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Iran Matters

The Significance of Hassan Rouhani's Reelection as President of Iran

Author: Ephraim Kam / June 06, 2017

Hassan Rouhani's reelection as president of Iran by an impressive margin was not a given. There were good reasons for suspecting he might be defeated. He had tough, powerful opponents, such as the radical wing of the regime, including the Revolutionary Guards, and the religious establishment. The Basij militias, subordinate to the Revolutionary Guards, could have exploited their widespread deployment in the country to bring masses to the ballot boxes. As is his wont, Supreme Leader Khamenei did not express explicit support for any of the candidates, but expressed displeasure with some aspects of Rouhani's policy. According to common assessments, he supported the conservative candidate Ibrahim Raisi. Moreover, while the signing of the nuclear agreement, which most of the public supported, as did Khamenei, was mostly attributed to Rouhani, the president was roundly criticized by his rivals for failing to lift all the sanctions, and improve the economic conditions.

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Ephraim Kam served as a colonel in the Research Division of IDF Military Intelligence until 1993, when he joined the Jaffee Center. Positions he held in the IDF included assistant director of the Research Division for Evaluation and senior instructor at the IDF's National Defense College. He specializes in security problems of the Middle East, strategic intelligence, and Israel's national security issues. His book Surprise Attack: The Victim's Perspective was published by Harvard University Press and was awarded the 1988 prize for best book on intelligence matters from the National Intelligence Study Center, Washington, D.C. He is also the author of From Terror to Nuclear Bombs: The Significance of the Iranian Threat (2004) and A Nuclear Iran: What Does it Mean, and What Can be Done (2007).

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