



# Donald Trump used the art of the deal buster with the Iran debacle

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On the campaign trail in 2016 Donald Trump claimed that he would use his self-touted savvy as a negotiator to come up with a better deal to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. He has now led us down a path that scuttles the existing deal and replaces it with nothing. In fact, it's worse than that. His administration is planning to throw the United Nations under the bus as well, for no extra charge.

Today, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo will go to the United Nations to submit a complaint to the Security Council about Iran's noncompliance with the nuclear deal, even though it was Washington that withdrew from the accord in 2018. Triggering a snapback provision in the resolution that will reinstate sanctions from all United Nations members on Iran.

Washington tore up the deal but now wants to use the terms of the agreement to force the Security Council to re-impose sanctions as well. The oddity of a nation making an argument that it still has the legal right or the political leverage to invoke the provisions of an agreement from which it has already withdrawn its own participation places the Security Council in a painful dilemma. The United States maintains that as a party to the Iran deal when it was created in 2015, it has full rights to invoke the snapback provision built into the agreement against Iran.

The Security Council is running out of ways to tiptoe out of a crisis about its own power to preserve the Iran agreement by avoiding a vote. If the other permanent members of the Security Council wanted to avoid this outcome, they might be arm twisted by the United States into some form of extending the arms embargo. The possibility of using procedural ways to maneuver some delays until October exists.

So the administration now advances its scorched earth trifecta crisis in order to further its own extreme goals. First, the legal and political quandaries permit Pompeo's mantra about the ineffectiveness of the Security Council to take center stage. Second, we punish and embarrass allies for their willingness to uphold the Iran deal after our withdrawal by forcing them to vote in favor of an arms embargo to preserve the deal or reject it, and likely kill the whole deal. Third, obviously, the United States

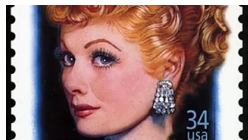


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gets to punish Iran even further, ultimately pushing to expand its nuclear capacity as much as it would like.

Some hardened realists might call this the ultimate brinkmanship. But this reckless U.S. action dramatically undermines the Security Council's significant role in validating and verifying international agreements. We further alienate Russia and China, who actually have been past partners in our work in the Security Council to control nuclear nonproliferation. We deteriorate even more our schism with critical allies.

This buries the Iran deal so that a future administration has little room for creating a better relationship with Iran as the snapback maneuver could have dire consequences if Iran responds by abandoning its current restraints on renuclearization. Other countries in the region could start down the path of nuclear weapons development. Israel might take military action against Iranian nuclearization, prompting Iranian retaliation.

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The play will also undermine the credibility of diplomacy by the United Nations. If the snapback effort succeeds, the United Kingdom, France, and other states that disagree with Washington's reckless abandonment of the Iran deal will be forced to go along with the United States or risk losing the ability to conduct commercial and financial business in the United States. The willingness of these governments to cooperate with and accept American leadership in the future will suffer as a result.

There you have it. Trump's new deal will lead to a more dangerous Middle East, a ravaged Security Council, and damaged relationships with allied governments that have become increasingly distrustful of American bullying and incompetence. What a deal!

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