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AS NEW IRANIAN PRESIDENT PUSHES NUCLEAR FLIM-FLAM, HE APPOINTS 1983 BEIRUT KILLER AS DEFENSE MINISTER – MEANWHILE ONLY CANADA JUDGES ROUHANI BY DEEDS, NOT WORDS

Contents:

Judge Iran's Regime by Its Actions, not by Empty Words: John Baird, *The Globe and Mail*, Aug. 10 2013—This past weekend, the Islamic Republic of Iran inaugurated Hassan Rowhani as its seventh president. In the weeks and months ahead, the world will be watching to see if the hopes and aspirations of Iranians will be fulfilled.

Iran's Plan B for the Bomb: Amos Yadlin And Avner Golov, *New York Times*, Aug. 8, 2013—Is Iran finally ready to talk? Iran's new president, Hassan Rouhani, has said he's ready for nuclear negotiations. And in recent weeks, the Iranian government has repeatedly expressed its desire to reach a deal on its uranium enrichment program.

Iran's New Defense Minister: Behind Attack on U.S. Marine Corps Barracks (Beirut 1983): Brig.-Gen. (ret.) Dr. Shimon Shapira, *JCPA*, Aug. 11, 2013—The newly-elected president of Iran, Hassan Rouhani, has appointed Brig. Gen. Hossein Dehghan as the new defense minister in place of Brig. Gen. Ahmad Vahidi. The appointment will take effect as soon as it is approved by the Majlis.

Even if Assad Loses, Iran Gains from its Support of Shia Militias: Phillip Smyth, *The National*, Aug 12, 2013—As Syria continues to burn, Iran has successfully pushed the narrative that it is the unbridled defender of Shia Islam. Even if Bashar Al Assad loses more ground to the rebel forces, Iran can still benefit from the conflict to bolster that narrative.

On Topic Links

Report: Iran's Arak Reactor to Have Nuclear Weapons Grade Plutonium by Next Summer: *Jerusalem Post*, Aug. 5, 2013

PM: Iran Has Set 7,000 New Centrifuges Spinning since Presidential Election: Herb Keinson, *Jerusalem Post*, Aug. 8, 2013

Iran's Mounting Malaise: Jamsheed Choksy, *Real Clear World*, Aug. 8, 2013

Iran Enters the Peace Process: Khaled Abu Toameh, *Gatestone Institute*, July 29, 2013

Former MI Chief Yadlin Cautions Over Iran's Plutonium Program: *Jerusalem Post*, Aug. 9, 2013

JUDGE IRAN'S REGIME BY ITS ACTIONS, NOT BY EMPTY WORDS

John Baird

The Globe and Mail, Aug. 10 2013

This past weekend, the Islamic Republic of Iran inaugurated Hassan Rowhani as its seventh president. In the weeks and months ahead, the world will be watching to see if the hopes and aspirations of Iranians will be fulfilled.

Canada's skepticism of the regime's commitment to genuine reform stands. Despite the expression of the Iranian people on June 14, Iran's nuclear non-compliance, its deliberate decision to ignore its human-rights obligations, its ongoing sponsorship of terrorist groups, its support for Syria's Assad regime, and its own regular and inexcusable anti-Semitic rhetoric continues unabated and undeterred. Mr. Rowhani's own tome of literature chronicling Iranian subterfuge and clever protraction of nuclear negotiations does little to enhance his own credibility.

Irrespective of these dubious confluences, after Mr. Rowhani's inauguration, this regressive clerical military dictatorship appears to have yet another opportunity. The Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has to decide whether he will continue to march Iran down its current path or whether he wants to allow Mr. Rowhani to roll back the apparatus of tyranny and fear, and place Iran within the community of nations committed to prosperity and freedom.

Maintaining the status quo will continue Iran's isolation as international sanctions will remain in place. The status quo will also mean that Iran will continue its malevolent partnership with Hezbollah and Bashar al-Assad, and deploy the insidious Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps. It will retain the same international standing and prestige as North Korea.

Alternatively, if the Supreme Leader allows Mr. Rowhani to immediately implement significant and deep changes in the regime's irresponsible nuclear policies, its disregard for human rights and its destructive meddling in the Middle East, Iranians may yet see a brighter future. Let us be clear about one irreducible fact: The choice is firmly the Supreme Leader's to make. The Iranian President has historically been constrained and shaped by the Supreme Leader, which highlights the challenges facing Mr. Rowhani.

Some of these obstacles have already been underscored since the election in June. On July 31, Iran announced it was extending a \$3.6-billion oil credit to the murderous Assad regime so it can continue butchering its own people. Iranians should be asking Mr. Rowhani why Iran is spending \$3.6-billion to kill fellow Muslims in Syria, rather than investing in the economic prosperity of the Iranian people.

Human Rights Watch recently reported that executions in Iran have increased at an alarming rate since the election and that as many as 71 people have been executed since June 14. The real number is certain to be higher. Was this the change Iranians voted for? The world cannot afford to take hints of moderation on key issues at face value while the regime continues to suffocate the aspirations of its people. Nor can we accept gestures that do not result in the systemic change Iranians demand and deserve. Serious change requires the regime to hold genuine nuclear talks with the P5+1 group, to fully co-operate with the International Atomic Energy Agency, to respect human rights, to stop supporting agents of death, destruction and chaos in the region, and to put the real interests of its citizens first.

Iranians deserve a future free of fear in which they can enjoy the benefits of hard work and build more prosperous lives for their children. Iranians deserve to have the institutions that allow them to debate and to determine their future in freedom. Iranians deserve to see the day that Iran takes its rightful place in international affairs as a respected regional power. These are the hopes that Iranians have told us they have invested in Mr. Rowhani.

Canada and the rest of the world will be looking to the regime to undertake deep reforms and to genuinely help Iranians realize their aspirations. The world will judge the regime by the actions it takes, not its empty platitudes or symbolic gestures.

John Baird is Foreign Affairs Minister of Canada.

[Contents](#)

IRAN'S PLAN B FOR THE BOMB

Amos Yadlin And Avner Golov

[New York Times](#), Aug. 8, 2013

Is Iran finally ready to talk? Iran's new president, Hassan Rouhani, has said he's ready for nuclear negotiations. And in recent weeks, the Iranian government has repeatedly expressed its desire to reach a deal on its uranium enrichment program.

A few days after Mr. Rouhani's election victory, Russia's foreign minister, Sergey V. Lavrov, stated that Iran was prepared to limit its enrichment to a level below 20 percent, which is the main goal of a future agreement

between the West and Iran. And last month, Iraq's prime minister, Nuri Kamal al-Maliki, reportedly told the White House that Iran wanted to begin direct nuclear negotiations with the United States.

But it would be dangerous to think that Iran's proposal for negotiations alone would pave the way for a deal. What matters is not the talks but the outcome. Whoever negotiates with Iran must acknowledge that the enrichment of uranium from a low level (3.5 percent to 19.75 percent) to weapons-grade level (90 percent) is only one of three dimensions of Iran's nuclear strategy. A second dimension is Iran's progress toward a quick "breakout capability" through the stockpiling of large quantities of low-enriched uranium that could be further enriched rapidly to provide weapons-grade fuel. Third, Iran also appears to be pursuing a parallel track to a nuclear capability through the production of plutonium. If there is going to be a nuclear deal with Iran, all three parts of its strategy must be addressed.

In the past year, Iran has installed thousands of centrifuges, including more than 1,000 advanced ones. A report by the International Atomic Energy Agency states that Iran already has enough low-enriched uranium to produce several nuclear bombs if it chooses to further enrich the fuel. Iran has deliberately refrained from crossing what is perceived as Israel's red line: 240 kilograms (about 530 pounds) of uranium enriched to a level of 19.75 percent.

Nonetheless, Western experts like Graham T. Allison Jr. and Olli Heinonen estimate that if Iran decided to develop a bomb today, it could do so within three to five months. That is assumed to be sufficient lead time for the West to detect and respond to an Iranian decision. But a recent report from the Institute for Science and International Security estimates that at the current pace of installation, Iran could reduce its breakout time to just one month by the end of this year. The report also estimates that at that pace, by mid-2014 Iran could reduce the breakout time to less than two weeks.

Any agreement must ensure that an Iranian breakout is detected quickly enough to allow for a Western response — meaning that the international community must be able to uncover any concealed facilities and activities for the production of fissile material. A solution will also have to address the potential for a plutonium bomb. In May, Iran announced that the heavy-water reactor in Arak would become operational early next year. Some American and European officials claim that Iran could produce weapons-grade plutonium next summer. These two announcements indicate that Iran is making progress on this alternative track. So far, the West has not paid much attention to the potential for a plutonium-fueled weapon. Now it must do so.

A functioning nuclear reactor in Arak could eventually allow Iran to produce sufficient quantities of plutonium for nuclear bombs. Although Iran would need to build a reprocessing facility to separate the plutonium from the uranium in order to produce a bomb, that should not be the West's primary concern. Western negotiators should instead demand that Iran shut down the Arak reactor. This is crucial because the West would likely seek to avoid an attack on a "hot" reactor, lest it cause widespread environmental damage. Once Arak is operational, it would effectively be immune from attack and the West would be deprived of its primary "stick" in its efforts to persuade Iran to forgo a military nuclear capability.

Of the three countries that have publicly crossed the nuclear threshold since the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty entered into force in 1970, two — India and North Korea — did so via the plutonium track. In order to deny Iran this route, any agreement between the West and Iran must guarantee that Iran will not retain a breakout or "sneak out" plutonium-production capacity.

At the United Nations last September, Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, focused only on uranium enrichment, reinforcing a one-dimensional perception of the Iranian nuclear program. This narrow perception is already widespread in the West and could enable Iran to attain a swift breakout capability using uranium or to build a plutonium bomb without detection.

Negotiations with Iran should resume, and the sooner the better. But Western leaders must maintain their current leverage — sanctions and a credible military threat — and ensure that any future agreement with Iran

addresses all three dimensions of Iran's nuclear program. Moderate messages from Tehran should not be allowed to camouflage Iran's continuing progress toward a bomb.

Amos Yadlin, a former chief of Israeli military intelligence, is the director of Israel's Institute for National Security Studies, where Avner Golov is a researcher.

[Contents](#)

**IRAN'S NEW DEFENSE MINISTER: BEHIND THE 1983
ATTACK ON THE U.S. MARINE CORPS BARRACKS IN BEIRUT**

Brig.-Gen. (ret.) Dr. Shimon Shapira

[JCPA](#), Aug. 11, 2013

The newly-elected president of Iran, Hassan Rouhani, has appointed Brig. Gen. Hossein Dehghan as the new defense minister in place of Brig. Gen. Ahmad Vahidi. The appointment will take effect as soon as it is approved by the Majlis. Brig. Gen. Hossein Dehghan spent his entire military career in the Revolutionary Guard, which he joined immediately after it was established in the last months of 1979. He came to the capital, Tehran, from his hometown of Shaharda in Isfahan Province, and until 1982 was commander of the Revolutionary Guard in the capital.

After the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in the summer of 1982, Dehghan was sent to Lebanon. He served as commander of the training corps of the Revolutionary Guard, first in Syria and soon after in Lebanon. This role made him responsible for building up the military force of Hizbullah, which also was established at that time. After most of the Revolutionary Guard force returned from Lebanon to Iran, and the force's commander, Ahmad Motevasselian, was kidnapped along with three other Iranians in the summer of 1982 by the Christian militia – the Lebanese Forces, Ahmad Kanani was appointed commander of the Revolutionary Guard force in Lebanon.

About a year later Hossein Dehghan replaced Kanani in that position. One of his first goals was to set up a central command for the Iranian force, which at that time was scattered among small towns and villages in the Baalbek region. At the beginning of September 1983, Hizbullah, with the help of the Revolutionary Guard headed by Dehghan, took over the Sheikh Abdullah barracks, which was seized in the course of a procession led by three Hizbullah sheikhs: Abbas Mussawi, Subhi Tufayli, and Muhammad Yazbek. It had been the main base of the Lebanese army in the Beqaa Valley and now became the Imam Ali barracks, the main headquarters of the Revolutionary Guard.

It was from this headquarters that Iran controlled Hizbullah's military force and planned, along with Hizbullah, the terror attacks on the Beirut-based Multinational Force and against IDF forces in Lebanon. The attacks were carried out by the Islamic Jihad organization, headed by Imad Mughniyeh, which was actually a special operational arm that acted under the joint direction of Tehran and Hizbullah until it was dismantled in 1992.

Instructions for the attack on the Multinational Forces were issued from Tehran to the Iranian ambassador to Damascus, who passed them on to the Revolutionary Guards forces in Lebanon and their Lebanese Shiite allies. According to the U.S. Marine commander, the U.S. National Security Agency (NSA) intercepted the Iranian orders to strike on September 26, 1983. It is difficult to imagine that such a high-level directive to the Revolutionary Guards in Lebanon would be transmitted without the knowledge of their commander, Hossein Dehghan.

On October 25, 1983, a Shiite suicide bomber detonated a water tanker at the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut, killing 241 Marines; simultaneously, another Shiite suicide bomber blew up the French paratroopers' barracks in Beirut, killing 58 soldiers. It was Mughniyeh who dispatched both bombers. The order to carry out the attacks was transmitted, and the funding and operational training provided, with the help of the Revolutionary Guard in Lebanon under the command of Hossein Dehghan.

[Contents](#)

EVEN IF ASSAD LOSES, IRAN GAINS FROM ITS SUPPORT OF SHIA MILITIAS

Phillip Smyth

[The National](#), Aug 12, 2013

As Syria continues to burn, Iran has successfully pushed the narrative that it is the unbridled defender of Shia Islam. Even if Bashar Al Assad loses more ground to the rebel forces, Iran can still benefit from the conflict to bolster that narrative.

Iran's guiding ideology of velayat Al Faqih, or the absolute rule of a religious cleric, is far from the accepted norm among the world's Shia. And Iran's support for sending Shia militants to fight alongside the Syrian regime has put Iran at odds with both traditional Shia clerics, who are followed by the majority of Shia Muslims, and radical clerics such as Iraq's Muqtada Al Sadr. These clerics, particularly Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani in Najaf, Iraq, have rejected the Iranian role and have thus been a persistent thorn in Iran's side. Mr Sistani went so far as to call Shia who go to fight in Syria "disobedient". Mr Al Sadr has said that he would "punish" any members participating in Syria's battles, according to the news agency AFP.

Despite such resistance, the Iranian regime has managed to advance its narrative among many Shia in the region. The Iranian regime justifies the involvement of Shia foreign fighters in Syria as fighting to "protect Shia holy sites" - particularly the Sayyida Zaynab shrine in Damascus - from "takfiris", a euphemism Tehran uses to describe all Syrian rebels. The term is generally used to describe radical Sunni Islamists who view Shia and some other Muslims as infidels.

The pretext of defending the shrine in Damascus plays well with Shia who have suffered under waves of bombings targeting their mosques, shrines and gatherings from Baghdad to Pakistan. Iran and its proxies have described their operations in Syria as a "sacred defence" and fallen fighters as "holy warriors of jihad".

The Iranian "defensive jihad" narrative is meant to be juxtaposed with the statements by Mr Al Sadr or Mr Sistani, who call on their followers not to fight in Syria, to make Shia feel their traditional and radical leaders are out of step in the face of a historic threat.

Iran works with numerous regional proxies, such as Lebanon's Hizbollah and Iraq's Asa'ib Ahl Al Haq - which split from Mr Al Sadr's militia - and Kata'ib Hizbollah, to propagate that narrative. These groups have provided members for Shia militias that operate in Syria, such as Liwa Abu Fadl Al Abbas. Working with these groups also helps Iran to expand its influence and create the impression that a broad front, united under Iran's leadership, is committed to keeping Mr Al Assad in power, thus attracting more Shia fighters for the conflict.

Even if a militia operates away from the holy sites in Syria, Iran claims that its policy of backing Mr Al Assad is part of its ultimate goal of defending the Shia relics. In May, for example, Liwaa Ammar Ibn Yasir, an Iranian-backed Shia militia, announced that it operates in Aleppo but also "defends" Sayyida Zaynab shrine in Damascus. The clear message is that no matter where one of the Tehran-backed Shia militias operates, it is indirectly defending Sayyida Zaynab.

Through this strategy, Iran can achieve three significant results: it can save a strategically important ally, lessen the influence of its Shia clerical rivals and foster a greater acceptance of its own radical doctrine within the Shia Islamic community.

Iranian government-controlled media has been proactive in pushing that narrative by highlighting the Sistani statements that jibe with Tehran's agenda while downplaying or simply ignoring his opposition to sending Shia fighters to Syria. For example, remarks made by Sayyid Javad Shahrestani, Mr Sistani's representative in Iran, that the war in Syria was actually a plot to damage Iran's regional standing were widely carried by Iranian state media. But Mr Sistani's clear opposition to Iranian moves in Syria is rarely mentioned.

The slogans used by Iranian-backed Shia militias fighting in Syria have also been used to give the impression that certain Shia clerics support the intervention. Liwa Imam Husayn has been branded as "Sadrist" by its creators. (It is worth mentioning that Shia militias in Syria have common leaders, for unstated reasons). According to a photograph used in the promotion of the latter militia on Facebook, one of the militiamen wields a heavy machine gun with a shot of Mr Al Sadr paternally looking down on him. The same photograph was published a few days earlier with Asa'ib Ahl Al Haq's logo on it, which suggests the group cannot be affiliated to Mr Al Sadr, as the latter's forces had sometimes clashed with Asa'ib Ahl Al Haq in Iraq.

Mr Al Sadr probably knew that he would need to cooperate with Iranian-backed groups in any joint operations in Syria, including with Asa'ib Ahl Al Haq, which is one of the main providers of combatants in Syria. In May, Mr Al Sadr came to loggerheads with Iraqi prime minister Nouri Al Maliki over the militia's activities in Iraq; according to the Saudi newspaper Asharq Al Awsat, Mr Al Sadr even called on his supporters to clamp down on the militia in Baghdad.

Both Syrian rebels and Shia militias have claimed Mr Al Sadr's forces operate in Syria. But he has categorically denied these reports, saying, in June, that "all these claims are lies". Judging from the reports and videos emerging from Syria, Mr Al Sadr appears to be telling the truth.

Moreover, Liwa Imam Husayn, in an attempt to suggest that Mr Sistani supports its involvement in Syria, announced recently that it held iftar for residents in the neighbourhood around the Sayyida Zaynab shrine in a Damascus building owned by Mr Sistani. Iran and its proxies will continue to push more Shia into Syria's conflict. The war in Syria has provided a situation in which Iran can assume a leadership role among the region's Shia community.

Phillip Smyth is a researcher at the University of Maryland. He focuses on Lebanon and Syria and specialises in Shia militias in Syria

[Contents](#)

ON TOPIC

Report: Iran's Arak Reactor to Have Nuclear Weapons Grade Plutonium by Next Summer: [Jerusalem Post, Aug. 5, 2013](#)—The Arak heavy water nuclear reactor in Iran will be capable of producing two nuclear bombs' worth of weapons grade plutonium a year and will be capable of producing the material by next summer, according to a Wall Street Journal report on Monday that cited US, UN and EU officials.

PM: Iran Has Set 7,000 New Centrifuges Spinning since Presidential Election: [Herb Keinson, Jerusalem Post, Aug. 8, 2013](#)—

1
Since Iranian President Hassan Rouhani was elected two months ago, Iran has installed 7,000 centrifuges, indicating that he is nothing more than a new face to an old regime, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu said Wednesday.

Iran's Mounting Malaise: [Jamsheed Choksy, Real Clear World, Aug. 8, 2013](#)—Hassan Rouhani took charge of Iran with its socioeconomic safety nets unraveling, thanks to deleterious policies exacerbated by tightened sanctions from the West. Addressing the parliament on July 14, while president-elect, he acknowledged that the nuclear impasse is far from the only factor transforming the Islamic Republic of Iran negatively with impact on other countries. Iran's challenges pose severe consequences at home and abroad.

Iran Enters the Peace Process: [Khaled Abu Toameh, Gatestone Institute, July 29, 2013](#)—Hammas's apparent rapprochement with Iran paves the way for Iran to play a major role in the Palestinian arena. Iranian military experts could soon be arriving in the Gaza Strip to train members of Hamas and other terrorist groups. This does not bode well for the Palestinian Authority and its leader, Mahmoud Abbas.

Former MI Chief Yadlin Cautions Over Iran's Plutonium Program: [Jerusalem Post, Aug. 9, 2013](#)—Former Military Intelligence chief Amos Yadlin warned Friday that the West's one dimensional perception of Iran's nuclear program, focusing solely on the uranium enrichment path to a nuclear weapon, could enable the Islamic Republic to build a plutonium bomb without detection.