

How the Failed Iran Agreement Will Threaten Israel's Nuclear Strategy

"The safety of the People Shall be the highest law." (Cicero, *De Legibus*[\[2\]](#)) It could also mean taking new steps to challenge an expected barrage of substantially shrill "nonproliferation" demands. At least as long as Barack Obama sits in the White House, such orchestrated demands to join the 1968 NPT, or a so-called "nuclear weapons free zone," will receive enthusiastic endorsements from Washington.

Significantly, however, Israel is not Iran. Israel does not call for Iran's "annihilation." Israel holds its own nuclear weapons and assets for only one reason. That reason is merely to remain "alive" in the midst of still-openly genocidal foes.

For Israel, any well-intentioned compliance with allegedly legal demands for denuclearization would prove intolerable. Even if all pertinent enemy states were to remain non-nuclear themselves, these adversaries, and also their terrorist proxies, could still find themselves in a dramatically improved position to overwhelm Israel. Hezbollah, the Shiite militia run by Tehran, controls more offensive rockets than all of the NATO countries combined. Moreover, Sunni ISIS, already launching rockets into southern Israel from the Egyptian Sinai, could sometime gain access to assorted nuclear materials in Syria. Such access would have to do with the Israeli-destroyed Al Kibar reactor (2007), now under direct control of ISIS forces.

It is easy for Israel's Arab enemies and Iran to sanctimoniously demand a non-nuclear Israel. After all, even if these states were demonstrably willing to remain non-nuclear themselves – and now, after the conspicuously failed

P5+1 agreement, any such willingness must be considered very doubtful – their cumulative conventional, chemical, and biological capabilities could still bring Israel into existential fire, into ice.

Lest anyone forget one of the most basic maxims of war and geopolitics, “mass counts.” Both Iran and the Arabs have *mass*. Israel, smaller than America’s Lake Michigan, has none.

President Obama, who stirringly calls for a world “free of nuclear weapons,” consistently fails to realize that hope is not a strategy. For the region as a whole, nuclear weapons are not the problem *per se*. In the Middle East, that problem remains a far-reaching and unreconstructed Arab/Iranian commitment to excise Israel (literally) from the map.

For Iran and certain others, including Fatah and Hamas components of the aspiring Palestinian state, a cartographic “genocide” has already been implemented. Indeed, on their official maps, nothing is left ambiguous. On these prescriptive coordinates, tangible excisions of Israel represent an expressly anticipated blueprint of divinely-based obligation.

In law, as well as in strategy, war and genocide need not be mutually exclusive. Today, both Palestinian and Iranian maps reveal flagrantly unhidden plans for genocide against “the Jews.” Religiously, these contemplated *crimes against humanity* stem from immutable eschatologies of “sacred” violence. For Israel, of course, the proposed enemy “solution” could be utterly final.

With its nuclear weapons, even while remaining “deliberately ambiguous,” Israel could expectedly deter enemy unconventional attacks, and most large conventional ones. While still in possession of such weapons, Israel could also launch certain cost-effective non-nuclear preemptive strikes against an enemy state’s hard targets – military assets that might otherwise

threaten Israel's annihilation. Without these nuclear weapons, any such still-conventional expressions of anticipatory self-defense could then represent the onset of a much wider and asymmetrically destructive war.

The strategic rationale for this under-explored nuclear argument is easy to explain. Without a recognizable nuclear backup, there could no longer exist any sufficiently compelling threat of an Israeli counter-retaliation. It follows, contrary to the U.S. president's repeatedly-misplaced preferences for global nuclear disarmament, that Israel's nuclear weapons actually represent (1) an incomparably important instrument of regional peace; and (2) a much-needed impediment to regional nuclear war. Moreover, with the impending final failure of American diplomacy vis-à-vis Iranian nuclearization, Saudi-Arabia will almost certainly seek its own nuclear weapons option, a search that could further involve China, Pakistan, or even the United States.

For both Israel and the United States, productive nuclear strategy requires carefully nuanced thought. In his broad blanket proposal for "a world without nuclear weapons," however, President Obama has been thinking openly against nuance, and without any discernible subtlety. To survive into the future, the international community, *contra* Obama, will soon have to make various critical and corrective nuclear distinctions between individual nuclear deterrence postures. In the special case of Israel, this community will need to acknowledge what it has too-long rejected: *The Jewish State's nuclear weapons may ultimately be all that can prevent a calamitous area-wide war.*

However counter-intuitive, nuclear weapons are neither good nor evil in themselves. In some circumstances, they could serve helpfully as needed instruments of stable military deterrence, and not as usable weapons of war. Still, there does exist, under authoritative international law, a residual national right to actually employ nuclear weapons in order to

survive. This exclusively last-resort right is codified at the 1996 *Advisory Opinion* on Nuclear Weapons, an *Opinion* handed down by the U.N.'s International Court of Justice.

Following Washington's *de facto* legitimization of Iranian nuclearization, Israel has more to fear from Tehran. In this connection, if Iran's religious leadership should ever choose to abandon the usual premises of rational behavior in world politics, Jerusalem's exclusively defensive nuclear posture could fail altogether. Nonetheless, even if Iran could sometime become a nuclear suicide-bomber *in macrocosm*, Israel's only rational strategy, moving forward, should remain a continuous enhancement of its core nuclear deterrent.^[1] *Salus populi suprema lex*, derived by Cicero from the *Twelve Tables of Roman Law*.

^[3] See Louis René Beres and General (USAF/ret) John T. Chain, "Could Israel Safely Deter a Nuclear Iran"? *The Atlantic*, 2012. General Chain was Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Strategic Air Command (CINCSAC).

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