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Obama's Legacy, a Nuclear Iran

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There is little doubt that Barak Obama deems the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) of July 2015 to be his crowning foreign policy achievement and an important pillar of his presidential legacy. To his mind, the deal is a shining nonproliferation success story achieved via peaceful diplomacy and an important catalyst to improving decades-long, moribund U.S.-Iranian relations.

But, Obama's assessment is wrong. The JCPOA has many flaws and weaknesses, and it is important to assess the president's role in the process that produced this dubious deal: What happened on the ground; how Obama's perceptions of nuclear disarmament colored his attitudes toward Iran, and the tactics he used to marginalize criticism and mobilize support for a flawed deal at the domestic level. It is equally important to examine to what lengths the president went in order to protect his problematic deal after it was presented, and at what cost. What legacy on Iran has Obama left for the next administration?

The Road to the JCPOA

In early April 2009, shortly after entering the White House, Obama made his first major foreign policy speech in Prague where he unveiled his agenda for advancing the goal of global nuclear disarmament.[1] While his initial steps in this direction were taken primarily at the global level,[2] in autumn 2009—after Tehran had been caught red-handed constructing a hidden enrichment facility at Fordow[3]—Obama made his first attempt to conclude a partial nuclear agreement with Iran in the context of a "fuel deal" offered by the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council and Germany (P5+1). The offer was that 75-80 percent of Iran's then-stockpile of low enriched uranium would be shipped abroad and turned into the fuel plates that the Iranians said they needed to run the civilian Tehran Research Reactor.[4]

For full article, see:

http://www.meforum.org/6561/obama-legacy-a-nuclear-iran