

# The Head of the IAEA Says There Is No Going Back to the Original Nuclear Deal

by Hugh Fitzgerald



**What will the Biden Administration do** about the nuclear deal with Iran? Originally, it seemed clear: the new president promised to return, without any changes to the JCPOA, “to the nuclear deal with Iran.” Were this to happen, it would undo much of the good that Trump’s policy had accomplished, by his pulling out of the deal in 2018, re-imposing crippling sanctions on the country – especially by reducing oil sales by 95% – and forcing the Iranian economy into free fall.

But then other voices were heard from those who are scheduled to be high up in Biden’s foreign policy apparatus, and have begun to express doubts about a return to the original deal. Iran has breached so many of its commitments under the deal, by putting some sites off-limits to IAEA inspectors, being

unable to explain the appearance of nuclear material at other sites visited by the inspectors, enriching twelve times the amount of uranium than is permitted under the JCPOA (and at higher levels of purity than agreed). And recently, in the latest example of defiance of the members of the JCPOA, Iran announced it was installing three cascades of advanced centrifuges at its underground nuclear facility at Natanz.

This last violation has greatly alarmed the E3 nations – the U.K., France, and Germany – that condemned the “deeply worrying” plan as being contrary to the nuclear deal. They are even more worried about the Iranian Parliament’s recent passage of a bill demanding that the Islamic Republic suspend all inspections by the nuclear watchdog agency, the IAEA – a bill that President Rouhani promises not to sign but that might be passed again, following the elections in June, when his successor – whom analysts predict will likely be someone far more hard-line than Rouhani – is elected.

The E3 nations are now sounding as if they want the nuclear deal modified, so that it will include limits on ballistic missiles, and address Iran’s aggressive moves, involving a series of proxies and allies, in Yemen (the Houthis), Iraq (the Kata’ib Hezbollah militia), Syria (the Alawite-led army of Bashar Assad), Lebanon (Hezbollah), and Gaza (where Shia Iran supports the Sunnis of Hamas against Israel). This is a welcome, and unexpected change. Perhaps the alarm expressed by both Israel and the Gulf Arabs is finally penetrating.

The IAEA’s head wants to make sure that there is not simply a return to the 2015 deal, but that all of Iran’s violations, including its larger-than-permitted store of enriched uranium, and the cascades of advanced centrifuges – are reversed. That will require a new agreement, not a return to the original one from 2015: The report is here: “IAEA chief: Biden must first focus on reversing Iran’s nuclear progress,” [Jihad Watch](#).