

Deputy Secretary of State Blinken's Perpetual Iran Anti-Nuke Machine



Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken

Source: AP

Newly designated Deputy Secretary of State, former Deputy National Security Adviser, Antony "Tony" Blinken testified yesterday before the [House Foreign Affairs Committee](#) chaired by California Republican Congressman, Edward Royce. Royce and Ranking Democratic Member, Elliot Engel of New York, were trying to determine the status of the Administration's P5+1 negotiations on an agreement to rein in Iran's nuclear program. Blinken's boss, Secretary of State Kerry, with the assistance of Energy Secretary [Dr. Ernest Moniz](#) are huddling in Lausanne, Switzerland with Iranian Foreign Minister Zarif and nuclear program head, Ali Akbar Salehi, to reach a political agreement by a self-imposed deadline of March 31st. Moniz and Salehi share an alma mater, [MIT](#), where they both earned doctorates, one in physics and the other in nuclear engineering back in the 1970's. Moniz was an Assistant professor at MIT, while Salehi was in the nuclear engineering program.

The latest press leak indicates that Iran might be given 40% of nuclear fuel enrichment capacity which translates to 6,000 centrifuges. That may be more than ample, Israeli PM Netanyahu, fresh from his Knesset elections victory on March 17th, contends will enable Iran to become a nuclear threshold state, although there are those who contend it may already have achieved that status. There is debate whether any final

Memorandum of Understanding will have a 10 or 25 year sunset term, and whether, Iran's nuclear program is susceptible to so-called verifiable inspections, given evidence to the contrary compiled by the IAEA inspectors.

It was against this background that Tony Blinken provided testimony to the House Foreign Affairs Committee. He roused the skepticism of the house panel with comments that the deal would bar Iran from achieving a nuclear capability in perpetuity. An *AFP* [report](#) on yesterday's hearing noted this exchange:

The Obama administration insisted before skeptical lawmakers Thursday that any deal with Iran would ensure for "perpetuity" that it could not develop nuclear weapons.

A comprehensive accord would also see "phased, proportionate" relief from tough sanctions that have severely constrained Iran's economy, but such relief could be swiftly reversed should the Islamic republic violate any final deal, said Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

Several members of Congress and other critics have warned that the ongoing negotiations between world powers and Tehran would lead to a deal that would sunset after 10 years.

Once the deal ends, critics fear the Islamic republic could once again freely crank up its nuclear program and develop a bomb.

"That is simply not true," Blinken told a hearing of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

"To the contrary, Iran would be prohibited from developing a nuclear weapon in perpetuity – and we would have a much greater ability to detect any effort by Iran to do so."

He said that while some constraints would be lifted after a "significant period," others would last "indefinitely, including a stringent and intrusive monitoring and inspections regime" by the United Nations' International Atomic Energy Agency.

And should Iran violate the agreement and begin a rush to a bomb, a process described as "breakout," Blinken stressed that restrictions on centrifuges and uranium mills would prevent Iran from completing a nuclear bomb for at least a year.

"That would provide us more than enough time to detect and act on any Iranian transgression," he said.

Blinken said Iran would be indefinitely barred under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty from developing or acquiring a nuclear weapon.

Democrats and Republicans alike scoffed at the suggestion that such NPT restrictions would hold back Iran; with committee Chairman Ed Royce warning that Iranians "have been violating those commitments for years."

Lawmakers also pointed to the need to include restrictions on Iran's ballistic missile program in any nuclear deal, as reinforcement against the country using such a delivery system for an atomic bomb.

"The critical question of the possible military dimension of Iran's program... would have to be part of any agreement," Blinken acknowledged.

Blinken's colleague at State, Deputy Undersecretary Wendy Sherman, who has been actively engaged in the P5+1 negotiations, has some relevant experience in dismissing Blinken's assertion that the deal under consideration would bar Iranian' nuclear breakout. Ms. Sherman was part of the Clinton Administration team that put together the executive

agreement in 1994 with North Korea that was also supposed to stop the DPRK's nuclear program by substituting light water reactors. That [agreement](#) was subject to a Congressional hearing. By 2006, North Korea successfully evaded IAEA inspections, produced a nuclear fuel stockpile and tested a device resulting in collapse of the [agreement](#). The Bush Administration stopped fuel oil deliveries to the DPRK.

Last time I looked at Blinker's bio, he had a Columbia Law School degree, not in physics, like Energy Secretary Moniz or Iran negotiator, Salehi, both MIT alumni.

Washington Post columnist, Al Kamen, [drew](#) attention to Blinker's obvious qualification enabling to make his perpetuity comment about a deal to stop Iran's nuclear program. Blinken was apparently a consultant to the HBO series, "House of Cards". Kamen revealed:

Sometimes it's good not to fast-forward through the credits roll. You never know what you'll find.

So the other evening, when the credits came up for episode nine of this season's "House of Cards," this popped up: "Consultant: TONY BLINKEN."

Whoa! As in the deputy secretary of state and former White House deputy national security adviser? That's some pretty heavy-duty consulting power. Is Blinken moonlighting for Kevin Spacey?

Well, not exactly.

Blinken, a modest sort, said in an e-mail that "'consultant' vastly overstated" his role, which amounted to a "few phone calls" perhaps nine months to a year ago. That would have been when he was working in the White House. The calls came from head series writer Beau Willimon and some other writers for the show who wanted to "test the veracity or not of some foreign policy story

lines.”

“At this point, I don’t remember the details or the issues” involved, Blinken said. And, no, he wasn’t paid for the advice. Probably a good thing, because the episode – one of the “Putin segments” – for which he got the credit line involves, even for the “House of Cards,” a wildly implausible shootout in the Jordan River Valley. (We’re not going to say more.)

And, yes, Blinken and wife Evan Ryan, the assistant secretary of state for educational and cultural affairs, are binge-watchers.

[Watch](#) this C-Span video clip of Deputy Secretary of State Blinken being questioned at the March 19, 2015 House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing on Iran nuclear negotiations: