

**IRAN'S NUCLEAR GOALS AND "MISCHIEF" IN SYRIA, LEBANON,
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[Trump and the Fading Ghost of an Illusion](#).: Amir Taheri, *Gatestone Institute*, Apr. 1, 2018— Does the appointment of John Bolton as National Security Adviser indicate President Trump's determination to formally renounce the so-called "nuclear deal" concocted by his predecessor Barack Obama?

[The Return of Imperialism: The Islamic Republic of Iran](#): Prof. Hillel Frisch, *BESA*, Apr. 4, 2018— After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Francis Fukuyama, in a widely publicized book, announced the ultimate triumph of liberal democracy and with it the strong prospect of a longstanding democratic peace.

[Iran's Role in the Boycott Israel Campaign](#): Asaf Romirowsky & Benjamin Weinthal, *National Interest*, Mar. 15, 2018— The Boycott, Sanctions and Divestment movement, better known by the acronym BDS, targeting Israel has largely been viewed as a Palestinian- and Western European-driven campaign with the alleged goal of advancing Palestinian statehood.

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[US Pro-Iran Lobby's Attack on NSA Pick John Bolton Highlighted by Tehran Regime's Official Media](#): Ben Cohen, *Algemeiner*, Mar. 23, 2018

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[Iranian Nuclear Weapons and 'Palestine' — Twin Dangers for Israel](#): Louis René Beres, *Algemeiner*, Mar. 29, 2018

[Saudi Crown Prince, on U.S. Visit, Urges Tough Line on Iran](#): Ben Hubbard, *New York Times*, Mar. 27, 2018

CALM, POISED AND A STEADY HAND

Yaakov Katz

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[*Jerusalem Post*](#), Apr. 5, 2018

May is going to be quite the month for US President Donald Trump. At some point in the coming weeks, he is expected to sit down for a historic tête-à-tête with North Korea's leader Kim Jong-un. Around the same time, on May 12, he will come up against the deadline for the Iran nuclear deal.

And then there is the planned transfer of the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem on May 15 as well as a proposal to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict the White House has been working on for the past year. While the Palestinians' recent anti-American rhetoric made it seem like the proposal had been shelved, the administration is claiming that the plan is still in the works. When will it be presented? That remains to be seen.

Even for Trump - a man who prides himself on being a brilliant deal-maker - this is a lot to handle. Most presidents would choose one or two massive foreign policy challenges of similar scale to tackle throughout their entire presidency, let alone in the span of just a few weeks. For Israel, the issue of utmost concern right now is Iran. On the one hand, there is complete agreement within Israel's defense and political echelons that the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran is bad. It gave the Iranians astounding financial breaks and left them with almost all of their nuclear infrastructure in place. Once the deal's sunset clauses kick in, Iran's breakout time to a bomb will be just a few weeks.

On the other hand, there is no arguing the fact that the deal has given Israel a respite. Just a few years ago, the government appeared on the verge of ordering an attack on Iran's nuclear facilities. With that threat postponed, the IDF has been able to spend the last few years honing its capabilities ahead of an eventual confrontation while investing in other fronts and needs.

While Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is a vocal proponent of seeing America pull out of the nuclear deal, the question is whether he - or anyone for that matter - knows what will happen the day after. Trump is trying to use the threat of America's pending withdrawal from the accord as leverage to negotiate a newer and better agreement that will, for example, place restrictions on Iran's ballistic missile program, its regional aspirations and the problematic sunset clauses. The Europeans warn that the chances of that happening are slim. The French and

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German foreign ministers came to Jerusalem recently to explain to Netanyahu that Iran will not agree to a new deal and that if America pulls out, so will Iran.

If that happens, they warned, the only way left to stop Iran will be with military force, and who has the appetite for that? What Europe might not be taking into account though is the possibility that Netanyahu has received assurances from Trump that he will attack Iran if it leaves the deal and begins racing toward a bomb. It is possible that if Iran withdraws and begins enriching uranium to military grade levels, the "fire and fury" Trump once threatened North Korea with, will be diverted to Iran.

But what if that doesn't happen? What if Trump decides to nix the deal but then fails to follow through with tough negotiations or the threat of military force? Is Israel better off with the deal gone and Iran an even greater threat, or not? What if Trump connects the peace process to the nuclear deal and tells Netanyahu that he will happily take care of Iran, but only if Israel ensures progress on the Palestinian track? This would be the revival of the famous "Bushehr-for-Yitzhar" deal - Bushehr is the site of some of Iran's nuclear reactors, and Yitzhar is a settlement in Samaria - that Barack Obama reportedly offered Netanyahu in late 2009. Under that deal, Obama was supposed to ensure that Iran's nuclear program would be stopped, and Israel would, in exchange, facilitate the establishment of a Palestinian state.

The deal, of course, never materialized. A Palestinian state was never established and the 2015 nuclear deal failed to completely stop Iran's race to the bomb. Is Trump planning such linkage between Iran and the Palestinians? It remains to be seen, although the timing of how this all plays out could be a sign of what is coming. Just days after making a decision on Iran, the US will hold a ceremony marking the moving of its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Some security cabinet members are nervous of what will come next. As one member told me recently: "Even between friends, there never really is a free lunch."

Whatever happens, Trump is going to have his hands full in the coming weeks. For any of these efforts to work - North Korea, Iran or the Israel-Palestinian peace process - the president will need to be personally involved, become intimately familiar with all of the details, and be prepared to use the full weight of his office when necessary. Israel is just one piece on the presidential chessboard. It might seem that Israel and the US are aligned as never before, but Netanyahu will need to be careful to ensure Israel's interests are not disregarded. As demonstrated by

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Trump's surprising and off-the-cuff announcement last week that he plans to withdraw US forces from Syria, Netanyahu already knows that, with this president, anything is possible...

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TRUMP AND THE FADING GHOST OF AN ILLUSION

Amir Taheri

[Gatestone Institute](#), Apr. 1, 2018

Does the appointment of John Bolton as National Security Adviser indicate President Trump's determination to formally renounce the so-called "nuclear deal" concocted by his predecessor Barack Obama? The common answer of the commentariat is a resounding yes. Long before Trump promised to tear-up the deal, Bolton was on record denouncing it as an ugly example of appeasement.

Thus, next May, when the "deal" comes up for its periodical renewal, President Trump's idea of "tearing up a bad deal" is likely to have broader support in his administration. And that seems to be exactly what Tehran is expecting. In fact, just days after Bolton's appointment, the spokesman for Iran's Atomic Energy Agency, Behruz Kamalvand, broke a year of silence to boast about ambitious new plans for speeding up and expanding the Islamic Republic's nuclear project. The buzz in Tehran is that the ruling establishment expects Trump to refuse to sign another waiver linked to the "deal" and, perhaps order a tightening of the existing sanctions. However, Tehran seems determined to continue its formal commitment to the "deal" as part of a strategy to drive a wedge between the Europeans and a Trump administration already unpopular in the old continent.

Tehran's calculation is that the mid-term elections in the US may deprive Trump of crucial Congressional support and pave the way for his defeat in the following presidential election. Thus the wisest course is to keep everyone focused on the nuclear issue that the Europeans, and part of the political establishment in the US,

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believe they have solved thanks to the "deal," while the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) continues its 20-year long equivocation on the issue. Only Iran really knows its own intentions on that score.

Iran is right in saying that it is not producing nuclear weapons. What Iran is doing is to set up all the technical, industrial and material means needed to produce such weapons, if and when it decides to do so. While not producing nuclear weapons now, Iran has a program designed to make such weapons within months. It is like a chef who brings in all that is needed for making a soup but does not actually start the cooking until he knows when the guests will be coming.

In the past three decades Iran has trained and deployed the scientists and technicians needed, built the research centers required, and set up structures for a complete nuclear cycle, from raw materials to the finished product. Part of the Iranian national defense doctrine is based on the capacity to produce and deploy nuclear weapons within a brief time span. Before the 1979 Islamic revolution, Iran regarded its northern neighbor, the nuclear "super-power" Soviet Union, as the sole serious threat to its national security. The assumption was that in case of a Soviet invasion, Iran should be in a position to use tactical nuclear weapons while waiting for the great American ally to ride to the rescue.

After the mullahs seized power, Iran's national defense doctrine was based on the assumption that it will, one day, fight a war with the United States plus its Arab allies and/or Israel. The central assumption of Iranian strategists is that the US cannot sustain a long war. It is, therefore, necessary to pin down its forces and raise the kill-die ratio to levels unacceptable by the American public. In the meantime, Iran would put its nuclear-weapons program in high gear, and brandish the threat of nuclear war as a means of forcing the US to accept a ceasefire and withdraw from whatever chunk of Iranian territory they may have seized.

Former President Hashemi Rafsanjani publicly evoked the possibility of using nuclear weapons against Washington's regional allies, especially Israel. "In a nuclear duel in the region, Israel may kill 100 million Muslims," Rafsanjani said in a speech in Tehran in October 2000. "Muslims can sustain such casualties, knowing that, in exchange, there would be no Israel on the map." Iran's top military commanders also speak about a military clash with the United States as the only serious threat to the Khomeinist regime in Tehran.

They believe they have three trump cards to play. The first is that Iran has a

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demographic reserve of some 20 million people of "fighting age" and is thus capable of sustaining levels of casualties unthinkable for Americans. The second is that Iran is already the missile superpower of the Middle East and could target all of Washington's allies in the region. Iran's third trump card is its nuclear program. Without it, the other two cards will not have the desired effect, especially if the US unleashes its new generation of low-grade nuclear weapons designed for battlefield use.

The real issue, as far as US and its allies are concerned, is that the regime in Iran has been, is and most likely will remain, a threat with or without nuclear weapons. Iran did not seize the US diplomats as hostages with nuclear weapons; nor did it massacre 241 US Marines in Beirut with an atomic bomb. The mischief that Iran is making in Syria, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen and Bahrain is not backed by nuclear power either.

So the real question is: How to deal with a maverick power that has built its strategy on fomenting discord and instability not only in the Middle East but anywhere else it gets a chance? Washington hawks, among them Bolton perhaps, believe that the only realistic policy towards Iran is one of regime change before the Khomeinists build their nuclear arsenal. They believe that could be achieved with a mixture of military and diplomatic pressure, combined with moral and material support for a pro-democracy movement in Iran.

The Europeans, however, fear that any attempt even at soft regime-change may push the Khomeinists on the offensive in Afghanistan, the Persian Gulf, Iraq, the Caucasus, Lebanon, and the Palestinian territories. Could a realistic policy be developed through a sober assessment of both positions? If yes, that would require far more sophistication than the "to waiver or not to waiver" debate over what is; in fact; the fading ghost of an accord wrought from dangerous illusions.

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THE RETURN OF IMPERIALISM: THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

Prof. Hillel Frisch

[BESA](#), Apr. 4, 2018

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After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Francis Fukuyama, in a widely publicized book, announced the ultimate triumph of liberal democracy and with it the strong prospect of a longstanding democratic peace. He called it, in a moment of hubris, the end of history.

The wars in the Balkans (the first to take place in continental Europe since WWII) and the wide-scale ethnic and religious massacres that accompanied them, followed by the 9/11 attacks in New York and Washington DC, severely dented this vision. It was probably laid to rest altogether with the rise of Putin in 1999 and the return of geopolitics on Europe's fringes in the war with Georgia in 2009, Putin's assault on eastern Ukraine in 2014, and his troops' bold annexation of Crimea the same year.

Putin has contributed greatly towards pulling the world back to the twentieth century after the illusions it harbored about what the 21st century was likely to be. The same can be said of Beijing as its policy of peaceful engagement gave way to an assertion of power in the China Seas. Both Russia and China have seriously alarmed their neighbors and other states. It seems, however, that the world might be reverting further backward than one century. It is regressing back to the Age of Imperialism, only this time the major catalyst is eastern, not western; Muslim, not Christian; Shiite, not (predominantly) Protestant; "radical", not conservative.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, which ranks only 17th in terms of economic output in the world, is hardly a major power. It hovers somewhere around the same score in terms of scientific contributions (barring patents, which it largely keeps in-house for military purposes). Yet it is demonstrating almost daily its imperialist reach in Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, and Gaza, and is developing ballistic capabilities to threaten Europe. The reader may be puzzled. How is Iran different from Russia, China, and the US? The answer lies in focus, capabilities, and responsibility. China's and Russia's assertions of power are focused on land and seas contiguous to their borders. Relative to its capabilities, Russia's recent foray in Syria is a minor affair justified in some sense by a desire to fight jihadists, many of whom came from the Caucasus, which are part of the Russian Federation.

Russia is also a player in the great power game. If the US felt compelled to fight ISIS, Russia had to take part to check American power in the area. All three

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powers, especially the US and China, have far-flung interests that necessitate a presence worldwide. It is the role of the US in preserving the freedom of the seas, so indispensable to global trade, that leads to tensions between China and the US and its allies. These powers have the responsibility and capabilities (one hopes) to resolve their many issues of contention. Iran is different in that it is the only country whose focus is on political, military, and terrorist intervention and involvement in areas beyond its contiguous borders against states that have not struck the homeland.

Israel, the state it vows to destroy, never wanted a fight with the Islamic State of Iran. Not only is it not in the Jewish tradition to tell other states how they should be ruled, but a strong lobby within Israel believed for many years that Iran would renew ties for mutual benefit, as it did in the days of the Shah. So strong was this conviction that Israel allegedly sold weapons to Iran during its protracted war with Iraq. Yet it was the Islamic Republic of Iran that created Hezbollah in faraway Lebanon to fight Israel and which today threatens the Jewish state with 100,000 missiles. It has placed its launching sites in the homes of Lebanese villagers and townspeople. Naturally, these villagers, along with the Israeli civilian population, are at great risk.

Prior to the Syrian civil war, the Assad regime - while allied with Iran - placed limitations on an Iranian military presence in Syria. Now that the Assad regime has been weakened, Iran is exploiting the new dynamic to transform Syria into another Lebanon. Imported Shiite militias under Iranian Revolutionary guidance and command create missile sites similar to those in Lebanon. Terrorist activity is being increased, and munitions factories and forward bases are being established inside Syria and along the border of the northern Golan. Israel vows to stop Iran and is probably behind the "unidentified" air attacks, the most recent a massive one, to prevent Iran from realizing its immediate objective...

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IRAN'S ROLE IN THE BOYCOTT ISRAEL CAMPAIGN

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Asaf Romirowsky & Benjamin Weinthal

National Interest, Mar. 15, 2018

The Boycott, Sanctions and Divestment movement, better known by the acronym BDS, targeting Israel has largely been viewed as a Palestinian- and Western European-driven campaign with the alleged goal of advancing Palestinian statehood. Yet the Islamic Republic of Iran's key role in stoking the BDS movement has increasingly become a key factor in economic warfare against the Jewish state.

All of this helps to explain why it is often important, as a counter-terrorism project, to decipher the BDS movement. Take, for example, Iran's efforts to promote genocidal anti-Israel sentiment in Europe: the annual al-Quds Day rallies, which were called into global action in 1979 by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the founder of Iran's theocracy, urges individuals to support the BDS movement and the destruction of Israel. Al-Quds Day rallies blanket European cities such as Berlin, London and Vienna. Iranian-backed Islamists have no qualms about marching together with an amalgam of neo-Nazis, German political leftists and supporters of the U.S.- and EU-designated terrorist entity the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

The Iranian regime-owned Islamic Center of Hamburg charters buses with Iranian regime and Hezbollah supporters to travel to Berlin to march in the al-Quds Day rally. Since 1996, there have been twenty-one al-Quds Day marches in the German capital. Hamidreza Torabi, an Iranian religious leader who has called for Israel's elimination at the rallies, heads the Islamic Academy of Germany—part of the Iranian regime-owned Islamic Center of Hamburg. At the 2016 rally, he held a poster urging the "rejection of Israel" and calling the Jewish state "illegal and criminal." The Berlin government has made half-hearted efforts to rope in the pro-Iran regime mini-movement by banning Hezbollah flags at the rallies. Berlin's state government refuses to outlaw all of Hezbollah. It is worth recalling that the United States, Israel, the Arab League, Canada and the Netherlands have outlawed all of Hezbollah. The European Union has merely proscribed Hezbollah's so-called military-wing as a terrorist organization, leaving the organization free to recruit, raise funds and otherwise operate in most of the EU. Hezbollah—a wholly-owned Iranian subsidiary—uses its organizational presence to expand the BDS movement in Europe.

Iran's grassroots campaign to shape European and American opinion is not limited

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to demonstrations. In 2016, the Bavarian city of Bayreuth awarded 10,000 euros to a U.S.-based activist group—Code Pink—that supports a boycott of the Jewish state and has participated in a conference in Iran with Holocaust deniers. The women's organization Code Pink has gone to great lengths to defend Iran's regime. In January, the Israeli government banned representatives of Code Pink and an additional nineteen BDS organizations from entering the country because of their campaign to dismantle Israel. A second NGO—the International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL)—an entity set up by the now-defunct Soviet Union—supports the BDS movement while providing a legal defense for the Iranian regime's controversial nuclear program. The U.S.-based bank Comerica terminated the bank account of the IADL after its connections to Iran and the BDS movement were exposed in the media.

Moreover, on the grassroots donor involvement front, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund (RBF) has played a role in promoting the nuclear deal with Iran, especially since Stephen Heintz became its president in 2001 and looked to involve RBF in "peace building/making" through fostering ties between Washington and Tehran. RBF at large has been a staunch supporter of the BDS movement with its support of the organizations Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) and Breaking the Silence. It is worth to note that JVP has been designated as one of the groups that are forbidden from entering Israel today given their work to destroy the country...

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[US Pro-Iran Lobby's Attack on NSA Pick John Bolton Highlighted by Tehran Regime's Official Media: Ben Cohen, *Algemeiner*, Mar. 23, 2018](#)—An Iranian official news agency on Friday highlighted the furious response of a Washington, DC-based pro-Tehran lobbying organization to the announcement that John Bolton will replace Gen. H.R. McMaster as President Donald Trump's national security adviser.

[Can the Iran Deal Be Fixed? And Should it Be?: Omri Ceren, *Commentary*, Mar. 15, 2018](#)—President Trump and his administration are approaching a make-or-break May deadline for deciding whether to stay in the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

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Lawmakers, analysts, and journalists have been struggling to reestablish something approaching a healthy debate in the aftermath of the factitious salesmanship of the Obama “echo chamber.”

[Iranian Nuclear Weapons and 'Palestine' – Twin Dangers for Israel](#): **Louis René Beres, *Algemeiner*, Mar. 29, 2018**—Although difficult to calibrate or measure, Iranian nuclearization and Palestinian statehood are likely progressing at roughly the same pace. To be sure, this coincident or near-simultaneous progression is proceeding without any dint of conscious intent or coordinated design.

[Saudi Crown Prince, on U.S. Visit, Urges Tough Line on Iran](#): **Ben Hubbard, *New York Times*, Mar. 27, 2018**—Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia has renewed his attack on the Iran nuclear deal during a visit to the United States, saying the agreement would delay but not prevent Tehran from acquiring nuclear weapons.