

**TRUMP TAKES TOUGH STAND ON IRAN WHILE FOLLOWING
REALPOLITIK WITH SAUDIS**
isranet-publications
Isranet Daily Briefing, November 26, 2018
<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/trump-takes-tough-stand-on-iran-while-following-realpolitik-with-saudis/>

[Trump Doesn't Know History, but He Knows Iran](#): Jonathan S. Tobin, *JNS*, Nov. 13, 2018 — Donald Trump got just about the welcome he should have expected when he showed up to take part in the commemorations of the centennial of the end of World War I this past weekend.

[The Implications of Sanctions for the Iranian Oil Market](#): Dr. Doron Itzchakov, *BESA*, Nov. 25, 2018— On November 5, the Trump government imposed wide-ranging sanctions on the Islamic Republic of Iran in order to bring about a change in the revolutionary regime's radical orientation.

[How Trump Could — and Should — Get Tough on the Saudis](#): Elliott Abrams, *New York Post*, Nov. 22, 2018— As a card-carrying neoconservative, I am usually a critic of realpolitik.

[The Midterm was a Huge Win for Trump's Mideast Policy](#): Dr. Aviel Sheyin-Stevens, *Arutz Sheva*, Nov. 18, 2018— Donald Trump's supporters take him seriously but not literally; whereas, Democrats and their media acolytes, along with Never Trump Republicans, take him literally but not seriously.

On Topic Links

[Trump's Iran Sanctions Could Work](#): Micha'el Tanchum, *Foreign Policy*, Nov. 20, 2018

[Trump's Clever Policies Against Iran](#): *Media Line*, Nov. 18, 2018

[Khashoggi's Revenge](#): Dr. Mordechai Kedar, *Arutz Sheva*, Nov. 24, 2018

[Donald Trump's High-Wire Act on the Global Stage](#): Derek Burney, *Globe & Mail*, Oct. 25, 2018

TRUMP DOESN'T KNOW HISTORY, BUT HE KNOWS IRAN
Jonathan S. Tobin

***JNS*, Nov. 13, 2018**

Donald Trump got just about the welcome he should have expected when he showed up to take part in the commemorations of the centennial of the end of

**TRUMP TAKES TOUGH STAND ON IRAN WHILE FOLLOWING
REALPOLITIK WITH SAUDIS**

isranet-publications

Isranet Daily Briefing, November 26, 2018

<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/trump-takes-tough-stand-on-iran-while-following-realpolitik-with-saudis/>

World War I this past weekend. The international media excoriated him for skipping one of the memorial services due to bad weather (he attended another such service the following day, despite the rain) and then was subjected to a stern lecture by his host, French President Emmanuel Macron, during another one of the ceremonies.

Trump is being portrayed as unequal to the high-minded leaders of France and Germany, whose current close relations underscore the importance of learning the lessons of history. But while the president seemed out of step with the spirit of the 1918 centennial, on the key challenge currently facing the international community, it is his European critics who are ignoring history and acting selfishly.

There was little doubt who or what Macron was talking about when he spoke of the dangers of “nationalism,” drawing a stark contrast between those who view themselves as “nationalists” and those who view themselves as “patriots.” Speaking at the Arc de Triomphe, Macron told the assembled leaders of Europe: “Patriotism is the exact opposite of nationalism. Nationalism is a betrayal of patriotism by saying: ‘Our interest first. Who cares about the others?’”

While Macron’s distinction between nationalism and patriotism is sheer sophistry, it was a message that went over very well for those who fear for the future. His critics think Trump’s “America First” foreign policy and lack of enthusiasm for the NATO alliance, as well as his much publicized interest in better relations with Russia, are tearing apart the post-World War II order that has kept the peace in Europe. Trump’s critics — Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel being the most prominent of them — believe that his emphasis on nationalism is encouraging right-wing governments in Eastern Europe to follow his lead and think less about what’s good for the continent as a whole and more about what’s in it for them.

Set in the context of the effort to recall how unbridled nationalism helped set in motion the catastrophe of the war that tore Europe apart from 1914 to 1918, it sounds like a searing indictment of the president. In that way, Trump’s own condemnation of those who value globalism or pay little attention to the impact of the global economy on local interests is viewed as not merely a narrow and chauvinistic approach to the world, but also a willingness to ignore threats to democracy that can only be met by collective action. Indeed, the whole point of NATO was to ensure that a third European war would not follow the defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945, as well as to defend small nations against the predatory

**TRUMP TAKES TOUGH STAND ON IRAN WHILE FOLLOWING
REALPOLITIK WITH SAUDIS**

isranet-publications

Isranet Daily Briefing, November 26, 2018

<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/trump-takes-tough-stand-on-iran-while-following-realpolitik-with-saudis/>

ambitions of the Soviet Union and its reboot under Russian President Vladimir Putin.

But Russia isn't the only threat the West faces, and that's why the Franco-German love-fest at Trump's expense isn't quite as principled as the president's critics claim it to be. Leaving aside the natural resentment many in Europe feel about the high-handed and undemocratic way that the European Union thwarts the efforts of individual nations to decide their own fates, Macron's sermon is actually deeply hypocritical. Far from exemplifying the principle that the West must think about what is good for all, France and Germany are actually doing the opposite when it comes to Iran.

Trump's decision to withdraw from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal horrified Macron and Merkel. They are particularly angry about America's re-imposition of sanctions on the Tehran regime and the Trump administration's efforts to force the Europeans to go along with his decision. The Europeans see this as the worst example of policies that undermine the Western alliance. But in fact it's the Europeans who are behaving selfishly.

Trump understands that the Iran deal must be renegotiated because the pact that President Barack Obama proclaimed as solving the nuclear threat is fatally flawed. The deal not only enriched and empowered the world's leading state sponsor of terror, but its sunset clause ensures that Iran will eventually get a bomb anyway. Rather than joining with him to act to correct this problem and restrain Iranian adventurism — including a mass slaughter in Syria, a bloody war in Yemen, and a standing threat to the security of Sunni Arab nations and Israel — the Europeans prefer to keep doing business with Tehran.

And rather than submit to American leadership on an issue that threatens not merely the Middle East but a European continent that would be in range of Iranian missiles, Macron and Merkel have been exploring options that would allow them to separate entirely from the US economy. They are bluffing about that. But their insistence on vetoing any Western stand against Iran is a dangerous form of appeasement that gives the lie to their claims of learning the lessons of history.

Europe's wars were caused by the indifference of democracies to the need to stop aggressors before they posed a mortal threat to the world. The greatest tragedies of the 20th century happened because the appeasers — and those who just wanted to make a profit by dealing with rogue regimes — had their way until it was too

TRUMP TAKES TOUGH STAND ON IRAN WHILE FOLLOWING REALPOLITIK WITH SAUDIS

isranet-publications

Isranet Daily Briefing, November 26, 2018

<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/trump-takes-tough-stand-on-iran-while-following-realpolitik-with-saudis/>

late to avert catastrophe.

Trump may not be much of a student of history, but he appears to know that much. That's why he's right about Iran, and why Macron and Merkel are wrong. All the lectures about nationalism won't change the fact that on Iran, it is they who are acting in their nation's selfish interest and Trump who is speaking for the good of the international community. One hundred years after the end of the Great War, that's a history lesson that can't be erased by the applause France and Germany are getting from Trump's critics.

[Contents](#)

THE IMPLICATIONS OF SANCTIONS FOR THE IRANIAN OIL MARKET

Dr. Doron Itzchakov

[BESA](#), Nov. 25, 2018

On November 5, the Trump government imposed wide-ranging sanctions on the Islamic Republic of Iran in order to bring about a change in the revolutionary regime's radical orientation. This round of sanctions places severe restrictions on a wide range of corporations, financial and commercial entities, organizations, and private individuals both in Iran and abroad. The focus of the sanctions is the Iranian energy market, with an emphasis on oil exports, which is the country's main source of income. The assumption is that constraining Iran's oil revenues will significantly harm its economic stability and thus force it to change course and return to the negotiating table, this time under new conditions.

On November 2, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the administration's purpose was to deprive the regime of the revenues with which it spreads death and destruction around the world. However, this goal is inconsistent with the decision to grant temporary exemptions to eight countries, including China and India - Iran's two biggest oil consumers. The eight countries that have been temporarily exempted are Italy, Turkey, Greece, Taiwan, China, India, South Korea, and Japan. This decision reflects a desire to avoid a shake-up in world oil prices and a pragmatic approach that allows room for maneuver for countries that are not ready or able to immediately stop their purchases of Iranian oil. The decision

**TRUMP TAKES TOUGH STAND ON IRAN WHILE FOLLOWING
REALPOLITIK WITH SAUDIS**

isranet-publications

Isranet Daily Briefing, November 26, 2018

<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/trump-takes-tough-stand-on-iran-while-following-realpolitik-with-saudis/>

also reflects the administration's "carrot and stick" approach, which it employs to maintain balance in the international arena and to obtain the cooperation of weightier countries such as China, India, and Turkey.

A day before the sanctions were imposed, the Islamic Republic marked the 39th anniversary of the takeover of the American embassy in Tehran. During the demonstrations, which were punctuated by chants of hatred against the US and Israel, the government attempted to convey that Iran will be able to withstand the sanctions. Notwithstanding that show of belligerence, it is perfectly clear that the establishment grasps the ramifications of the sanctions for the Iranian economy, indicators of which have been visible ever since Trump announced the departure of the US from the nuclear agreement. Moreover, the economic turmoil caused by the sanctions imposed on Iran during the Obama administration is still engraved in the Iranian collective memory, though at that time, its oil exports did not fall below 1 million barrels per day.

At the time of writing, Iranian oil exports are estimated at 1.6 million barrels per day, but in the 10 months since the beginning of the year (January-October), the daily average was about 2 million barrels. This is due to export volumes of 2.1 to 2.6 million barrels per day between February and July of this year. Bloomberg data on the world oil market show that in 2017, Iran ranked sixth in the world, with an income of about \$40 billion. If Iran's decision-makers can manage to maintain an average export of 1.2 million barrels per day, they will be able to cope with the threat to the sector. Therefore, the decision to allow the eight countries, particularly China and India, to continue to purchase Iranian oil for the time being is a boon to the Iranian side.

The Americans' "stick and carrot" policy of imposing sanctions but granting a temporary exemption to eight Iranian customers is being interpreted by Tehran as a sign of weakness and a victory for its own foreign policy. While Trump succeeded at bringing the ruler of North Korea to the negotiating table, the Iranian arena is different. The leadership in Tehran hopes that Trump will not win another term, and is willing to tighten the country's belt until the next US elections. It should also be remembered that in effect, the revolutionary regime has been under American sanctions since the time of its inception; hence its perception that it can overcome the burden of sanctions.

China, the world's largest oil consumer, is a key element in the Iranian regime's ability to withstand sanctions. According to OPEC, China's crude oil consumption

TRUMP TAKES TOUGH STAND ON IRAN WHILE FOLLOWING REALPOLITIK WITH SAUDIS

isranet-publications

Isranet Daily Briefing, November 26, 2018

<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/trump-takes-tough-stand-on-iran-while-following-realpolitik-with-saudis/>

will reach 13 million barrels per day by the end of 2019. Beijing purchases the largest share of the Iranian oil market, making it a vitally important ally. Moreover, Beijing and Tehran have joint ventures in many fields, including commercial, security, and geopolitical areas.

The inclusion of China and India, which collectively account for about 65% of Iranian oil exports, on Washington's list of exemptions is inconsistent with Mike Pompeo's statement that Washington's goal is to paralyze Iranian oil exports. In September, the volume of aggregate purchases by China and India stood at about 1.05 million barrels a day out of a total of 1.6 million. It appears, therefore, that despite the decline in the volume of Iranian oil exports, the volume of exports has not yet fallen to the critical level of fewer than 800,000 barrels a day since the date of publication of the resolution on the return of sanctions.

As part of Iran's bid to preserve its oil revenues, a wide range of purchase proposals, ranging from barter transactions to cash-based payments, have been proposed to circumvent the limitations on the banking system. Tehran recently announced that it was going to sell a million barrels of oil on the energy exchange in an effort to open the oil market to private investors. Of the million barrels, 280,000 were sold. While that result did not meet Tehran's expectations, it will maintain the trend even at the cost of a significant reduction in oil prices...

[To Read the Full Article Click the Following [Link](#)—Ed.]

[Contents](#)

HOW TRUMP COULD — AND SHOULD — GET TOUGH ON THE SAUDIS

Elliott Abrams

[New York Post](#), Nov. 22, 2018

As a card-carrying neoconservative, I am usually a critic of realpolitik. But in judging the Trump administration's response to the killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, I find myself thinking that more realpolitik would lead to better policy. Here's what I mean. The president has made two statements, both of which refuse to break with Saudi Arabia or its crown prince: his formal White House statement and his comments to reporters. Both constitute a kind of realpolitik.

**TRUMP TAKES TOUGH STAND ON IRAN WHILE FOLLOWING
REALPOLITIK WITH SAUDIS**

isranet-publications

Isranet Daily Briefing, November 26, 2018

<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/trump-takes-tough-stand-on-iran-while-following-realpolitik-with-saudis/>

The formal statement begins this way: “The world is a very dangerous place!” In both statements, the president notes the advantages that accrue to the United States from our relationship with the Saudis, principally the arms sales to the kingdom, its investments in the United States, its help in keeping oil prices down and its assistance against terrorism and against Iran more generally.

As to Iran, the president said: “We also need a counterbalance. And Israel needs help also. If we abandon Saudi Arabia, it would be a terrible mistake.” The problem with this analysis is not that it is wrong, but that it posits only two options: abandoning Saudi Arabia or embracing it. A tougher realpolitik approach would promote a third option: Use this moment to push the Saudis to do some things we think they need to do.

Some examples: Patch up their dispute with Canada. More important, patch up their dispute with Qatar and get the Gulf Cooperation Council working again. Rationalize their own government by appointing empowered ministers, instead of having the crown prince in charge of all domestic, economic, defense and foreign-policy aspects of their government. And take some steps on human rights. The president was asked about the last point: “Are you basically telling us, Mr. President, that human rights are too expensive?” Trump replied “No, I’m not saying that at all.” But there is no evidence the United States is pressing the Saudis on that issue.

Now compare the putative master of realpolitik, Richard Nixon. After the massacre at Tiananmen Square in 1989, Nixon — then a private citizen — wrote to the Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping. Nixon took a tough-minded pose, writing, “I have always believed that a nation’s policy must not be affected by soft-headed friendship, but only by hard-headed reality.” He reaffirmed his belief that US-China relations were of “great benefit to both our countries strategically.” And he had “hard-headed” advice for Deng: “It is imperative that steps be taken now to return China to its rightful place as a civilized member of the world community. It would be a tragedy if China continues to be seen as a repressive throwback to a dark age of the past.”

What steps? Release the physicist and dissident Fang Lizhi. Second, “provide amnesty for those who demonstrated peacefully . . . particularly students.” Third, take some steps providing reassurance about the future of Hong Kong. Two months later, in June 1990, Fang Lizhi and his family were allowed to leave China, and a group of dissidents was released. Perhaps Nixon’s advice, couched not as

TRUMP TAKES TOUGH STAND ON IRAN WHILE FOLLOWING REALPOLITIK WITH SAUDIS

isranet-publications

Isranet Daily Briefing, November 26, 2018

<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/trump-takes-tough-stand-on-iran-while-following-realpolitik-with-saudis/>

humanitarian pressure but cold political realism, had an effect.

That is what seems to me missing from recent administration policy on Saudi Arabia. Nixon did not presume that the choices were all or nothing, to embrace China or to break with it. Similarly, if the Trump administration view is that we should not break with Saudi Arabia (a view I share), then the next step is not to embrace Saudi Arabia but rather do what Nixon did: Specify to the Saudis what they need to do so that they will not be seen as “a repressive throwback to a dark age of the past.”

Send the Saudi foreign minister to fix things with Canada. Figure out a way to release the blogger Raif Badawi and the Saudi women’s-rights protesters who appear to have been badly abused since their arrests. Reunite the Gulf Cooperation Council. In his public statements, the president did not do that. Neither did Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in his remarks. Realpolitik policy is missing: how we will use this moment to press the Saudis to do some things we need them to do, in our national interest.

The exception is Trump’s approach to Yemen. Since the Khashoggi killing, the Trump administration has taken a far tougher public stance demanding steps aimed at ending the war there, and it has stopped US aerial refueling of Saudi jets. Now, neither the president nor the secretary is obliged to lay out American demands in public. We must hope the Trump administration is trying in private to exact a price for the public support it is giving the US-Saudi relationship.

[Contents](#)

THE MIDTERM WAS A HUGE WIN FOR TRUMP’S MIDEAST POLICY

Dr. Aviel Sheyin-Stevens

[Arutz Sheva](#), Nov. 18, 2018

Donald Trump’s supporters take him seriously but not literally; whereas, Democrats and their media acolytes, along with Never Trump Republicans, take him literally but not seriously. Before the midterm election, Trump intimated he could win the election and outperform previous presidents who generally lost seats in their first midterm election; however, he also acknowledged that

**TRUMP TAKES TOUGH STAND ON IRAN WHILE FOLLOWING
REALPOLITIK WITH SAUDIS**

isranet-publications

Isranet Daily Briefing, November 26, 2018

<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/trump-takes-tough-stand-on-iran-while-following-realpolitik-with-saudis/>

Democrats may win the House. Now, many claim he lost the election. Although the Democratic Party won the House, Trump won the election.

What President Trump achieved by his net gain of Senate seats in the midterm was unprecedented for a Republican. He has also essentially eliminated the Never Trump section of the Republican Party. Since the beginning of his administration, Never Trump Republicans refused to accept his leadership of their party and therefore use every opportunity to undermine him. He has also essentially eliminated the Never Trump section of the Republican Party. The late Senator John McCain blocked Trump's efforts to repeal Obamacare with his dramatic late-night Senate vote in 2017. McCain's dramatic, decisive vote against Republicans' effort to repeal Obamacare was widely perceived as motivated by personal revenge against Trump, because Trump succeeded where he failed. McCain had been in favor of repealing Obamacare, until Trump was elected and wanted it repealed.

Senator Bob Corker, the outgoing chairman of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, undermined Trump's foreign policies and cast aspersions on the president's judgment. His actions subverted the credibility of Trump's foreign policy strategies and empowered Democrats and others to delegitimize Trump's leadership. In contrast; however, Corker worked heartily with Barack Obama. Corker assisted in securing Obama's catastrophic Iran nuclear deal. Corker agreed not to treat the deal as a treaty that would have required the support of two thirds of the Senate for ratification, and passed a special law for it that upturned the US Constitution. Rather than requiring a two-thirds majority for ratification, the law required two thirds of the Senate to disapprove the deal to prevent its implementation.

Before the midterm election, Never Trump Senators held the balance of power in the Senate, but not anymore. They would mostly be replaced by pro-Trump people, like Senator-elect Marsha Blackburn of Tennessee who is replacing Corker. Many months ahead of the midterm election, Republican voters kept telling pollsters that the number one issue facing the country was immigration. Meanwhile, they considered tax reform as one of the least pressing issues. Nevertheless, House Republicans surrendered on Trump's immigration plans to push Paul Ryan's 'Tax Reform 2.0' plan.

House Republicans who spurned running for reelection also contributed to the Democratic takeover of the House. Generally, House incumbents have little trouble holding onto their seats. Since 1964, their reelection rates have consistently been

**TRUMP TAKES TOUGH STAND ON IRAN WHILE FOLLOWING
REALPOLITIK WITH SAUDIS**
isranet-publications
Isranet Daily Briefing, November 26, 2018
<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/trump-takes-tough-stand-on-iran-while-following-realpolitik-with-saudis/>

over 80% and often in the high 90s. In this midterm, 39 incumbent Never-Trump House Republicans, many in leadership positions including House Speaker Paul Ryan, chose to retire. The departure of key Never Trump Republicans from the House could make the Republican minority caucus to be more unified than they were as the majority. Thus, they could act more capably as a minority than they were as a fractured majority. Approaching the 2020 election, the Republican Party would be far more coherent ideologically and unified behind Trump's leadership than it has been for the past two years.

As for the Democrats, fanatically anti-Israel, pro-Hamas candidates Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib won their House races when they ran in safe districts. However, anti-Israel Scott Wallace and Leslie Cockburn who ran in Republican-leaning districts in Pennsylvania and Virginia, respectively, lost their races, whereas moderate Democrats won races in Republican leaning states...

[To Read the Full Article Click the Following [Link](#)—Ed.]

[Contents](#)

[On Topic Links](#)

[Trump's Iran Sanctions Could Work](#): *Micha'el Tanchum, Foreign Policy, Nov. 20, 2018*—Those who doubt that U.S. President Donald Trump's Iran sanctions will hit their target should reconsider. It is true that their immediate impact on Iran's oil export revenues will likely be minimal.

[Trump's Clever Policies Against Iran](#): *Media Line, Nov. 18, 2018*—On the morning of November 5, renewed US sanctions against Iran kicked in and Tehran's hope for a last-minute miracle that would save it from economic meltdown vanished.

[Khashoggi's Revenge](#): *Dr. Mordechai Kedar, Arutz Sheva, Nov. 24, 2018*—According to Reuters, a group consisting of members of the Saudi royal family plans to replace the son of reigning King Salman, Mohammad, with his uncle, the king's brother, 76 year old Ahmed bin Abed Al-Aziz.

[Donald Trump's High-Wire Act on the Global Stage](#): *Derek Burney, Globe & Mail, Oct. 25, 2018*—U.S. President Donald Trump is taking Teddy Roosevelt's maxim - "Speak softly and carry a big stick" - and putting it into a higher gear. He talks

**TRUMP TAKES TOUGH STAND ON IRAN WHILE FOLLOWING
REALPOLITIK WITH SAUDIS**

isranet-publications

Isranet Daily Briefing, November 26, 2018

<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/trump-takes-tough-stand-on-iran-while-following-realpolitik-with-saudis/>

loudly while brandishing a heavy stick on the world stage.