Iran – Updates as of Mid-March 2021

The Information Below Was Written or Posted in Early 2021 up to Mid-March 2021

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🡪 Glen will very briefly summarize some of the recent updates starting at the middle of page 2 near the end of the meeting of the Olympia Coalition to Abolish Nuclear Weapons on Thursday March 18.

🡪 Glen will post this document to the “Iran” part of his blog, [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org)**.** Also, see the information I have previously posted to my blog’s “Iran part here: [**https://parallaxperspectives.org/category/international-affairs-see-foreign-policy-and-specific-nations-and-regions/iran**](https://parallaxperspectives.org/category/international-affairs-see-foreign-policy-and-specific-nations-and-regions/iran)

**Background since the 1940s:**

* **This article summarizes U.S. meddling in Iran since 1941:** [**https://www.truthdig.com/articles/americas-sordid-history-of-meddling-in-iran**](https://www.truthdig.com/articles/americas-sordid-history-of-meddling-in-iran)
* **The U.S. and Britain overthrew Iran’s democracy and installed an extremely brutal dictator, the Shah, who ruled with an iron fist – and was heavily supported and armed by the U.S**. – for 26 years until he was overthrown in 1979 by a nonviolent revolution. Iran’s people democratically elected a new prime minister – Mohammad Mossadegh – in 1953. Britain and other Western powers reaped huge profits from the oil that belonged to the Iranian people, who were left poor. Prime Minister Mossadegh took action to nationalize Iranian oil so the Iranian people would benefit from the profits, but the British and American governments did not want that, so the CIA and Britain’s equivalent agency (M16) overthrew the democracy and installed the Shah.
* **The U.S. provided enormous amounts of military weapons – including our most sophisticated jet fighter planes, etc., – to help the Shah brutally dominate Iran’s people.** Meanwhile, the U.S. was losing the Vietnam War, so Nixon and Kissinger changed U.S. foreign policy to vigorously arm and support regional geopolitical powers (such as the Shah) to maintain control in their respective regions so the U.S. would not need to send our own American troops (based on our costly failures in Vietnam). When the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee studied the extent of U.S. weapons sales to Iran, the Committee declared it “out of control.” Finally in 1979 the Iranian people rose up and nonviolently protested in the streets until the Shah left. During those protests, the Shah’s gigantic military used military helicopters provided by the U.S. to fly low through the streets of Teheran and machine-gun people to death. The Iranian people disagreed sharply with the U.S. government but never hated the American people as people. President Jimmy Carter welcomed the Shah to move to the U.S. for medical treatment for his terminal cancer, even though the Iranian people told the U.S. not to do that. This was the immediate prompt for Iranians to hold hostage the American marines who were still guarding the U.S. embassy there.
* **The U.S. government and mainstream media demonized Iran and the Iranian people.**  One TV network began each nightly news program with the somber warning: “America held hostage” and the number of days since the Marines were held hostage. Politicians and media propagandized the American people and poisoned our attitudes toward Iran. That American animosity still continues now, more than 40 years later. When Ronald Reagan defeated President Carter in the 1980 election, Iran **immediately** released the hostages as soon as Reagan was inaugurated in January 1981, because Reagan had secretly cut a deal with Iran’s new hard-line right-wing theocratic government.
* **Compare Iran and the U.S. in terms of militarism:** [**https://parallaxperspectives.org/494-2**](https://parallaxperspectives.org/494-2)
* **Glen produced his September 2013 TV program just a few days after Iran’s election. Two knowledgeable Iranian-American guests explained the history and the current politics.** This background is still useful in helping the U.S. make smarter decisions about Iran. Much of what the US’s news media and politicians say grossly inaccurate, mean-spirited and downright harmful. This TV interview reviews Iran’s history, provides a context for understanding what has really been happening in recent years, corrects some of the misinformation we’ve been hearing for many years, and suggests more constructive ways to promote peace with Iran. Watch the TV interview and/or read a thorough summary of what we said at this link: [**https://parallaxperspectives.org/tv-iran-understanding-the-realities-achieving-peace**](https://parallaxperspectives.org/tv-iran-understanding-the-realities-achieving-peace)

**Recent decades of context for the U.S.’s crisis with Iran:**

* **The context of conflicts among Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Sunni, Shia, and the U.S.:** The U.S.’s animosity toward Iran – and threats of war – continued after the 1979-1981 Iran hostage crisis. When Iran and Iraq fought a war from 1980 to 1988 the Reagan Administration took actions to keep them fighting each other. Reagan provided weapons to help Saddam Hussein’s Iraq fight against Iran. It was the U.S. that provided the poison gas that Saddam Hussein used (and the U.S. later blamed him for using).
* **More context: Two president Bushes waged unjust wars against Iraq:** Let’s understand the context before 1979 and related to both of the Bush wars against Iraq (the older George H.W. Bush and his son George W. Bush). In order to get oil from Saudi Arabia in the early 1970s the Nixon Administration strongly supported Saudi Arabia’s theocratic dictatorship in a number of ways and sold it massive amounts of highly sophisticated military weapons. This continued for decades, and Trump escalated it further. Saudi Arabia is the global headquarters of the main branch of Islam (the Sunni variety), while Iran is predominantly Shia (Islam’s other branch). Traditionally the Sunni and Shia braches oppose each other. (Remember after George W. Bush overthrew Iraq’s government the civil wars in Iraq included fighting between Sunni and Shia groups.) The older Bush suckered Saddam Hussein into attacking Kuwait for oil, and then waged war against Iraq and stationed U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia, Islam’s holy land. Later the elite Saudi nobleman Osama bin Laden said that prompted him to attack the U.S. on September 11, 2001. Ironically, Saddam Hussein had made Iraq a modern secular nation with free education all the way up to the Ph.D. level and equal rights for women. About half of Iraq’s scientists and engineers were women. He kept religion out of government. Iraq’s population is majority Shia (like Iran’s), rather than Sunni (like Saudi Arabia), so when the U.S. overthrew Iraq’s modern secular government, a brutal civil war ensued and Iraq’s new government is Shia-dominated, so the U.S. ironically gave Iran’s heavily Shia theocracy much power over Iraq.
* **Also, Israel’s right-wing governments have been vigorously pushing for a war against Iran.** The U.S. keeps letting Israel shape U.S. foreign policy in the region.
* **This summary of one and a half pages shows how utterly stupid, incompetent and cruel the U.S. foreign policy has been in this region. This horrible foreign policy has been bi-partisan.** Trump did not create the problems, but he did make them worse in the past four years. Joe Biden has a long history of strong hawkishness, and he has appointed many horrible war-hawks to powerful positions in his administration. We can solve the problems only if grassroots people organize to explain the realities to the public, the media and the government – and demand a sensible, compassionate, humane, nonviolent foreign policy.

**Recent information (leading up to early 2021) and petitions to sign:**

* **The U.S. and our heavily armed allies Saudi Arabia and Israel have been threatening war and committing other cruelties against Iran. Iran’s people and government are entirely justified in fearing for their “national security,”** so we need to understand why their voters recently elected hard-liners to protect themselves from the assassinations that Trump has committed there and also from the wars that the U.S. and Israel have been threatening. Recently Iran had enriched some uranium a little bit (far, far, far less than would be needed for an atomic bomb) in order to thumb its nose at Trump.
* **Urge Biden to re-join the JCPOA:** In 2015 President Obama and Iran and other nations (China France, Germany, Russia, and the United Kingdom) negotiated a deal called the **Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action** (**JCPOA**) , which is often called the “Iran Nuclear Deal.” It is a detailed, 159-page agreement with additional agreements attached. See information here: [**www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/JCPOA-at-a-glance**](http://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/JCPOA-at-a-glance) It actually was working well, but some disagreements arose. Trump – in his usual stupid unilateral isolationist way – abruptly pulled the U.S. out of it. When Joe Biden was campaigning for President, he promised to re-join the JCPOA. But instead he appointed a number of horrible war-hawks to powerful positions, and **now Biden has been continuing Trump’s cruel pressure on Iran instead of simply re-joining the JCPOA.**  Trying to add more conditions would only sabotage this peace agreement. Now that President Biden and Secretary of State Blinken are dragging their feet on re-joining the JCPOA, now 70 Democrats are joining with Republicans to sabotage the peace deal. A few days ago 140 congressional representatives – 70 Republicans and 70 Democrats – sent a letter urging the Biden administration to take a “comprehensive approach” to Iran, rather than simply and cleanly re-joining the JCPOA. The so-called “comprehensive approach” is actually code for continuing Trump’s march toward war with Iran. [**CLICK THIS LINK TO SEND AN E-MAIL now to the 70 Democrats to tell them to stop sabotaging diplomacy**](https://www.codepink.org/r?u=CYr2P2_0WnT_72KxuXFZlzMGXhHlEjofTvHNCadA1gKGWM2Ul2LIqzzfvXL7evvMCWTEewGCDNiVbwy1Jr4hKx5_chmOHXDMPlTvdpAGgyI&e=c70f7dd118066ec9d2aaeea3a89007b3&utm_source=codepink&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=70demsforshame&n=5)**:** [**https://oneclickpolitics.global.ssl.fastly.net/messages/edit?promo\_id=11753**](https://oneclickpolitics.global.ssl.fastly.net/messages/edit?promo_id=11753)
* **Tell President Biden to stop dragging his feet on rejoining the Iran deal.** Biden’s hard-line appointees have been convincing Biden to let Trump’s dangerous policies remain in place. More than 30 organizations are urging Biden to IMMEDIATELY re-join the Iran Nuclear Deal (JCPOA). SEE THIS: [**https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/541366-progressives-press-biden-to-rejoin-iran-nuclear-deal**](https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/541366-progressives-press-biden-to-rejoin-iran-nuclear-deal). E-mail Biden through his presidential website, [**www.whitehouse.gov/contact**](http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact)
* **Urge your U.S. Senators to support diplomacy and REFUSE TO SIGN the letter written by Senator Menendez, the top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Republican Senator Lindsay Graham.**  That letter would undermine diplomacy with Iran by setting up IMPOSSIBLE standards for the deal. CLICK THIS LINK: [**https://act.winwithoutwar.org/act/Menendez\_Graham\_Iran\_deal?source=em20210310&t=6&akid=6833%2E372126%2EOIk1pd**](https://act.winwithoutwar.org/act/Menendez_Graham_Iran_deal?source=em20210310&t=6&akid=6833%2E372126%2EOIk1pd)
* **Juan Cole’s January 23, 2021, article is about the “Iran nuclear deal” explains the conflict between President Biden’s moderates and hardliners:** [**https://www.juancole.com/2021/01/moderates-hardliners-reviving.html**](https://www.juancole.com/2021/01/moderates-hardliners-reviving.html)
* **SIGN THIS PETITION** from Feb. 23, 2021, urging Biden to re-join the JCPOA: [**https://www.change.org/p/urge-the-biden-administration-to-rejoin-the-iran-nuclear-deal?utm\_source=share\_petition&utm\_medium=custom\_url&recruited\_by\_id=409b0650-730e-11eb-9e62-110cf24680ce**](https://www.change.org/p/urge-the-biden-administration-to-rejoin-the-iran-nuclear-deal?utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=custom_url&recruited_by_id=409b0650-730e-11eb-9e62-110cf24680ce)
* **I appreciate the work of the National Iranian American Council (NIAC).** They are a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization founded in 2002 to give voice to the Iranian-American community. Other people can participate too. Their website [**www.niacaction.org**](http://www.niacaction.org) provides much reliable information, petitions to sign, and more. On February 18, 2021, they provided answers to some common questions about the JCPOA. SEE: [**https://www.niacouncil.org/news/whats-the-deal-with-the-iran-deal/?emci=b8f847a7-2e72-eb11-9889-00155d43c992&emdi=2a32665a-3b72-eb11-9889-00155d43c992&ceid=200952**](https://www.niacouncil.org/news/whats-the-deal-with-the-iran-deal/?emci=b8f847a7-2e72-eb11-9889-00155d43c992&emdi=2a32665a-3b72-eb11-9889-00155d43c992&ceid=200952)
* **Is Biden risking new conflict with Iran by yielding to Dem Hawks and Neoconservatives?** See this article by Medea Benjamin and Nicholas J.S. Davies published on February 16, 2021: [**https://www.juancole.com/2021/02/conflict-yielding-neoconservatives.html**](https://www.juancole.com/2021/02/conflict-yielding-neoconservatives.html)
* **Now Biden is shying away from rejoining the JCPOA (the “Iran Nuclear Deal”).**  President Biden is backtracking on his commitment to rejoin the international nuclear agreement with Iran—this risks killing the agreement and undermining his broader commitment to diplomacy. This article was published on February 15, 2021: [**https://www.nationofchange.org/2021/02/15/is-biden-committing-diplomatic-suicide-over-the-iran-nuclear-agreement/**](https://www.nationofchange.org/2021/02/15/is-biden-committing-diplomatic-suicide-over-the-iran-nuclear-agreement/)
* **Although Trump and the U.S.’s hawks claimed Iran violated the JCPOA, Iran’s Foreign Minister explained to Biden that it was the U.S. that had violated the JCPOA, so the U.S. has the responsibility to return to it.**  The article begins with this paragraph: “While U.S. President Joe Biden insisted Sunday that Tehran must halt its uranium enrichment program before the U.S. rejoins the Iran nuclear deal, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif countered that it was former President Donald Trump who abandoned the agreement and deprived Iranians of food and medicine—and therefore the onus is on Washington to bring the U.S. back into compliance with the pact by lifting all sanctions on Iran.” The article includes this quotation from Iran’s top diplomat: “If the United States and its partners return to the deal, Iran will reverse its actions. All the actions we are taking are reversible.” This article was published by Common Dreams ([**www.commondreams.org**](http://www.commondreams.org)) on February 08, 2021: [**https://www.commondreams.org/news/2021/02/08/iran-foreign-minister-tells-biden-us-violated-nuclear-deal-so-it-us-has-return?cd-origin=rss&utm\_term=AO&utm\_campaign=Daily%20Newsletter&utm\_content=email&utm\_source=Daily%20Newsletter&utm\_medium=Email**](https://www.commondreams.org/news/2021/02/08/iran-foreign-minister-tells-biden-us-violated-nuclear-deal-so-it-us-has-return?cd-origin=rss&utm_term=AO&utm_campaign=Daily%20Newsletter&utm_content=email&utm_source=Daily%20Newsletter&utm_medium=Email)
* **SIGN THIS PETITION from January 27, 2021 urging Biden to emphasize diplomacy with Iran:** [**https://act.winwithoutwar.org/act/peoples-petition-diplomacy?source=em20210126&t=6&akid=6756%2E372126%2EZ\_dBJW**](https://act.winwithoutwar.org/act/peoples-petition-diplomacy?source=em20210126&t=6&akid=6756%2E372126%2EZ_dBJW)

**If you want additional information from January 2021 or before, contact me.**

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