

# An End to Iran's Nuclear Ambitions Would Be a Big Plus for Global Stability

By Conrad Black

It must be said that at this point that the talks between the United States and Iran are quite promising. The stated goal of President Trump and Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel is that Iran must not have a nuclear military weapon, and it appears likely to be achieved peacefully.

Trump has made it clear that the United States will not hesitate to [use military action](#) to prevent the deployment of nuclear military weapons by Iran and has moved a fleet of [B-2 stealth bombers](#) to the Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia, all of them armed with a penetration capability adequate to obliterate the underground nuclear laboratories of Iran [at Isfahan](#). They have given a hint of their potential destructiveness by hammering the [Houthi proteges](#) of the Iranians in Yemen.



Vehicles are escorted by Italian police at the entrance to the Omani Embassy in Rome where a second round of nuclear talks between Iran and the United States were held on April 19, 2025. *Andrea Solaro/AFP via Getty Images*

There are many people, including most of the Arab powers, who would be delighted to see the Americans or even the Israelis pummel Iran so severely that its primitive and corrupt totalitarian theocracy might collapse, especially if the barracks of the military police that enforces the medieval despotism of the Islamist clergy were thoroughly bombed. But it is to President Trump's credit that he is making a genuine effort to achieve his goal without recourse to such an application of overwhelming force, and so far the talks with Iran taking place in Rome appear to be [making progress](#).

The method now being explored—that the enriched fissile material Iran has already developed be [given to a third country](#), such as Russia—is one that the Obama administration once proposed. The objective is to ensure that Iran does not become a nuclear military power. There is no downside to giving some enriched uranium to the Russians, who already have an [ample supply](#) of it and a substantial nuclear military capability. But if Iran were to become a nuclear military power, there is little question that the same status would be quickly attained by a number of other countries in the Middle

East.

The Iranians do have a legitimate point that the present arms control regime is unfair and fundamentally ineffective. The nuclear-armed powers are a club, and they unctuously tell all other countries in the world that they must not join this club—but it is not a club from which any of them proposes to resign. The United States, Russia, the UK, China, France, India, Pakistan, and Israel are all nuclear powers. And although Pakistan in particular is a politically unstable country, all of them have exercised their nuclear roles responsibly by not plunging into nuclear war or having any accidental detonations. But the pledge to attempt to [achieve disarmament](#) themselves has not been taken seriously, and it is hard to believe that anyone ever thought it would be.

The old Cold War Western allies—the United States, UK, and France—can justly claim that they took up nuclear arms out of deterrence. The Russians and Chinese cannot make the same claim believably, but as a matter of prestige, they had to have such weapons if the Western allies did. India needed such a capability if China had it, and Pakistan needed such a capability if India did. It is impossible for any fair-minded person to doubt that Israel is entitled to such weapons given the mortal threats to the survival of the Jewish people over many centuries, and particularly within the lifetime and recollection of many millions of people, and surrounded as it is by traditional enemies, some of whom are still technically at war with Israel.

While it would be a bonus if the United States and/or Israel could dispose of the appalling Iranian regime—the leading terrorism sponsor in the world—the U.S. administration is right to prefer the non-violent achievement of the objective of a non-nuclear Iran. The president is showing great forbearance—not a quality with which he is widely credited—and contrary to the preferences of the Israeli government, is seeking a non-violent solution. If a deal is made, Iran will lose its ability to deter reprisals against it, and its terrorist proxies Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis will be weakened. Israel, meanwhile, has [already destroyed](#) Iran's anti-aircraft defences. Lacking a nuclear threat, Iran is a

plucked chicken.

There is a valid distinction between Iran and the existing nuclear powers. Of these, only the United States developed an atomic weapon for deliberate military use to finish the Pacific phase of World War II, which was initiated by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor with no notice or warning. Neither the United States nor any of the subsequent nuclear military powers have ever declared any intention of using such a weapon other than as a response to a nuclear attack upon them. While Iran makes a legitimate point about the pious exclusivity of the present nuclear club, it renders itself ineligible for admission to it because of its frequent and plausible threats to attack Israel with nuclear weapons, despite its certain knowledge that Israel would obliterate it in retaliation. It would be a horrendous destruction of human life.

In the early phase of Iran's expressed intent to become a nuclear military power, there was widespread opposition to it, including from the principal European powers. Then-French President Nicolas Sarkozy and British Prime Minister David Cameron and others made very purposeful noises about cooperating to prevent such a development, as did the George W. Bush and Obama administrations in Washington. But as usually happens, the expressions of determination faded into the ludicrous [Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action](#), made in 2015 under the sponsorship of President Obama between Iran and the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council as well as Germany and the European Union. The agreement in effect stipulated a delayed pathway for Iran to enrich uranium to nuclear warhead levels.

President Trump withdrew the United States from this agreement in his first term, and President Biden, despite prodigies of concessions, was unable to find acceptable terms for a return to it, indicating Iran's complete lack of interest in any course except arming itself with the power to be a potentially mortal threat to any state that disagreed with it. Only the actions of the United States and Israel prevent Iran from having a green light from many of the world's most influential

countries to deploy such weapons.

This also plays into the [comprehensive negotiations](#) now underway between the United States and Russia, including bringing an [end to the Ukraine war](#), the normalization of relations between Russia and NATO, and possible agreements on extraction and sales of strategic minerals. More broadly, the aim is to induce Russia out of its present suffocating embrace as a junior [ally of China](#) and back into a constructive relationship with the Western world, where Russia has belonged since the reign of Peter the Great 300 years ago.

All of these factors are under discussion in Rome and we should all wish success to this negotiation, but not quail from a military solution if Iranian inflexibility forces one.

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