

## **THE U.S. AND EUROPE MUST AVOID A FAKE FIX OF THE IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL**



**Since the signature of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in July 2015, also known as the Iran nuclear deal, between the P5+1 (the U.S., the U.K., France, Russia, China, and Germany) and Iran, the Middle East is less stable and the world is a more inhospitable place. Only a real fix of the JCPOA can reverse the current situation. On the contrary, cosmetic changes and fake solutions expand the problem far from solving it. The deadline is fast approaching.**

During the last two and a half years Iran has implemented a regional strategy to dominate the Middle East, from Tehran to Beirut via Baghdad, Damascus, and Sana'a. The regime has succeeded in its undertaking — it is not a coincidence that, over the same period of time, Israel and Saudi Arabia have increased their bilateral cooperation in security and intelligence matters. Also, throughout these years, as we could witness at the end of 2017, the Iranian regime has increased its brutal repression against its own citizens; has expanded the sponsorship of terrorism through its main proxy, Hizballah; has directly attacked Israel's territory beyond the Syrian border—where Iranians have established military facilities and strongholds—and has developed its ballistic-missiles program in defiance of UN Security Council Resolution 2331. **In the meantime, the world has kept silent.** As U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham has stated; **“Iran is winning” due to “poor policy choices in the Middle East”.**

The Friends of Israel Initiative (FOII) will insist, as many times as necessary, on the hard and inescapable truth: Iran's belligerent agenda endangers the security and the stability of the Middle East, the U.S., and Europe. As FOII's Board Members José María Aznar and Stephen Harper have stated in the pages of the *Wall Street Journal* on March 5 **the world must unite in order to stop Iran. The first step is to avoid a fake fix of the nuclear deal and, once for all, offer, deploy and enforce real solutions.**

As we have noted many times—and what is undeniable evidence today—Iran’s evil attitude is nowadays a global risk. Iranian dominance of the Middle East is becoming a reality with the apparent acquiescence of most of the world’s powers. However, with the arrival of the Trump’s Administration, **the U.S. has fortunately adopted a new, more intelligent approach in order to deal with Iran’s aggressive actions. Europeans should follow the example of the Trump Administration and hold Iran accountable for its illegal, destabilizing activities.** For that purpose, the core of the problem resides in the current form of the nuclear deal, which has enabled Iran to rise as the new hegemon in the Middle East, threatening Israel’s existence and aspiring to lead a Shia-dominant axis in detriment of the Sunni states. **Europeans should abandon the idea that quick fixes would be enough to maintain the JCPOA alive. This agreement requires a transformative amendment, not just pretending changes to keep the European diplomatic honeymoon with Iran.**

In order to amend the JCPOA, **the U.S. and its allies, especially the Europeans, must speak out with one voice.** It is the proper time to acknowledge **that the JCPOA has failed.** The JCPOA is a bad deal for important reasons. Among them, it leaves Iran’s nuclear infrastructure intact; it allows advanced nuclear R&D; the deal’s inspection and verification regimes are insufficient; it has allowed the development of the long-range ballistic program, which today is not only active but expanding; and the sunset clauses set out by the nuclear deal actually mean the stepwise nuclearization of Iran. The JCPOA’s side effects have included the enhancement of Iran’s regional domination and its rogue activities. The regime’s moderation is non-existent.

Despite certain points of agreement among European powers reached on the ballistic missile program, May 12 is the deadline set by the Trump Administration and it is closer than it seems. A smart, efficient, and fair JCPOA amendment should fix all the problems above indicated. It should also curb Iran’s foreign intervention and force the regime to take back all the calls for Israel’s annihilation. In sum, **a real fix of the JCPOA.**

European nations can avoid the collapse of the JCPOA; they can instead improve it and engage Russia and China in this process. European nations should **work willingly with the U.S. Administration to reach a common position, aimed to offer efficient solutions for the JCPOA and to leave behind temporary arrangements.** If the U.K, Germany, France, and the U.S. agree to properly redesign the nuclear deal with Iran, the other signatories, Russia and China, will be led to accept.

Time is running out. The United States and Europe need **to walk away from a superficial amendment to the nuclear agreement with Iran. Europeans would be naïve if they think that they can maintain the agreement by themselves.** The JCPOA may be working, yes, but it is a very bad agreement and its effects are devastating.

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Spotlight

**Mahmoud Abbas: The Decline of a Failed Leader**



Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas has publicly rejected the Trump Administration's peace proposal, that has not yet been made public, and, as a pretext, Abbas has said that he does not want to be remembered as a traitor. Once again, Abbas refuses to sit down to negotiate with Israel. Once again, he turns a deaf ear to the possibility of coexistence. And once again he has demonstrated that **Palestinian obstructionism to live with Israel is the main obstacle to peace.**

**Rather than achieving progress in the peace talks, Abbas has always chosen to internationalize the conflict with Israel.** His strategy to attack Israel's legitimacy at international organizations has not brought any beneficial change for the Palestinians on the ground —only more stalemate and deterioration. Abbas has repeatedly stated in his time as president of the PA that he will keep on fueling the delegitimation campaign against Israel in the international arena. It is a pathway that only leads to perpetuate the conflict.

This unfortunate attitude, which has marked the leadership of Abbas for ten years, is also animated by the sabre rattling in al-Fatah, the organization that Abbas heads and that is also the party that governs the Palestinian Authority. On April 30, the Palestinian National Council meets to elect its new executive committee, from which will presumably emerge Abbas's successor. The Palestinian National Council, has not met for a decade; this next meeting is framed within the struggle for the succession of Abbas. The Palestinian leadership continues fighting for power and the preservation of the bureaucratic oligarchy that governs the destinies of the West Bank. **Will Abbas's heir be able to solve once for all the pending task of achieving a fair and lasting peace with Israel?** We honestly hope so. However, the history of Palestinian leaders tends to the opposite. This leadership has not been able to advance the peace process with Israel, nor has it been able to stop Hamas and its intentions of destroying Israel. The reason is clear: lack of will to coexist with Israel.

Nonetheless, **rejecting peace with Israel is not the sole historical error by Abbas.** The Palestinian president has also failed to address the rampant corruption of the Palestinian Authority or to avoid the disaffection of the Palestinian population for his government. The polls give him minimal approval ratings and the rest of his term seems doomed to failure and internal struggles for power in Ramallah. It is power that does not aspire to coexist with Israel, but to perpetuate the stagnation in the peace process.

Abbas could have gone down in history as the courageous leader who sealed lasting peace with Israel. Instead, **he chose a rejectionist position during the peace process and facilitated the hijacking of international organizations to delegitimize Israel. Abbas encouraged martyrdom against Israeli civilians. He kept the corruption networks alive inside the PA and unsuccessfully tried to reconcile with Hamas without requesting the recognition of Israel or to abandon terrorism.**

# FOII'S ACTIVITIES

## MEDIA

### OP-EDS

# WSJ

“**THE WORLD MUST UNITE TO STOP IRAN**”, Jose Maria Aznar and Stephen Harper, *The Wall Street Journal*, March 4

FOII's Board Members **Jose Maria Aznar** and **Stephen Harper** explain why the U.S. and its allies must roll back Iran's aggression and influence throughout the Middle East. ([Read](#)).

## EVENTS



## 2018 AIPAC POLICY CONFERENCE

FOII had a strong presence during the 2018 AIPAC Policy Conference. FOII's Board Members Stephen Harper, John Baird, and John Bolton as well as FOII's Associate Director Davis Lewin, participated in breakout sessions during the conference.

**Stephen Harper** was openly and personally greeted by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during his intervention. **John Baird** participated in a debate on "Israel's Standing in the World Today: Challenges and Opportunities in the Years ahead" together with AIPAC's Director of International Affairs, Stephen Schneider. **Davis Lewin** participated in two sessions: "Israel and Europe: Challenges and Opportunities ahead" with the Deputy Foreign Minister of Hungary and the German Ambassador regarding Anti-Semitism issues and "Israel and the Rise of European Nationalism and the Threat of Terrorism", with the Associate Director of the Henry Jackson Society Douglas Murray and the Director for Counter-Terrorism in the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



*"The JCPOA can perhaps delay Iran's nuclear weapons program for a few years. Conversely, it has virtually guaranteed that Iran will have the freedom to build an arsenal of nuclear weapons at the end of the commitment."*

**Mike Pompeo**

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