agreement under discussion would only concern the Iranian nuclear issue, rather than any of the other issues relating to Iran's aggressive behaviour on the international stage. Iran's state sponsorship of terror, support of the Assad regime in Syria, use of regional proxies, abuse of human rights, threatening behaviour against Israel and the oppression of its own people's civil liberties were therefore to be kept out of negotiations. This meant that Iran faced no scrutiny and was not asked to grant concessions in these areas. The only restrictions against Iran were to be in the nuclear field.

Yet, despite the strict line that the agreement would not stray on to concessions surrounding non-nuclear issues, the final agreement did include concessions on a non-nuclear component, in the form of the lifting of the international arms embargo against Iran. This involved the international community making a far-reaching and potentially highly impactful concession to Iran, one that is widely believed not to have been on the agenda until the closing days of the negotiations in Vienna. From what is understood of what took place during the final stages of the negotiations, Russia and China backed the Iranian demand for the arms embargo to be lifted as part of the agreement, while certain European powers—France in particular—took a stance opposing this move. The US ultimately appears to have determined that the arms embargo could be lifted, however not at the outset of the signing of the agreement. The delay of several years in lifting the embargo seems to have been a compromise position reached between the powers.

Under the terms of the JCPOA, the existing arms embargo on Iran will be lifted five years from the implementation of the agreement. Perhaps more concerning still is that the agreement also allows for the lifting of the embargo on the sale of ballistic missiles technologies to Iran, including intercontinental ballistic missiles capable of carrying a nuclear warhead. Iran will also be prohibited from further development activities regarding ballistic missile programs. The embargo on conventional weapons has been in place since 2010 as a tightening on existing UN restrictions on arms sales to Iran dating from 2007. In 2010 the Security Council took the decision to implement these further and more stringent sanctions in response to Iran's ongoing illegal enrichment activities. The agreement with Iran will now see this prohibition ultimately dispensed with, assuming that Iran is not found to be in breach of the agreement over the course of the next five years. Yet, the provision concerning the arms embargo also has more immediate ramifications. For the past five years the UN has operated a panel tasked with monitoring for arms shipments to Iran. This panel will now be disbanded, but it is not apparent that any new arrangement is being established in the interim, leaving it unclear as to whether the remaining period of the embargo will be monitored or adequately enforced.

The existing UN restrictions on ballistic missiles prohibit all states from providing technology or assistance to Iran that would help the regime to advance its ballistic missiles programme, with specific reference to missiles that could serve as a delivery system for a warhead. Yet it appears to be for this very reason that, since the release of the JCPOA Iran has denied that the restriction concerning missiles is actually binding upon it. Indeed, Iran argues that the agreement already frees it from any restrictions on missile technologies. Addressing the Iranian parliament after the signing of the agreement, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif claimed that since the clause specifically details missiles capable of carrying a warhead—and since Iran claims not to be seeking to develop any such warhead or the missiles for carrying one—this prohibition could not be said to apply to Iran. This raises further concerning questions about whether or not Iran will even seek to comply with the remaining period of the embargo.

With other articles of international law still forbidding the shipment of arms to those that are widely considered Iranian proxies such the Assad regime in Syria, Shia rebels in Yemen, and Hezbollah in Lebanon, the lifting of the arms embargo theoretically should not allow for this move to benefit terrorist groups and rogue regimes across the Middle East. Yet, given that Iran is long known to have supplied such clients with arms and financial support anyway, it is reasonable to believe that the lifting of the arms embargo will only assist Iran in these activities.

The lifting of the arms embargo will also run alongside the upfront unfreezing of Iranian assets and the gradual lifting of sanctions, representing tens of billions of dollars which will rapidly become available to the Iranian state. While the regime will certainly use some of this income for legitimate domestic purposes, it is also widely suspected that the Iranian government may attempt to use some of this influx of funds to support its regional proxies and terrorist groups. Coming alongside the lifting of the arms embargo, it is also anticipated by many observers that the funds that will become available from the lifting of sanctions could well be used to bolster Iran's conventional military capacity, including the country's air defence systems, which in turn could make any future military option against Iran's nuclear programme far more difficult and costly to carry out.

Critics of the JCPOA have argued that even if the deal can be shown to have some merits with regards to the nuclear issue, the lifting of the arms embargo and embargo on ballistic missiles invalidates the agreement as a whole. The potential implications of the lifting of the arms embargo, alongside the lifting of other financial restrictions that will leave the regime in a stronger position to be able to increase its level of conventional militarisation, as well as continuing its support for proxies and terrorist groups, thus further destabilising the region and also emboldening Iran's hegemonic ambitions in the Middle East. This, taken with the potential inadequacies of the agreement on the nuclear front, risks harming the regional and global security situation and ultimately making the current Iranian regime a far more dangerous force than it already is.

Conclusion

The deficiencies of the JCPOA concern both the nuclear and non-nuclear aspects of the agreement. On the nuclear front it remains unclear as to whether the terms of the agreement are

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sufficient for definitively preventing Iran's progress toward nuclear weapons capabilities. At the same time, some of the concessions made to Iran—particularly with regards to sanctions relief and the lifting of the arms embargo and embargo on ballistic missile technology—threatens to create a far more unstable and dangerous scenario for the region and global security.

The JCPOA arguably leaves Iran as a threshold nuclear weapons state by the time that the terms of the agreement expires, with no clear indication of how the prospective Iranian nuclear threat will be handled in the longer term. This is to assume that Iran complies fully and cooperates willingly with the implementation of the agreement. Yet, in the event that Iran seeks to breach the agreement, the JCPOA has clearly inadequate mechanisms for responding to such a breach. Indeed, the terms of the agreement may not even be sufficient to allow for the early or full detection of Iran breaking the agreement. The inspections procedures envisaged by the agreement, particularly with military and officially non-nuclear sites, creates such a long delay that it is conceivable that the regime would be able to hide any activity prohibited under the terms of the agreement.

In the event that Iran was found to be in breach of the JCPOA, the mechanisms for responding to this appear weak and highly problematic. Far from the snapback mechanisms for re-imposing sanctions, as promised by the Obama administration, the agreement details a long and complicated process that means it would likely take months to restore sanctions. It is also unclear as to whether there would be full international cooperation in the event that sanctions did need to be put back in place. Nor is it clear what the re-imposition of sanctions would be at such a late stage. Some have suggested that by such a point, sanctions would simply serve as an incentive for Iran to speed up its nuclear progress, implementing its own “nuclear snapback” and making a final dash for weaponisation, while the international community continued to debate how to respond.

If this agreement fails to hold back Iran's progress towards nuclear weapons, the world would then not only be faced with the threat of a nuclear Iran, but this event would likely trigger a nuclear arms race across the Middle East. Other regional powers are already deeply concerned about Iran's hegemonic ambitions, as well as the pattern of instability that Iran has been encouraging and exploiting in the Middle East. But with the lifting of the arms embargo this long existing problem may well only become more acute.

As such, the JCPOA appears set to further existing problems surrounding Iran's aggressive and destabilising activities, while also failing to guarantee that Iran will not be able to make further progress towards nuclear weapons in the long term. In this way, the Iran agreement fails to meet the international community's policy objectives on Iran.

About the Author

Tom Wilson is Resident Associate Fellow at the Centre for the New Middle East at The Henry Jackson Society. Prior to joining The Henry Jackson Society, he worked as a Tikvah Fellow at *Commentary Magazine*, where he wrote about political extremism and terrorism in the Middle East. Tom attended Royal Holloway University and UCL, where he obtained a BA and an MA in Modern History. His writing has been published in *The Wall Street Journal*, *Commentary Magazine*, *Standpoint*, *Real Clear Politics*, *The Jerusalem Post* and other outlets.



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The Henry Jackson Society
Millbank Tower,
21-24 Millbank, London, SW1P 4QP
Tel: 020 7340 4520

www.henryjacksonsociety.org
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