

## Report

# The Implications of a Nuclear Deal with Iran on The GCC, China, and Russia

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## Abstract

On 30th June 2015, Iran and P5+1, China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States are expected to finalise a nuclear deal on Iran's nuclear projects. The P5+1 are likely to agree on Iran adjourning rather than completely ending its nuclear programs. Any framework with Iran that will not have at its core the stability of the Middle East, and the security of all Iran's neighbors is likely to lead to more tension and mistrust. The Obama Administration is eager to pivot to Asia at the expense of the Middle East and in the process would like to outsource the region's security to Iran. This American recipe will lead to more conflicts, chaos, and instability. Iran's Arab neighbors deserve the right to veto any deal that endangers their stability and favors and protects Iranian interests over anyone else.

This report discusses the implications of a potential nuclear agreement between Iran and the US on China, Russia, and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). This report argues that neither China nor Russia are in a rush for the US to conclude a nuclear agreement with Iran, and holds that a nuclear deal with Iran is likely to start an arms race in the region especially if the US does not carefully safeguard its implementation. Further, the report posits that an expected deal will accelerate the demise of the unipolar system of power in the Middle East.

## Introduction

The Lausanne framework on Iran's nuclear ambitions, if implemented, is likely to change many notions of the prevailing balance of power in the Middle East and to usher in a new arms race among many aspiring regional powers in the Arab World and beyond. Signing a nuclear deal with Iran without a careful review of the military and security landscape of

the region is likely to cause an unprecedented tension between the U.S. and many of its Arab allies and threatens a stormy transition of the unipolar system to an era of imbalance and military competition among all the ambitious powers in the area: China, Iran, Russia and Turkey. All the aforementioned powers are waiting to replace any poorly planned American departure from the region. Thus, it is the responsibility of the U.S. to slow the demise of the unipolar system in the Middle East and usher in a peaceful transition of power to avoid a bloody and a complicated one by clarifying the nature and the mechanisms of a future nuclear deal with Iran.

Most transitions from a unipolar to bipolar or multipolar system are violent; this was true for Europe in World War I, World War II and the Cold War. Therefore, a presumed transition from unipolarity to bipolarity or multipolarity in the Middle East will be bloody if the U.S., the only hegemon in the region, does not diligently prepare for this transition. An Iranian nuclear deal that does not spell out all the details and mechanisms meticulously will marshal in chaos, bloodshed and a destabilization of the region for decades to come. The Middle East deserves the attention Eastern Europe received from the U.S. after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, and Asia is getting now. In Asia the U.S. has been working diligently to midwife a peaceful transition from a unipolar to a multipolar system by engaging China and India while preserving its special relations with and fiercely protecting Japan, the Philippines, South Korea, and Taiwan from any attempted Chinese aggression. In the Middle East, however, the U.S. has failed to convince its allies or adversaries about its intentions and strategy. The U.S. rhetoric has not changed, but its actions speak volumes about its true intentions. The prevailing perception in the region is that the U.S. has agreed to outsource the security of the region to Iran, and in the process, America will rehabilitate and legitimize the Iranian regime in order for the Obama Administration to defend and justify an Iranian deal.

### **Obama and an Iranian Nuclear Deal**

From the interviews that president Barak Obama gave to the New York Times' Thomas Friedman and to the Atlantic's Jeffrey Goldberg, one can distill the priorities and political philosophy of the Obama Administration. Both interviews reflect an admiration of the Iranian people at the expense of the Arabs and a lack of coherent vision for the day after Iran and the P5+1 sign a nuclear deal. The president was not clear on the following: what is Iran going to do with its oil revenues? What is Iran going to do with its frozen assets in Western banks? Would a nuclear agreement with Iran increase or decrease the stability of the Middle East? What are the guarantees that Iran would not venture into more secret nuclear programs once it retrieves all of its assets? How much of the money will go to arm and rebuild the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC)? Who will be in control of the nuclear facilities in Iran, the IRGC, the elected politicians, or the religious

establishment? Any final agreement with Iran must address the above mentioned regional concerns.

Judging from the day after a framework deal was announced in Lausanne, none of the above mentioned security issues had concerned the Obama Administration. Iran rushed to buy the S-300 missile defense system from Russia. The S-300 is a mobile surface-to-air missile defense system that couples powerful radar with high-speed, long-range missiles capable of covering a vast amount of land with high levels of precision and accuracy.<sup>(1)</sup> The symbolism of the deal and its timing overrides any explanation from the Russians or the Iranians. The message is very clear to all Iran's neighbors: Iran tactically suspended its nuclear projects to have the hard currency necessary to rebuild its military capabilities, but strategically it will never give up on its expansionist policies. The purchase of the S-300 missile system gives Iran a significant military edge over its Arab neighbors, invites an arms race, affirms Iran's aggressive intentions, and fuels the geopolitical competition between Iran and its Arab neighbors.

The Obama Administration seems indifferent to all these concerns and to the emerging military imbalance in the region and to all the reservations coming from its own Arab allies. This oblivious attitude was best reflected in the two interviews that President Obama gave to the New York Times and the Atlantic. For instance, when Jeffrey Goldberg asked the president to comment on what Secretary of the Treasury Jack Lew had said, "Most of the money Iran receives from sanctions relief will not be used to support its terrorist-aiding activities,"<sup>(2)</sup> Obama was enigmatic in his answer. He said, "I don't think Jack or anybody in this administration said that no money will go to the military as a consequence of sanctions relief. The question is, if Iran has \$150 billion parked outside the country, does the IRGC automatically get \$150 billion? Does that \$150 billion then translate by orders of magnitude into their capacity to project power throughout the region?"<sup>(3)</sup>

In addition, Obama argued that "most of Iran's nefarious activities—in Syria, Yemen, and Lebanon—are comparatively low-cost," and that "they've been pursuing these policies regardless of sanctions."<sup>(4)</sup> The president's logic demonstrated a lack of sensitivity to the needs of the region and the willingness of the Administration to sign a dysfunctional agreement with Iran that would not stabilize the region or respect the interests of America's allies in the Arab World. An agreement that will not change the behavior of Iran is a bad one; an agreement that will strengthen the IRGC at the expense of civil society in Iran is a disastrous one; and an agreement that will not prevent Iran from allocating resources to its proxies in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen will be catastrophic.



It is noteworthy that the president did not mention Iraq when he talked about Iran's meddling in the affairs of its neighbors, as if the Iranian control of Iraq is a fait accompli and U.S. has accepted it despite all the threats it causes to the Arab World, especially the GCC countries. The president seems impervious to the allocation of Iranian resources to facilitate their expansion in the region. He stated very clearly that Iran expanded and meddled in the affairs of its neighbors while under sanctions, and all Iran's activities were "low-cost."<sup>(5)</sup> Therefore, the Administration's objective is to sign a deal with Iran regardless of Iran's behavior and to outsource the region's security to Iran to lure Iran into accepting a deal. This thinking will alienate regional allies and stiffen their stand on many core issues of mutual interest for the U.S. and the region at large. Also, it will not help the U.S. usher in a peaceful transition in the coming years. The GCC countries are a keystone in any future balance of power due to their financial and energy resources that Europe and Asia need to sustain their economic production, their durable economies, embedded state institutions, and the crucial and prestigious role they play among other Arab and Muslim countries.

The rift between the US and the GCC over Iran is growing. The GCC believes that the U.S. is focusing on the urgent while neglecting the important in dealing with Iran. It is obvious that the urgent for the U.S. is to sign a nuclear deal regardless of its consequences on the security and the stability of the region. Signing a deal with Iran could be urgent for this Administration, but preserving the balance of power and midwifing a peaceful transition in the region is more important. An in-depth discussion on all the possible scenarios with the GCC and other stakeholders to minimize the damage and to prevent a slide into a period of bloodshed, chaos, and an arms race should be more important for the U.S. than a nominal diplomatic victory that may lead to a security dilemma in the region.

A security dilemma is the likely outcome of an ambiguous nuclear deal with Iran. For instance, Prince Turki bin Faisal said, "Whatever the Iranians have, we will have, too."<sup>(6)</sup> In addition, an Arab diplomat said, "We can't sit back and be nowhere as Iran is allowed to retain much of its capability and amass its research."<sup>(7)</sup> Iran is likely to keep at least 5,000 centrifuges and a growing research and development program in place. The Obama Administration is keen on recognizing Iran's rights to continue the enrichment of uranium and to leave all know how mechanisms intact. This concession will pave the way for Iran to maintain its nuclear technology intact, and would make it very hard for the U.S. to verify the extent to which Iran is complying with a deal. Further, this concession will grant Iran enough leeway to stop cooperating with any process that it feels will constrain its efforts to pursue its agenda of expansion. Unfortunately, the president is little concerned about the implication of a nuclear Iran on the region, and more sensitive to Iran's national pride and heroism. The president told Friedman, "Given the fact that this is a country that withstood an eight-year war and a million people dead, they have

shown themselves willing, I think, to endure hardship when they considered it a point of national pride or, in some cases, national survival." (8) Any close observer might read this as admiration and an acceptance by president Obama of Iran's right to lead the region, with its ability to deliver more than others.

This American attitude is complicating the process for the Europeans, especially the French, and endangering the prospects for a solid nuclear deal that will be accepted by all concerned parties. The GCC and the majority of the Arab World are for bringing a peaceful and friendly Iran back to the international community, but none is prepared to see an aggressive and hegemonic Iran coming back to divide the region along sectarian lines with the blessing of the U.S. Therefore, the U.S. has to clarify the nature of a future nuclear agreement to the region before it signs one.

### **The Nature of an American Iranian Nuclear Deal**

The GCC countries are awaiting an explanation from the U.S. on the nature of an Iran nuclear agreement. Many questions are lingering about the future impact of a nuclear deal on American-Iranian relations. The GCC is eager to know whether this understanding will be transactional or transformational. During the Cold War the U.S. and Soviet Union reached many transactional (just a military agreement) agreements that focused on arms control, and kept American containment of Soviet ideology and actions around the world intact. The transactional relationship between the two was contingent on tit for tat, trust but verify, punish, suspend, deter, and support proxies when necessary. Neither was ready to rehabilitate or legitimize the other or any of its proxies during this period; the U.S. deterred the Soviet Union by all means necessary, including the use of force. For instance, the U.S. was uncompromising in Cuba and Chile and acted decisively to prevent the Soviets from infiltrating into its backyard. Operation Bay of Pigs and the assassination of the Chilean president were the American response to Soviet tampering with American spheres of influence. The American-Soviet competition was over ideology, culture, spheres of influence, and credibility.

Iran, like the Soviets in the past, aspires to expand ideologically in the region by spreading its version of Shi'a Islam through its Shi'a proxies. It has been employing and deploying a great deal of its human and financial resources in order to accomplish this task. It has been building cultural centers, mosques, seminary schools, and sending huge caches of weapons to arm its supporters and facilitate its infiltration into the Arab and Islamic worlds. Also like the Soviets in the past, Iran is pursuing a policy of expansion by bullying and intimidating its neighbors. The Soviet Union tormented Eastern Europe and forced it into the Soviet sphere of influence; Iran is behaving similarly with its neighbors and pressuring them to concede to its demands through military threats or mobilizing the Shi'a Arabs to destabilize the region. Iran, like the

Soviets, is very protective of its credibility and its ability to deliver to its allies; it has shown resolve in protecting its allies and preserving its projects and has been tenacious in the application of its political strategy to spread its own version of Shi'a Islam to its neighbors. Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen are but few examples of Iran's true intentions in the region.

Like the U.S. in Cuba and Chile, the Saudi-led coalition has acted to quell Iran from infiltrating into its backyard. Operation Decisive Storm (ODS) was launched to deter Iran from meddling in the affairs of the region and to discourage it from dividing the region into Sunni-Shi'a zones. The GCC and many stakeholders are eager for the U.S. to acknowledge this fact and deal with Iran accordingly. Otherwise, the U.S. will be dealing with more military confrontations similar to ODS.

Therefore, the U.S. needs to be very clear about any deal with Iran that will not tackle all of these issues. The GCC deserves an answer from its American ally about the nature of the agreement. Does America aspire to sign a transformational (rehabilitate, legitimize, and outsource the security of the region to Iran), or just a transactional one? A transformational one has to have a different mechanism and the GCC and the Arab World must have a veto over its application. A key aspect of a transformational agreement must be an American insistence that Iran changes its behavior in the neighborhood. The US cannot rehabilitate and legitimize Iran and allow Iran to continue its meddling policies in the affairs of the region intact. The Americans, the Europeans, the GCC, and other stakeholders have to draw a road map that prevents Iran from using its resources to facilitate or engage in conflicts. Whether or not Iran will be accepted as a productive member in the international community must depend on its behavior with its neighbors and its commitment not to support aggression, schism, proxy wars, and intervention in other countries' affairs.

It is safe to say that the U.S. and the Iranians are behaving on an ad hoc basis for the time being. Both are examining the landscape and negotiating with an eye on domestic challenges: the Administration does not have the full backing of the majority of the Republicans and a sizable number of Democrats and pundits, who are questioning the wisdom of opening up to Iran before examining all the facts. The biggest challenge in the U.S. is who will win the elections? If a republican will he honor an agreement with Iran? Or is he going to renegotiate some of its articles?

The same is true inside Iran: President Hassan Rouhani and Foreign Minister Javad Zarif do not have the full backing of all the power brokers in the Islamic Republic. Neither do they have full control of all the events taking place in Iran. For instance, the New York Times reported that since the negotiations started, "Iran's Nuclear Stockpile Grew by about 20 percent."<sup>(9)</sup> The report stated that during the negotiations Iran did not freeze

its enrichment process. The report demonstrates two fundamental facts. First, Iranian negotiators are not in full control and there is an obvious dissension in the ranks. A key cardinal of any negotiations is to negotiate with someone who can deliver. Second, the Iranians are not negotiating in good faith. Both reasons are compelling enough for the GCC and other stakeholders to doubt the process and question the rush and rationale of the existing mechanisms as they evolve. Therefore, the prospects for concluding a deal and beginning its implementation during the Obama era are sketchy at best and do not have the backing of many in the international community, due to mistrust and many ambiguities. The GCC, some Europeans, and other stockholders have reservations about a future deal for legitimate security reasons, and about the fact that president Obama deconstructed all the nuclear negotiations on finishing a deal regardless of the details. Russia and China however, may not support them because of their own hegemonic agendas.

### **Russia and the Nuclear Deal**

Russia is not in a rush for the U.S. and Iran to conclude any nuclear agreement. Russia prefers to keep the nuclear issue between Iran and the West unresolved in order to keep tension high in the region and prevent Iran's comeback in the energy markets. Therefore, Russia stands to benefit a great deal from an American-Iranian stalemate and continued sanctions, which would prevent Iran from enjoying normal economic relations with the West and limit Iran's ability to intervene in the politics of its northern neighbors. In addition, Russia needs Iran to remain a thorny issue in the Middle East and to continue to delay any American strategic plans from being initiated. Consequently, Russia plays the Iranian card to extract concessions from the U.S. and other Arab countries in the region, and to keep the U.S. distracted and preoccupied with high security issues that threaten its allies in the Arab Gulf area and the Middle East region. The Russian political psychology is still stuck in the Cold War era and both Vladimir Putin and Sergei Lavrov behave as if the Cold War never ended and the Middle East is still serving as one of its frontiers. As a result, Russia arms Iran, builds Iran's nuclear reactors, supports Iran's proxies in the region, and supports chaos and military dictators, rather than stability and transitions to democracy, to keep Iran and other countries in the region occupied and fighting one another.

Russia's strategic objective in all of that is to keep Iran from coming back to the global energy markets and to prevent Iran from behaving as a regional power along Russia's borders, thwarting any attempt by Iran to be an influential power along the Caspian Sea. Russia fears an Iranian comeback on many fronts--especially on the energy and geopolitical one.



## Russia and the Energy Market

The impact of falling oil prices on the Russian economy and on its political influence is very devastating to Russia's long-term vision of becoming a dominant regional and global power. Russia strives to claim the title of a major power, and to achieve that it needs a great deal of financial resources, especially hard currency, to rehabilitate its infrastructure and invest heavily in its military industries. Russia depends heavily on oil revenues as the main income to support its projects and carry on its political and military agenda around the globe. Oil and gas comprise over 60% of Russia's exports and make up over 30% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP).<sup>(10)</sup> Therefore, a nuclear agreement between the U.S. and Iran, lifting the sanctions against Iran, would disrupt Russia's hegemony over European energy imports. Russia has been using the energy issue as "a fungible source of power"<sup>(11)</sup> to pressure the Europeans to concede or retract certain decisions on Ukraine, Georgia, Chechnya, Iran, and Syria. Russia's military ambitions in Europe and its desire to acquire more land and resources by force convinced the Europeans to seek an alternative source of energy. Many European and Iranian leaders are talking about Iran as a credible alternative. For instance, the EU's foreign policy arm--the Directorate-General--published a study stating very clearly that "Iran is a credible source of energy alternative to Russia."<sup>(12)</sup> However, European countries know that for this to materialize, sanctions would have to be lifted and a durable infrastructure built to transport the energy.

Lifting the sanctions on Iran would allow Iranian oil and gas to be sold on the global market and would increase the supply of oil, and consequently decrease the prices. Therefore, Russia stands to lose much from any American-Iranian reconciliation and any reduction of tension in the Middle East. Any ease of sanctions on the Iranian oil and gas industry is likely to have an impact on supply and demand and will drive the price of oil further down. Iran can reach Europe via Turkey or via an Iraqi-Syrian gas line that will pass through the Mediterranean Sea. Also, the Iranians are not hiding their desire to replace Russia or compete with it for European and Turkish markets. For instance, Iranian president Hassan Rouhani stated that "Iran can be a secure energy for Europe."<sup>(13)</sup> Ali Majedi, Iran's deputy oil minister said "Iranian natural gas is Russia's only competitor for Europe."<sup>(14)</sup> Iran is ready to transport oil to Europe through three channels: Turkey; Iraq; or via pipelines running through Armenia, Georgia, and under the Black Sea. Many European officials are willing to entertain the idea of allowing Iran, rather than Russia, to supply them with oil. The Europeans are very frustrated with Russia's aggressive military policies after the Russian invasion of Ukraine and are susceptible to constraining Russia financially by finding an alternative supplier of oil and gas. This fact troubles the Russians enormously and makes them anxious. Therefore, Russia, the largest exporter of gas to Europe, will do its best to prevent Iran from entering the European market and from jeopardizing Russian influence in Europe. Russia will not hesitate to do this as it has in the past when it thwarted an Iranian attempt to

supply gas to Armenia.<sup>(15)</sup> Therefore, Russia is not eager to see Iran reconciling with the West anytime soon. Resolving the problems between the West and Iran will free Iran from many constraints and will encourage it to resume what many Iranians believe to be their natural hegemonic role in their neighborhood.

Therefore, Russia tends to benefit economically and politically from an unresolved Iranian-Western dispute over nuclear and other regional issues. Thus, Russia will not help the West to pressure Iran and it will not rush any nuclear agreements between Iran and the West. Russia will do all it can to slow any progress between Iran and the West and the Russian position will remain ambiguous in the foreseeable future. This explains the rationale behind Russia's participation in Western sanctions against Iran and the voting pattern of Russia vis-à-vis many UN and European resolutions pertaining to Iran and Russia's insistence to arm Iran and build its nuclear capabilities. Hence, Russia is less sensitive to any change in the balance of power system in the Middle East. If the security situation in the Middle East deteriorates and the demise of the unipolar system accelerates, Russia can adapt to it much better than China.

In addition, Russia is less economically and militarily sensitive to an Iranian full reintegration into the global community and to an Iranian rapprochement with the West than China. Russia can economically compensate for its energy market degraded profits with weapon sales and has the capacity and the means necessary to defend itself better than China. In addition, Russia was a super power and still can revive that role much easier and faster than China. The Russian military apparatus is better equipped to defend the homeland than the Chinese one. Russia has huge caches of weapons and poses thousands of nuclear heads and other conventional weapons. Russia has shown a tendency and a willingness to use its military since the collapse of the Soviet Union and has been very assertive about its right to trade arms on a global scale. For instance, Russia has been competing for Egyptian and Iraqi markets in the last few years.<sup>(16)</sup> Unlike China, Russia can stand and fight the West anytime it chooses, whereas China is so cautious about any major wars right now due to their impact on its resources and its development. China prefers to continue its traditional role as an emerging power in hiding. Therefore, China does not take any clear/confrontational position on any delicate political issue around the world.

### **China and a Nuclear Deal with Iran**

Geopolitics, energy, and China's desire for hegemony in Asia and beyond complicate the Sino-Iranian relations and overshadow any possible peaceful resolution to Iran's disagreements with the West. Publicly China states its desire for a peaceful resolution between Iran and the West over the nuclear issue, but China has much to worry about if Iran is to conclude such an agreement anytime soon. China has built a complex network

of relations with many Arab, Islamic, Western, and Latin American countries in the last three decades, and many of these relations clash with Iranian interests in the short and long runs. Both countries have hegemonic economic and military agendas in Asia and aspire to expand their maritime influence and establish themselves as substantial naval powers. Therefore, China sees Iran as a potential competitor rather than a close ally.

China prefers the status quo between Iran and the West over any other alternative. China needs Iran to serve as an impediment to the American pivot to Asia and as a bridge to help China infiltrate the Middle East. This equation can only work if Iran stays distracted with the West over its nuclear projects and if the West keeps its sanctions on Iran. The Western sanctions deprive Iran of the ability to rebuild its naval power; prevent Iran from acquiring new and advanced technologies that would give them an edge over China or many of its neighbors; curtail Iran's ambitions to expand or finance economic projects or collaborate with certain ethnicities in Asia; keep Iran weak and its agenda limited to survival rather than expansion; deny Iran the ability to tip the balance of power of India over Pakistan or come close to the Gwadar Port-- China's only hope to project its naval power next to the Middle East.

Therefore, China looks at India, Iran, and the US through the same security prism. China feels that the three compete with it from a different angle. Consequently, China fears any Western Iranian reconciliation that may shake the equilibrium of power in Asia and accelerate the demise of the unipolar balance of power system in the Middle East before China is economically and militarily ready to assume a hegemonic global role. China and Iran have many flash points to worry about in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and many other central Asian countries. Thus, China is more militarily vulnerable to a potential nuclear settlement between the West and Iran or any military alliance between India and Iran. China considers any Iranian-Indian coordination a threat to its security in Asia and a potential spur to other Indian-Western agreements. China fears India more than Iran, but sees Iran as the medium that will help India advance faster than it could alone and that could delay Chinese efforts to expand in Asia at a lower cost. Furthermore, China sees both India and Iran as pawns in the American efforts to pivot to Asia. Therefore, China tends to lose a great deal if an Iranian-Western agreement if the nuclear issue materializes before China puts in place the key institutions to facilitate its rise as a superpower around the globe. Indeed China has begun the process of creating alternatives to Western financial and development institutions. For instance, China has been instrumental in establishing the BRICS New Development Bank (NDB), the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), and the Silk Road Fund. All these moves are taken by China to signal its readiness to assume a superpower role in the foreseeable future and to expand its ability to maneuver in and out of Asia.<sup>(17)</sup>

In sum, Sino-Iranian relations will continue to expand especially over the energy sector, but neither will recognize the other's right to have an exclusive influence or domination in Asia or beyond. Both aspire to be influential powers, China a superpower, and Iran a regional one. The potential for the two to clash over spheres of influence in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Latin America is very strong, but each needs a few decades to rebuild internally before it begins to flex any muscles against the other. Therefore, China is not eager to change the status quo over Iran's nuclear negotiations with the West and stands to benefit more from no agreement at this stage. In addition, China is not eager for any transition of power from a unipolar to a multipolar restructuring until it gets ready to assume full leadership of the international system. If the system changes sooner, China's resources will be depleted sooner than needed and that will delay the actual rise of China to political prominence. However, Iran seems keen to change the status quo by finalizing a devious nuclear deal with the West that will guarantee the lifting of sanctions, allowing Iran to regain all its financial assets and not restricting its behavior. Further, Iran prefers a transition from a unipolar to a multipolar restructuring of the international system to enable it to play a more central role in the new configuration. Sooner or later China and Iran are destined to collide over their interests and their ambitions.

## Conclusion

The potential signing of a nuclear deal with Iran, considering some of the leaked details, is likely to cause a great deal of tension for the Obama Administration and the Middle East. The presumed deal will give Iran the ability to regain many of its frozen financial assets; will facilitate a strong return of Iran to the global oil market; will allow Iran to keep all its nuclear facilities and technologies; and will not restrain Iran from interfering in the affairs of its neighbors. As Washington shifts its attention to the Asia-Pacific and seeks to avoid costly military engagements in the Middle East, Iran's ambitions could complicate the U.S. attempt by destabilizing the region, accelerating the demise of the unipolar system in the Middle East which will result in an era of a new arms race.

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## Endnotes

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