

Are we witnessing a JCPOA redux?

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The justification for the 40-days of war with Iran, in a large part, turns on the question of whether or not it will achieve a better result than the 2015 Iran deal, known as the JCPOA. If it does, Trump will have vindicated his decade-long position that he could make a better deal. If it doesn't, he will have proven that Obama's cautious and accommodating diplomacy was ultimately wiser and more realistic.

Many of the key details remain unclear but the answer to this question can be assessed by comparing the two situations as they currently stand.

The first critical question is what will become of Iran's enriched uranium. The JCPOA saw Iran relinquish almost its entire stockpile of enriched uranium, essentially resetting the clock. This was the primary achievement of the 2015 deal. In the current deal, Trump is still insisting that Iran relinquish its entire stockpile of what is assessed to be the 440 kg of 60% enriched material. But what of the other 9 tons of 20% and 5% enriched uranium? This remains unclear.

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