

WIN WITHOUT WAR



Progressive Foreign Policy Debrief

Intel for Advocacy

EDITOR'S NOTE: To cap off Women's History Month, every article, op-ed, essay, and blog post linked in [our Debrief](#) on March 30 was written by a woman. We also stated our commitment to be more inclusive well beyond March. In that spirit, we'd be remiss if we didn't highlight an important piece this week by our colleagues Alexandra Bell and Kelsey Davenport, on what they dubbed "the marticle," or an article on national security issues quoting only men as sources. They note that while yes, reporters can do better, so can we. They explain how [here](#).

TOPLINE TAKEAWAYS

- *Just like in Iraq, Iran deal opponents want to kick out the inspectors before they've finished their work.*
- *When you promote a torturer, you promote torture.*
- *Why start more wars when we haven't finished the ones we're already in?*

TRUMP, A 'DOG AND PONY SHOW,' AND A NEW PATH TO WAR WITH IRAN

The United States and its allies and partners have been working for more than a decade to rein in Iran's nuclear program -- a process only seriously accelerated by President Obama. And after many thousands of hours of diplomacy, debate, media coverage, blood, sweat, tears, and a lot of luck, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was signed in July of 2015 and implemented in January of 2016.

Now, we're about a week away from the years of painstakingly difficult work to block Iran from building a nuclear weapon going down the toilet, all because of [one man's fragile ego](#).

Actually to be more accurate, it's because of Donald Trump's fragile ego aided by years of lies and misinformation cooked up by neocons and their allies in an effort to either kill diplomacy with Iran or, after the JCPOA's implementation, kill the deal itself and put the United States back on a path to war (on that last point, don't take our word for it, the UN Secretary General [said as much this week](#)).

They will all own the consequences of killing the Iran deal. (You can read about what those consequences will be [here](#).)

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So will Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who aided their cause this week with what many called a “[dog and pony show](#)” seemingly intended to convince Trump to put the final nail in the Iran deal’s coffin by suggesting Iran was cheating on the JCPOA.

In fact, the thrust of Netanyahu’s presentation -- basically an intel dump about Iran’s past work on a nuclear weapon -- has been well known for some time, a point (if you don’t believe U.S. intelligence or the IAEA) confirmed by:

Former Israeli National Security Advisor [Uzi Arad](#)
Former head of Israel’s Atomic Energy Commission [Uzi Eilam](#)
Former Mossad Director [Danny Yatom](#)
Former CIA Director [Michael Hayden](#)
EU Foreign Affairs High Representative [Federica Mogherini](#)
Former Energy Secretary [Ernest Moniz](#)
Ret. Adm. [James Stavridis](#)
(Iran deal opponent) [Sen. Bob Corker](#)
[And a host](#) of observers, analysts, and [non-proliferation experts](#).

BIBI AND TRUMP ACTUALLY MADE A CASE FOR THE DEAL

After Bibi’s speech, the White House issued a statement confirming that Iran indeed *had* (as opposed to *has*, as it originally said before a correction) a nuclear weapons program, thereby inadvertently making the case that we should probably try to have something in place to prevent that from restarting (like the JCPOA!).

Former Secretary of State John Kerry [pointed this out](#). [As did our European allies](#), [Moniz and many, many, many, many others](#).

THOSE WHO WERE AGAINST THE DEAL SAY TRUMP NEEDS TO KEEP IT

Reps. [Mac Thornberry](#) and [Eliot Engel](#), and Sens. [Jeff Flake](#), [Rand Paul](#), [Ben Cardin](#), and [Shelley Moore Capito](#) all voted against the Iran deal in a congressional vote and are now saying that Trump should not scrap it.

Even [Max Boot](#) and [Jennifer Rubin](#), both very vocal opponents of the JCPOA, say it’s a [bad idea](#) for Trump to withdraw.

RESOURCES

- Talking points on the JCPOA and Netanyahu’s speech [[LINK](#)]
- Diplomacy Works Digest, 5/4/18 [[LINK](#)]

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- TAKE ACTION: Tell Congress: Speak up, save the Iran deal [[LINK](#)]
- Nuclear Threat Initiative interactive on the Iran deal [[LINK](#)]
- POLL: 56 percent support the Iran deal, just 26 percent oppose [[LINK](#)]
- “Trump May Already Be Violating the Iran Deal,” the Atlantic [[LINK](#)]
- “UN chief urges Donald Trump not to scrap Iran nuclear deal,” Reuters [[LINK](#)]
- “If Trump shreds the Iran deal, it'll be a huge geopolitical mistake,” NY Daily News [[LINK](#)]
- “Trump is on the verge of a disastrous decision on Iran.” LA Times [[LINK](#)]
- “To Win a Nobel, Trump Should Look to the Iran Deal,” NY Times [[LINK](#)]
- “Killing the Iran deal would be a fatal mistake,” Chicago Tribune [[LINK](#)]
- “Trump team's typo and Netanyahu's fluff can't obscure Iran deal stakes,” CNN [[LINK](#)]
- “That was no typo on Iran's nuclear program,” The Iranian [[LINK](#)]

[WHEN YOU PROMOTE A TORTURER, YOU PROMOTE TORTURE](#)

Infamous Iraq war architect and former Secretary of State Condi Rice has something to say about torture. This week she offered a common refrain from those defending CIA Director nominee Gina Haspel -- who played a key role in Bush's torture program: making decisions after 9/11 was hard, give us a break.

“You have no idea the pressures that we faced to try and make sure that this country wasn't attacked again,” Rice [said](#). “I am offended that people who were not there and who didn't have to make the tough decisions now want to second-guess.”

There are a few problems with Rice's argument:

1. There were CIA officers who, at the time, [objected](#) to Bush's torture program and refused to participate in it.
2. Gina Haspel wasn't one of them.

In fact, Gina Haspel not only wasn't an objector, she was the one giving orders to torture and then tried to destroy the evidence.

What's more, Rice doesn't address the argument those who oppose Haspel's nomination are making: **we should not reward those who tortured. Period.**

Oh and don't fall for the “if not Haspel, then who” trap. How about someone who didn't torture anyone? That would be a good start.

RESOURCES

- For messaging and resources, see last week's Debrief [[LINK](#)]

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- See Haspel campaign tools from Indivisible [here](#).
- LETTER from prominent health professionals, bioethicists, and public health experts expressing concern over Haspel's nomination and urging selection of a nominee with a record of rejecting torture. [\[LINK\]](#) [\[RETWEET\]](#)
- LETTER: American Psychological Association expressing concern about Haspel's nomination, and urging the CIA to take concerted steps to ensure the Senate and public have access to still-classified documents to adequately evaluate Haspel's fitness for the position. [\[LINK\]](#)
- ACTION ALERT: Physicians for Human Rights [\[LINK\]](#)
- "10 Reasons Health Professionals Should Oppose Gina Haspel as CIA Director," Physicians for Human Rights [\[LINK\]](#)
- "CIA director Gina Haspel's Thailand torture ties," BBC News [\[LINK\]](#)
- "Confirming Gina Haspel would be a direct endorsement of torture," Washington Post [\[LINK\]](#)
- "White House preps 27-page talking point defense for controversial CIA nominee," The Hill [\[LINK\]](#)
- "Ex-CIA Official Says Some Torture Videotapes May Still Exist," the Daily Beast [\[LINK\]](#)
- ICYMI: The ACLU's Faiz Shakir talked about Haspel's nomination on Pod Save the World [\[LINK\]](#)

[BEFORE WE START AUTHORIZING NEW WARS, MAYBE WE SHOULD TAKE CARE OF THE OLD ONES FIRST](#)

As Congress gears up to debate a new Authorization for the Use of Military Force, and give the president even more power to wage endless war around the world (see more on that [here](#)), it's probably worth taking a look at the how the war that got all this started is going.

After 17 years of war in Afghanistan, we're still nowhere near close to anything resembling "victory," as a [new report](#) this week from the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, or SIGAR, pointed out. R. Jeffrey Smith [shared some of the lowlights](#) over at Foreign Policy (which we've edited for brevity):

- The Afghan economy -- measured in GDP -- **stopped growing in 2012 and has since retrenched.**
- The U.S. has spent \$126 billion on relief and reconstruction and **Afghanistan is the 183rd worst country in the world to "do business."** Less than a third of Afghans are connected to the power grid.

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- The few economic gains from direct U.S. spending **are considered unsustainable without persistent foreign aid.**
- **Afghanistan remains highly unstable**, with more security incidents last year than ever recorded.
- **Suicide attacks in Afghanistan went up 50 percent in 2017.** Casualties from complex attacks and suicide bombings are steadily rising. Sectarian attacks tripled in 2017.
- We've spent nearly \$9 billion trying to reduce narcotics production in Afghanistan. But **opium growing has steadily increased, with a 63 percent jump in 2017 alone.**
- **Only 65 percent of the population presently lives under Afghan government control**, after direct U.S. expenditures to Afghan security forces of \$78 billion. "The overall trend for the insurgency is rising control over the population," the report states.
- The number of serving Afghan military and police, meanwhile, **experienced "a sharp decline" last year** and insider attacks by Afghan soldiers are rising.
- **Widespread corruption remains a dragging anchor** on progress throughout the country.

On top of all that, Politico [reported](#) this week that an "extensive effort aimed at weeding out Taliban sympathizers and terrorist infiltrators from the Afghan army has slowed the work of a new unit of 1,000 military advisers, whose deployment was billed as a key part of the strategy President Donald Trump authorized in August."

"Afghanistan is a decade-plus Dereliction of Duty," [said](#) Micah Zenko, a Senior Fellow at Chatham House. "Everyone in the Pentagon, [Operation Freedom's Sentinel] command, or deployed on the ground, knows the war is lost, but nobody will say this publicly."

BURIED LEDES

NO BIG DEAL? The Trump White House [has](#) **no interest in counting civilian casualties in counter-terror strikes.**

A new AUMF being debated in Congress [could give the president the power](#) to **indefinitely imprison U.S. citizens.**

"There's a growing risk that [another major war] is about to break out in Syria, [pitting Israel against Iran.](#)"

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Atomwaffen is a white supremacist extremist group seeking to start a race war and overthrow the government. [A number in its ranks](#) are current and former members of the U.S. military.

The U.S. and its friends and allies account for 63.3 percent of military spending worldwide. The U.S. alone is 35 percent. Russia and China account for [just 17.8 percent](#), combined.

Trump wanted to withdraw all U.S. troops from Korean peninsula back in February, but was [reportedly](#) talked about of it by his Chief of Staff.

Is the Trump administration bribing Ukraine to not cooperate with special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation [in exchange for weapons sales](#)?

AND FINALLY, **May the Fourth Be With You!** "Preferably, the force of the U.S. military," [says](#) the Prince of Famine. "Thanks, guys, for the bombs, jet fuel, and intelligence, without oversight from Congress. Makes it real easy to keep bombing civilians in Yemen."