Hit the Houthis but eviscerate Tehran

written by David M. Weinberg | 25.03.2025

For 14 months, the Biden administration let the Houthis savage international shipping lanes through the Red Sea and Suez Canal and attack Israel and Saudi Arabia without sufficient response. So it is good that America is finally acting, under US President Donald Trump's leadership, to eliminate Houthi missiles and air bases in Yemen.

More importantly, Trump said this week that he would hold Iran responsible for any attacks conducted by its Houthi proxy regime.

"Every shot fired by the Houthis will be looked upon, from this point forward, as being a shot fired from the weapons and leadership of IRAN, and IRAN will be held responsible and suffer the consequences, and those consequences will be dire!" the president wrote on his Truth Social platform.

He then sent a letter (via the Emiratis) to "Supreme Leader" Ayatollah Ali Khamenei of Iran with a two-month deadline for a deal to end Iran's nuclear bomb and ballistic missile programs. US National Security Advisor Mike Waltz specified that the Islamic Republic must "hand over and give up" on all elements of its nuclear program, including missiles, weaponization, and uranium enrichment.

Iran's response? Khamenei said that Tehran would not be bullied into talks by "excessive demands and threats" from the US. He called Trump's offer for talks "a deception aimed at misleading public opinion." To boot, he once again called the Holocaust a "myth" and a "fictitious event" – a theme to which he frequently, obsessively returns – something that exposes his annihilationist-toward-Israel mindset.

I find that foreign leaders and officials, even those who specialize in the Middle East, truly are not aware of the scope of Iranian muckraking and troublemaking in the region. Generally, they know that there are bad actors at play out there, from al-Qaeda and ISIS to Hezbollah, but they don't have a comprehensive picture of Iranian belligerence and ambition.

They often wrongly assume that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, then-president Barack Obama's nuclear deal with Iran, is still in place, shunting concerns about Tehran to the backburner. Nor do they know that this October, Obama's "snapback" mechanism for sanctions on Iran expires, giving the Islamic Republic a "legitimate" path to a nuclear bomb.

Some North American and European leaders prefer to pretend that Israel is exaggerating the menace of Iran. Therefore, instead of investing thought and effort in confronting Iran's tectonic threat to Middle Eastern and global stability, they focus on a range of secondary regional issues.

These range from humanitarian relief for Palestinians in Gaza to settlements in Judea and Samaria and stabilization of the new regime in Syria. In pursuit of a bit of "balance" in their foreign policies, they might even feign some interest in the fate of Israeli hostages held by Hamas.

These are important issues but a sideshow to the urgency of halting Iran's aggressive march across the Middle East. In fact, pushing back against Tehran is the linchpin of a necessary regional reset, the fulcrum for ameliorating most flashpoints in the region.

So, for those who have not been paying sufficient attention (or, again, for those who allege that Israel is exaggerating the Iranian threat), here is a summary of the treacherous Iranian record.

Iran's overarching revolutionary ambitions

Iran does not hide its overarching revolutionary ambitions: to destroy Israel, to subdue any pro-Western states in the Middle East and dominate the region, and to export its brand of radical Islamism globally. Tehran constantly threatens Jerusalem with war and eventual destruction.

Khamenei regularly refers to the Jewish state as a "cancerous tumor" in the Middle East that must be removed and speaks of the complete liberation of Palestine (meaning the destruction of Israel) through holy jihad.Iran has sought to carve out a corridor of control – a Shi'ite land bridge – stretching from the Arabian ("Persian") Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea, including major parts of Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon, under the control of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps

and its Quds Force, various Shi'ite militias, and Hezbollah.

This corridor has given Iran a broad strategic base for aggression across the region and has deterred Israel from operating against Iran.

Iran equipped Hezbollah with an arsenal of over 150,000 missiles and rockets aimed at Israel and supplied Hamas with the arms and rockets that fueled four significant military confrontations with Israel over the past decade.Fortunately, over the past year, much has changed.

Israel has operated to significantly defang and decapitate Hezbollah. The fall of the Assad regime in Syria to Sunni forces has weakened Iran's Shi'ite arc across the region, too. And in the wake of Hamas's October 2023 invasion of southern Israel, the IDF has moved to destroy the terror group's military capabilities and end its rule in Gaza, a difficult campaign that is still underway and probably won't be completed unless and until Tehran is subdued.

Iran is fomenting subversion in Middle Eastern countries that are Western allies, including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Jordan. It is particularly focused on destabilizing the Hashemite regime in Jordan to gain access to Israel's longest border and, from there, to penetrate Israel's heartland.

The mullahs of Tehran are behind the radical Islamic groups in Judea and Samaria and terrorist infrastructure with tons of weaponry and cash that are fueling violence against Israel – an infrastructure currently being exposed and destroyed by the IDF.

Iran is sponsoring terrorism against Western, Israeli, and Jewish targets around the world, including unambiguous funding, logistical support, planning, and personnel for terrorist attacks that span the globe, from Buenos Aires to Burgas. The Islamic Republic maintains an active terrorist network of proxies, agents, and sleeper cells worldwide.

Tehran is rapidly approaching full nuclear military status, with uranium enrichment and bomb-assembly facilities buried in near-impenetrable deep underground bunkers.

According to the IAEA, Iran has enriched uranium to almost-bomb-ready levels (60% and 84%, which are very close to the 90% level necessary for a nuclear

weapon), with its stock of refined uranium hexafluoride growing by 92.5 kg. in the past quarter alone to 274.8 kg. By IAEA standards, this is sufficient for an estimated six nuclear weapons, with the final sprint achievable within months.

The past six US presidents all pledged that Iran would never be allowed to acquire a nuclear weapon. But Obama cut a rotten, soft deal with Tehran that legitimized the nuclear program and afforded the Islamic Republic tens of billions of dollars in sanctions relief and cash aid. President Joe Biden continued on this path.

Worse still, Biden's top military man, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Mark Milley, dialed back America's commitment to stopping Tehran by saying that the US only "remains committed [to ensuring that] Iran will not have a fielded nuclear weapon." This suggested that the Biden administration was prepared to tolerate developed nuclear weapons in the Islamic Republic's hands, provided the weapons were not "fielded," in other words, deployed.

Iran has developed a formidable long-range missile arsenal of great technological variability, including solid and liquid propellant ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, and ICBMs. The entire Iranian ballistic missile program is in violation of United Nations Security Council prohibitions.

Tehran has fired its ballistic missiles at US troops in Iraq, at targets in Iraqi Kurdistan, and twice over the past year into Israel. Fortunately, Israeli air defenses, alongside a coalition of Western forces, successfully intercepted most of the incoming Iranian missiles aimed at the Jewish state, which were not (yet) nuclear-tipped. The latest Iranian ICBM seems to be based on the North Korean BM25 missile with a range of 3,500 km., meaning it could reach deep into Europe.

Iran has provided Russia with thousands of armed attack drones for Russian President Vladimir Putin's war against Ukraine. Experts are concerned that, in return, Tehran will be getting sophisticated Russian military technologies such as new aerial defense systems – especially after Israel destroyed much of its Russian-supplied air defense systems (known as S-300 and S-400) in a retaliatory operation last October.

And where is all Iran's money coming from? Well, in addition to the payouts from Obama and Biden, Iran's Quds Force and Hezbollah are invested heavily in drug production and distribution (Captagon pills and more) across the Middle East and

Europe and in money-laundering cryptocurrency schemes – as revealed two years ago by the Israeli Defense and Foreign Affairs ministries. And in violation of all international sanction regimes, Iran sells roughly $2 billion a month of oil to China.

This accounting is particularly important as America and Israel move closer – I hope and believe – to an essential, decisive military strike on Iran's nuclear bomb facilities and missile bases.

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