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HAS THE GENEVA ACCORD ALREADY--SO TO SPEAK--BOMBED? AND IS AN ALMOST-BOMB AS BAD AS A REAL ONE? AND IS GIVING "DIPLOMACY A CHANCE" HERE EQUIVALENT TO APPEASEMENT?

N.B.: Sunday, Feb. 9, 2014, CIJR is pleased to present the First Sabina Citron Annual International Conference: *Approaching Nuclear Showdown? Israel, Iran and the US after Geneva* (Lodzer Centre Congregation, 12 Heaton Street, Toronto) for more information contact CIJR at 1-855-303-5544 –ed.

As the US continues diplomatic relations with fundamentalist Iran, Israel continues to see the Islamist regime and its nuclear program as its primary threat. Additionally, Iranian-sponsored Hezbollah and the worsening Syrian civil war are likely to plunge the Jewish state into direct conflict with Lebanon, extremist Sunni cells in Syria, Iraq and Gaza Strip, to say nothing of the ongoing terrorist threat to the Middle East's only democracy.

The *Canadian Institute for Jewish Research*, Canada's leading independent pro-Israel, community/student-oriented academic think-tank, invites you to hear an outstanding array of speakers, giving their perspectives on the threat of fundamentalist Iran's nuclear program to the Middle East and the world. *CIJR*, with the support of strong community partners such as: the Speakers' Action Group, the Canada-Israel Friendship Association, Israel Truth Week, the Lodzer Centre Congregation and the Canadian Patriotic Society, presents: **Professor David Bensoussan**, University of Quebec, *CIJR Academic Council* and a member of the *Cross-Cultural Roundtable on the Security of Canada*, **Lawrence Solomon**, author and *Financial Post* columnist, **Sayeh Hassan**, noted Iranian born pro-democracy activist, **Jonathan Dahoah-Halevi**; former Lieutenant Colonel Intelligence, IDF, editor *Shalom Toronto* & Fellow, *Jerusalem Centre for Public Affairs*.

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[Iran Mocks President Obama by Honoring Mughniyeh:](#) Elliott Abrams, *Council on Foreign Relations*, Jan. 14, 2014, 2013 — President Obama has a full court press under way to stop Congress from passing new sanctions legislation that could—could, not will—impose sanctions on Iran one year from now if negotiations break down or Iran cheats.

[New Iran Agreement Includes Secret Side Deal, Tehran Official Says:](#) Paul Richter, *Los Angeles Times*, Jan. 13, 2014 — Key elements of a new nuclear agreement between Iran and six world powers are contained in an informal, 30-page text not yet publicly acknowledged by Western officials, Iran's chief negotiator said Monday.

[In Iran We Trust?:](#) Gabriel Schoenfeld, *Weekly Standard*, Feb. 10, 2014 — President Obama is rushing to implement the six-month interim agreement with the Islamic Republic of Iran that went into effect last week. Together with five other world powers, he is now working to negotiate a long-term agreement aimed at keeping Iran from developing a nuclear bomb.

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WHAT'S WORSE THAN AN IRANIAN BOMB? AN IRANIAN ALMOST-BOMB

Gary C. Gambill

[National Post](#), Jan. 8, 2014

For all of their sharp disagreements over the particulars of foreign policy, everyone in Washington seems to agree on one thing — that the overarching objective of American policy toward Iran should be, as President Barack Obama frequently intones, to "prevent Iran from building a nuclear weapon." They've got it wrong. The primary objective of American policy must be a sweeping degradation of Iran's nuclear industrial infrastructure, preferably by diplomatic means, even if the resolute pursuit of this goal provokes Iran into rashly attempting the construction of a bomb — indeed, especially if it does so.

Bear in mind that Iran hasn't been rushing to build a bomb. Rather, it has been working steadily to increase its breakout capacity — the ability to successfully produce a nuclear weapon on short notice, if it made a mad dash to do so. According to the latest report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Iran has accumulated 7,154 kg of under-5% low-enriched uranium (LEU) and 196 kg of near-20% medium enriched uranium (MEU), altogether enough to build six or seven bombs if enriched further to weapons grade (i.e., about 90%). With over 18,000 centrifuges installed at the Natanz and Fordow facilities, Iran's breakout time is currently four to six weeks — which is to say, that is how long it would take to produce a sufficient quantity of weapons grade uranium (WGU) for its first bomb, according to an October 24 report by the Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS), plus whatever extra time is needed to construct a serviceable explosive device. Iran's paramount goal is to inch as close as possible to the finish line without triggering a military response, then reach a permanent settlement with the P5+1 (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, plus Germany) that preserves as much of its breakout capacity as possible in exchange for an end to sanctions that have hobbled its economy.

Achieving an internationally-legitimized nuclear threshold status has immense strategic advantages for the Islamic Republic, above and beyond the ability to rapidly weaponize at a few months' notice: Fear of provoking Tehran to cross this final threshold likely will discourage the international community from slapping on future sanctions for sponsoring terrorism, bloody proxy interventions in the region (including Syria), human rights violations, and Iran's various other rogue-state activities. And Iranian threshold status is just as bad as a bomb in instigating a regional nuclear arms race. Phase one of this strategy had largely run its course by the time Iran began secretly negotiating with Obama administration officials in 2013, and Iran's enrichment efforts had slowed considerably. Moving substantially closer to the nuclear goal line (e.g., by accumulating sufficient MEU to build a bomb without having to enrich LEU all the way up to weapons grade) would have resulted in even more damaging sanctions and risked provoking a war. The Iranians now are ready to stop pushing the envelope because they already are in the position they want.

The Joint Plan of Action (JPA) — the name of the November, 2013 accord that would temporarily freeze Iran's nuclear program — effectively rewards Iran for doing something that was already in its interests. Slightly reducing enriched uranium stockpiles and accepting modestly expanded inspections to verify its "voluntary measures" (as Iranian obligations are described in the text) enable Tehran to park its nuclear progress, eliminate the perceived threat of an imminent breakout, and thereby immunize itself from the

threat of Israeli attack while negotiation of a final status agreement drags on, all while enjoying limited sanctions relief and an upfront P5+1 promise to allow a "mutually defined enrichment program."

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry's frequent admonitions that, absent the JPA, Iran would "rush towards a nuclear weapon" are absurd. Iran won't seriously consider a breakout unless or until its leaders are prepared to absorb Israeli, and possibly American, air strikes and live with a far more debilitating sanctions regime — or until one or both of these threats fade away. Thankfully, we're not there yet. But if a firm and unyielding international commitment to reduce Iran's breakout capacity happens to increase the possibility of a breakout attempt in the short-term, so be it. We should all be so lucky if Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei is foolhardy enough to launch a breakout prematurely and unite the world against his regime. Even if he manages to squeeze a weapon's worth of fissile material out of what's left of Iran's smoldering enrichment facilities, I like the international community's chances of ensuring that it is destroyed or relinquished once the ayatollahs have shown their true colors.

But five years from now, if the JPA forms the basis of a permanent accord, all bets are off. The nightmare scenario isn't that the Iranians rush to weaponize; it is that they are allowed to perch on or near the precipice of doing so until a day when the sanctions are lifted and Western desire for Iranian co-operation in Syria, Lebanon, and the Palestinian territories is at a premium. So enough talk about preventing Iran from building a bomb, a phrase that too easily conjures to mind hypothetical scenarios in which Tehran accepts an enrichment freeze and omniscient inspections regime, while keeping most of its present nuclear infrastructure intact. Averting the construction of a nuke, at the expense of doing little to roll back the threat of a nuclear Iran, virtually guarantees that the mullahs will eventually cross the finish line in force.

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**IRAN MOCKS PRESIDENT OBAMA
BY HONORING MUGHNIYEH**

Elliott Abrams

[Council on Foreign Relations](#), Jan. 14, 2014

President Obama has a full court press under way to stop Congress from passing new sanctions legislation that could—could, not will—impose sanctions on Iran one year from now if negotiations break down or Iran cheats. The idea seems to be that passage of the bill would signal mistrust of Iran, or would break the spell of sincerity being cast at the negotiating table. But what is Iran doing while the president woos legislators? Laughing at us all. Yesterday, Iran's foreign minister—one of the reputed moderates in the Rouhani camp—was in Beirut and laid a wreath at the grave of Imad Mughniyeh.

Mughniyeh was the Hezbollah terrorist who had killed more Americans than any other man until the attack on 9/11. Mughniyeh was involved in bombing the Marine barracks in Beirut, the bombings of US embassies, the torture and killing of CIA station chief William Buckley in Beirut, the hijacking of TWA 847 and the murder of Navy diver Robert Stethem—among other acts of terror. He was also indicted in Argentina for the bombing of the Israeli embassy and Jewish community center in Buenos Aires. So what does the urbane Zarif do when in Beirut? He lays a wreath at Mughniyeh's grave; Reuters has published the photo.

It is obvious that while we are supposed to freeze any Congressional action lest we upset the sensitive Iranians, they plan to mock the President and indeed the United States. We are to walk on eggshells; they honor a terrorist who murdered hundreds of Americans. (And more: last week Iran shipped weapons to rebels in Bahrain.) The administration's reaction to all this is to insist with greater and greater heat that Congress must not act, and to cast aspersions on those members who back the legislation.

This dishonors those whose lives were taken by Mughniyeh, but it does more: it suggests to Iran that the administration is now hostage to the nuclear negotiations. For the Obama administration, the talks MUST succeed and nothing will be permitted to get us off that track. This is dangerous, freeing Iran not only to honor a terrorist who murdered Americans and to give greater backing to terrorism today, but ultimately to cheat on the nuclear deal as well—under the logical assumption that the Obama administration will not see evidence it does not want to see and that would turn its diplomatic achievement into dust.

But the administration may be sowing the seeds that will kill its own deal down the road, if and when Iranian cheating is discovered. A weak American posture, a suggestion that no Iranian actions will be taken seriously and that the administration is totally committed to keeping this deal under all circumstances, is a formula for trouble down the road. It is exactly contrary to the message that we should be sending Iran today.

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**NEW IRAN AGREEMENT INCLUDES SECRET SIDE DEAL,
TEHRAN OFFICIAL SAYS**

Paul Richter

[Los Angeles Times](#), Jan. 13, 2014

Key elements of a new nuclear agreement between Iran and six world powers are contained in an informal, 30-page text not yet publicly acknowledged by Western officials, Iran's chief negotiator said Monday. Abbas Araqchi disclosed the existence of the document in a Persian-language interview with the semi-official *Iranian Students News Agency*. The new agreement, announced over the weekend, sets out a timetable for how Iran and the six nations, led by the United States, will implement a deal reached in November that is aimed at restraining Iran's nuclear ambitions.

When officials from Iran and the world powers announced that they had completed the implementing agreement, they didn't release the text of the deal, nor did they acknowledge the existence of an informal addendum. In the interview, Araqchi referred to the side agreement using the English word "nonpaper," a diplomatic term used for an informal side agreement that doesn't have to be disclosed publicly. The nonpaper deals with such important details as the operation of a joint commission to oversee how the deal is implemented and Iran's right to continue nuclear research and development during the next several months, he said. Araqchi described the joint commission as an influential body that will have authority to decide disputes. U.S. officials have described it as a discussion forum rather than a venue for arbitrating major disputes.

White House Press Secretary Jay Carney said Monday that the text of the implementing agreement would be released to lawmakers. He said the six parties were weighing how much of the text they could release publicly. Asked late Monday about the existence of the informal nonpaper, White House officials referred the question to the State Department. A State Department comment wasn't immediately available. [Updated 8:45 p.m. Jan. 13: A State Department spokeswoman, Marie Harf, denied later Monday that there was any secret agreement. "Any documentation associated with implementation tracks completely with what we've described," she said. "These are technical plans submitted to the International Atomic Energy Agency," the United Nations' nuclear watchdog agency. "We will make information available to Congress and the public as it becomes available," Harf said.]

Ray Takeyh, an Iran specialist at the *Council on Foreign Relations*, said Iran and the other six countries may have written the nonpaper to record understandings that they didn't want to release publicly. The governments may plan to release "just a short text, with broad principles and broad strokes," Takeyh said.

The Nov. 24 deal between Iran and the six powers – the U.S., Britain, France, Russia, China and Germany -- aims to freeze Iran’s nuclear progress for six months. During that period, the two sides will try to negotiate a longer-term deal aimed at ensuring that Tehran’s nuclear program remains peaceful. The agreement has come under fire in Iran and the United States from critics who contend it is harmful to their side. In his interview, Araqchi touched on the sensitive issue of how much latitude Iran will have to continue its nuclear research and development. U.S. officials said Sunday that Iran would be allowed to continue existing research and development projects and with pencil-and-paper design work, but not to advance research with new projects. Araqchi, however, implied that the program would have wide latitude. “No facility will be closed; enrichment will continue, and qualitative and nuclear research will be expanded,” he said. “All research into a new generation of centrifuges will continue.”

The research and development issue has been an important one for many U.S. lawmakers, who fear that Iran will try to forge ahead with its nuclear program while the negotiations are underway. At an administration briefing for senators Monday, members of both parties raised concerns about the centrifuge research issue, aides said. President Obama on Monday again hailed the implementing agreement and appealed to Congress not to impose new sanctions on Iran, for fear of driving the country from the bargaining table. "My preference is for peace and diplomacy, and this is one of the reasons why I've sent the message to Congress that now is not the time for us to impose new sanctions; now is the time for us to allow the diplomats and technical experts to do their work," Obama said. "What we want to do is give diplomacy a chance and give peace a chance."

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IN IRAN WE TRUST?

Gabriel Schoenfeld

[Weekly Standard](#), Feb. 10, 2014

President Obama is rushing to implement the six-month interim agreement with the Islamic Republic of Iran that went into effect last week. Together with five other world powers, he is now working to negotiate a long-term agreement aimed at keeping Iran from developing a nuclear bomb. He regards his opening to Iran as a signature achievement of his presidency and has proudly declared that diplomacy opened a path to “a future in which we can verify that Iran’s nuclear program is peaceful and that it cannot build a nuclear weapon.” If we assume that negotiations do not collapse and some sort of long-term accord is struck, there will still be thorny questions. A preeminent one concerns Iranian compliance. How much confidence can we have that the ayatollahs will not press ahead with their nuclear program in clandestine facilities, as they have done in the past? And if they do press ahead, how much confidence can we have that our intelligence agencies will catch them?

Obama’s faith that “we can verify” Iranian compliance glides over the fact that the U.S. track record in unmasking covert nuclear programs is checkered at best. This is not because our intelligence agencies are incompetent—although sometimes they are—but because the task is exceptionally hard. Just last week, a three-year study by a Pentagon subunit, the Defense Science Board, concluded that U.S. intelligence agencies “are not yet organized or fully equipped” to detect when foreign powers are constructing nuclear weapons or adding to existing arsenals. What is more, their ability to find “small nuclear enterprises designed to produce, store, and deploy only a small number of weapons” is “either inadequate, or more often, [does] not exist.”

Past intelligence lapses in the nuclear realm go back to the dawn of the atomic age and include a failure to foresee the first Soviet A-bomb test in 1949, the first Soviet H-bomb test in 1953, and the first Indian nuclear test in 1974. After the first Gulf war, the U.S. intelligence community was astonished to learn that Iraq was only months away from putting the final screw in a nuclear device. In the run-up to the second

Gulf war, the CIA blundered in the opposite direction, declaring with high confidence—“a slam dunk” in CIA director George Tenet’s notorious phrase—that Saddam Hussein was developing nuclear weapons. He was not. More recently, North Korea constructed a uranium enrichment facility that, despite intense scrutiny by American intelligence, went unnoticed until the North itself chose to reveal it.

The case of Syria is especially pertinent to our efforts to monitor Iran. By the late 1990s, U.S. intelligence detected glimmerings that Syria might be embarking on some sort of nuclear project. But the agency had trouble making sense of the evidence it was gathering. It perceived that North Korea was helping Syria with a joint venture involving North Korean nuclear experts, but as a senior U.S. intelligence official explained in a briefing, we “had no details on the nature or location of the cooperative projects.” By 2003, U.S. intelligence had concluded that the activity involved work at sites “probably within Syria,” but they “didn’t know exactly where.” The fog of intelligence had set in: “We had this body of evidence, kind of almost like a cloud of, boy, there is something going on here but we can’t get a whole lot of precision about it.”

By 2005, the United States had made more progress in determining what was transpiring. Satellite photos revealed a “large unidentified building under construction” set in a canyon in eastern Syria near the Euphrates River at a juncture called al Kibar. But American intelligence analysts could not say much more. All they had was images of a structure that was “externally complete,” but it was “hard to figure out, looking at that building, what its purpose is.” One problem was that “it certainly didn’t have any observable, externally observable characteristics that would say, oh, yeah, you got yourself a nuclear reactor here—things like a massive electrical-supply system, massive ventilation, and most importantly a cooling system.” Another problem was that though the structure closely resembled North Korea’s plutonium reactor at Yongbyon, America’s highly skilled photo-interpreters could not connect the dots between the two facilities. The oversight was not their fault; the Syrians had erected curtain walls and a false roof to disguise the building’s shape and conceal typical features of a reactor. The multibillion-dollar, ultra-high-tech tools of U.S. intelligence were foiled by one of the most low-cost and ancient techniques of warfare: camouflage.

Only in 2007, just as the reactor was ready to be loaded with uranium fuel, did U.S. intelligence conclude that Syria had built a gas-cooled, graphite-moderated reactor. It reached this judgment not by dint of its own collections efforts but thanks to incontrovertible evidence provided by Israel: photographs of the building’s interior. Under our eyes but without our seeing, the Syrians had come breathtakingly close to possessing an operational generator of the nuclear bomb ingredient plutonium. “This was a significant failure on the part of U.S. intelligence agencies,” writes former defense secretary Robert Gates in his new memoir. Gates notes that “Syria for years had been a high-priority intelligence target for the United States” and that “early detection of a large nuclear reactor under construction in a place like Syria is supposedly the kind of intelligence collection that the United States does superbly well.” The failure clearly shook Gates and led him to ask President Bush: “How can we have any confidence at all in the estimates of the scope of the North Korean, Iranian, or other possible programs?”

That was the right question to ask in 2007 and it remains the right question to ask about Iran today. It is especially significant that the CIA was undaunted by its own lapse. After Israel presented the United States with photographs of the interior of the building at al Kibar, the CIA told President Bush that while it now had high confidence that the structure was a nuclear reactor, it still had low confidence that Syria was engaged in a project to develop nuclear weapons. The reason for the low confidence estimate: It had scoured Syria and not been able to locate or identify any other components of a Syrian nuclear program. This was not a conclusion without consequences. In the wake of the WMD intelligence fiasco that precipitated the second Gulf war, President Bush was reluctant to strike the Syrian reactor without a rock-solid CIA judgment behind him. Israel was not so reluctant. It destroyed the reactor in an air raid on September 6, 2007.

[To Read the Full Article Click the Following [Link](#) –ed.]

ON TOPIC

[Obama and Iran in Business](#): Editorial, *Jerusalem Post*, Feb. 1, 2014 — The early bird really does catch the worm and, mindful of that, European firms are rushing with headlong alacrity to do deals with Iran

[The Internal Iranian Struggle in the Aftermath of the Geneva Nuclear Agreement](#): Lt. Col. (ret.) Michael Segall, *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs*, Jan.-Feb, 2014 —The interim nuclear agreement between Iran and the P5+1, and subsequent assessments both in the West and in Iran about “winners and losers,” have become a focus of fierce domestic controversy in Iran between the conservatives and Revolutionary Guard on one side, and President Hassan Rouhani, the nuclear negotiating team, and those considered the reformist camp on the other

[Using Cold War Tactics to Confront Iran](#): Daniel Pipes, *Washington Times*, Jan. 8, 2014—As Americans seek to find an alternative to the stark and unappetizing choice between acceptance of Iran's rabid leadership having nuclear weapons or pre-emptively bombing its nuclear facilities, one analyst offers a credible third path.

[A Raid on Iran?](#): Uri Sadot, *Weekly Standard*, Dec. 30, 2013—As world powers debate what a comprehensive nuclear deal with Iran should look like, Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu continues to maintain that Israel is not bound by the interim agreement that the P5+1 and Iran struck in Geneva on November 24.

[The Post-Khamenei Era](#): Ramin Parham & Saeed Ghasseminejad, *Jerusalem Post*, Jan. 26, 2014—A new Iran is emerging. New elites will arise. The battle has begun. Will the West be part of the problem or the solution?

[From Shah to Supreme Leader](#): Laura Secor, *Foreign Affairs*, Jan-Feb. 2014—There is something irresistible about the story of Iran's last shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.