



Iran's Deal with the Devil

In the week when the US normalised relations with two of its historic foes – Cuba and Iran, the global media gave wall-to-wall coverage to the deal between the US and Iran, describing it as a historic deal that potentially changes the global political landscape. The accord was announced on Tuesday 14 July by Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and the European Union's Policy Chief Federica Mogherini in a joint statement in the Austrian capital. Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif called the deal a *"win-win"* solution to end *"an unnecessary crisis and open new horizons for dealing with serious problems that affect our international community. I believe this is a historic moment."* US President Barak Obama, in a White House briefing described the deal as: *"Today after two years of negotiation the United States together with the international community has achieved something that decades of animosity has not: a comprehensive long-term deal with Iran that will prevent it from obtaining a nuclear weapon."*

The details of the deal show Iran capitulated to every US demand and in effect abandoned its nuclear programme. Under the terms of the deal, Tehran agreed to remove two-thirds of its centrifuges, reduce its stockpile of enriched uranium to a fraction of what would be needed to make a bomb and halt the use of advanced centrifuges for 10 years. Iran also promised not to build a new heavy water reactor for 15 years and will modify the core of its heavy-water plutonium reactor at Arak, while its spent fuel — a key component of a potential bomb — will be shipped outside of the country. On top of this Iran would allow UN inspectors round-the-clock access to nuclear sites.

The US President confirmed the series of sanctions would be gradually lifted — providing Tehran with access to between \$100 billion and \$150 billion in frozen funds — only after Iran demonstrates it is abiding by its commitments under the agreement and would be reimposed if Iran was caught cheating. He also reiterated that Washington reserved the right to use force to prevent Iran from obtaining a bomb. The US Congress now has 60 days in which to consider the deal, though Obama said he would veto any attempt to block it.

After over a decade of negotiations and after developing a nuclear programme, Iran submitted itself to US terms, not even defending any aspect of its nuclear programme. Despite this agreement taking so long which included lots of extensions, the deal is really the culmination of more than a decade of careful diplomacy, with much of it behind the scenes. This nuclear deal was just one part of US-Iran normalization of relations.

Throughout both the 20th and 21st century Iran and US have maintained ties despite periods of animosity. The Shah was Britain's man in the Middle East and whilst Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini considered the US the devil, Iran always sold oil to the US and never fully cut ties. After the Grand Ayatollah's death and the

emergence of Ali Khamenei, on all the key issues be it Saddam Hussain, the Iraq invasion and the Afghan invasion both the US and Iran worked closely together. But it was the invasion of Iraq which began in 2003 which bled the US dry that the US desperately needed Iran.

When the Arab Spring reached Syria, the US was seriously worried about developments in the Middle East. It was here the US needed Iran to play a central role in extricating the US and saving it from being defeated. Iran responded by making all its proxies join in the US constructed political system in Iraq. This then allowed US forces to concentrate on the insurgency in central Iraq. Sayyid Ali as-Hussayni al-Sistani brought Sadr, Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI) and da'wah factions together to form the United Iraqi Alliance (UIA) that gained a large number of parliamentary seats in the 2005 elections. The group similarly won substantial seats in the 2010 parliamentary elections. Without Iran, the US would never have resolved the quagmire of Iraq. The US and Iran are so close in Iraq that when ISIS overran the Iraqi government in the Anbar province Iranian forces along with Shi'ah militia coordinated air attacks with Iranian ground attacks. But it is in Syria where US-Iranian interests directly converge, both see the al-Assad regime as the future of the country despite the public outcry for his removal. The US has had no problem with Iran propping up Bashar al-Assad as both are in agreement on this. In fact the US and Iran have been in agreement on much of the Middle East for a very long time despite their public rhetoric to the contrary.

Since 1979 Iran gained much support from the global Ummah for its stance against the US and the Jewish entity. Its support for Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Palestine gained it much notoriety when the groups took on the Jewish entity in many wars and made her bleed. But Iran has abandoned the Ummah for its national interests and now sees working with the US as the best way for it to maintain its influence in the region. This has been the dream of many clerics in Iran for decades, despite the constant rhetoric from Tehran. As a regional power, with a guerrilla force in the shape of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Iran is a power that both Saudi Arabia and Israel fear. Iran has every capability to bleed the US dry in the Middle East, but rather than turning the screws against the US and expelling her from the region, Iran's leaders decided to get into bed with the devil herself. The Jewish entity's criticism of the deal centers around it being America's instrument in the Middle East, but now the US has her Persian ally as her main instrument in the Middle East.

The Iranian leaders should remember the US is a capitalist state and she never has permanent friends or allies, an ally today can be an enemy tomorrow and Iran should remember this when the US no longer needs her and abandons her.

Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by

Adnan Khan