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### May 11, 2018: Another Mistake by President Trump

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Title: Another Mistake by President Trump

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5/11/2018--Readers of this blog are aware of my opinion of the disastrous tax cut that is increasing the national debt, raising oil prices and unsettling the market. The tax cut is costing me a lot of money and will cost me more money in the future. The tax cut was a mistake.

Now we come to a new mistake. President Trump is taking the US out of the Iranian nuclear agreement. He can do this because the agreement was not a treaty and whatever US international commitments this breaks are within the President's authority to break. Basically, that kind of international law is not binding.

The objections to the agreement were twofold--and I say that because the Iranians were by all accounts not violating the agreement. Iran had stopped all development of a nuclear weapon, as promised. So, no one can claim that the US is reneging because Iran violated the terms of the agreement.

The first reason is that in some number of years--ten or fifteen depending on how one does the numbers--Iran would no longer be bound not to pursue a nuclear weapon.

This reason is asinine. After all, if there is no agreement, Iran is free to pursue a weapon now. Yes, we can attack Iran to prevent that, but we could do that in ten years also.

The second reason, which I hope is the actual motivation for Netanyahu, since he is knowledgeable about the world, is that the agreement allows Iran to pursue all the other bad behavior that Iran is currently pursuing--from ballistic missiles to proxy war fighting in Syria that directly threatens Israel. Plus, by legitimating the regime and giving the regime access to more funds in various ways, the agreement actually enhances Iran's capacity to pursue these terrible aims.

In other words, all the agreement ever did was prevent Iran from obtaining a bomb. The agreement did not go to the heart of the problem of Iran's conduct and aims.

This criticism is descriptively accurate. The Iranian agreement was premised on the view that any other bad behavior by Iran was secondary and would be made far more dangerous if, in addition to acting this way, Iran had a bomb. The agreement also assumed that progress toward an Iranian bomb would lead to a military confrontation between Iran and some combination of Israel, the US and Saudi Arabia. That military confrontation was judged to be more dangerous than the conduct Iran is currently pursuing, which was judged not to be likely to lead to all-out war.

This criticism is accurate but misguided. The people who brought us this deal were wiser than those opposing it. Their calculations were correct.

The best case scenario now would be for the Europeans and China to create banking options that render US sanctions irrelevant in order to give Iran an incentive to continue its adherence to the agreement despite the US reneging on the deal. That alternative would have the added

advantage to the world of weakening Donald Trump's capacity to destabilize things. I feel bad hoping for an alternative that will harm my country, but peace is better than war. If this happens, however, the US will be crippling itself economically.