

## Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action Briefing

This briefing is structured in the following way:

- Background on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)
- The Pros and Cons of this agreement in relation to our interests
- The reaction by pro-Israel organisations in America to the agreement
- The reaction by the Jewish community to the agreement

### Background

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action is a nuclear agreement between Iran and the P5+ 1 (China, France, Russia, UK, USA and Germany) that was signed on July 14th 2015. This agreement succeeded the Interim Agreement which was created in November 2013. The main takeaways from it are as follows:

- Iran's stock pile of medium enriched Uranium must be eliminated,
- Their stock pile of low enriched Uranium must be cut by 98%,
- The number of centrifuges will be reduced by two thirds for the next 15 years,
- Uranium will only be enriched up to 3.67% for the next 15 years,
- Uranium enrichment will be limited to one facility with a first generation centrifuge for the next 10 years,
- International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will have regular access to all nuclear facilities.

In return for Iran's compliance with this agreement they will see some economic and other sanctions lifted from the USA, EU and UN. Sanctions regarding the importation of arms, sensitive technology amongst other things are still in place and can be reviewed on a case by case basis.

The implementation of this deal has been met with much controversy for reasons outlined below.

### Pros

The general argument for those in favour of the agreement can be summarised into the following points:

- It will slow down the development of Iran's nuclear weapons by 10 – 15 years. This is something that is extremely welcomed given their close proximity to this achievement otherwise,
- It will keep their nuclear programme in check via IAEA observations. This will further enforce the agreement and notify us if they break it giving us ample time to react,
- It is a step in the right direction that could open Iran's mind to more change and could steer the Middle East away from a nuclear problem,
- It will increase their economic output via the lifting of sanctions which should give them incentives to commit to the Additional Protocol once the agreement expires.

### Cons

The general argument of those against the agreement can be summarised as follows:

- It creates a legitimate pathway for Iran to continue to have Nuclear weapon. This is allowing a dangerous country access to the development (albeit limited) of dangerous weapons,
- The agreement only provides a temporary decrease in nuclear weapon development and the same problems could arise again in 10 years' time,
- The growth of the Iranian economy will inadvertently trickle down into funding terrorism contributing to potential further instability in the Middle East and the rest of the world,
- It didn't take into account the previous history of Iran which has already carried out illegal actions in developing the weapons. Additionally there is problems with its funding of Hezbollah, rife anti-Semitism and holocaust denial.

#### What does this mean for the interests of pro-Israel lobby groups?

The dialling back of Iran's nuclear programme is a step in the right direction but a question arises as to whether it goes far enough?

Without this agreement Iran would have a full range of nuclear weapons in a very short time. This is extremely dangerous in regards to Israel as the dire relations between the two countries could lead to disastrous consequences. As a result this agreement can be seen as a definite improvement on the current situation. Having said that is this a big enough reason to withdraw the vast array of sanctions that are currently incorporated? The danger of having a country which so fervently opposes Israel's very existence with any access to nuclear weapons, no matter how small or how heavily policed, is extremely worrying. Both North Korea and Syria have pulled the wool over the IAEA's eyes before and giving Iran a small amount of nuclear legitimacy could bring about the same consequences.

#### Reactions from Jewish Organisations in America

##### *The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC)*

AIPAC is strongly opposed to the adoption of this agreement. They have called for Congress to reject it to force America to work with its allies, continuing economic pressure, into securing a better deal.

Highlighting a lack of 'anytime, anywhere' approach to IAEA inspections and a lack of regard for Iran's previous behaviour they have set up a group called the 'Citizens for a Nuclear Free Iran' (CNFI). The group has established an advisory committee which is made up of 1 Republican and 4 Democratic Senators. In the first week of August CNFI had meetings with 400 congressional offices and from mid-July to August 4<sup>th</sup> they spent 11 million dollar in 23 states running TV ads to get their message across.

##### *JStreet*

JStreet is in favour of the agreement claiming that it meets the goals that Obama set out to fulfil. They have taken a similar approach to AIPAC investing \$2 million on a three week ad campaign in 5 states. Additionally they held 125 congressional meetings and flew over key Israelis who support their cause to help convince congress to pass this law. Additionally they conducted a public opinion survey (discussed below).

##### *American Jewish Committee*

The AJC oppose the agreement. The first statement they released said that they wanted to review all information. They did this meeting with the Secretary of State, Congressional Members, Diplomats and President Obama. After this they released a statement saying that although they oppose the agreement, they are aware that the agreement raises questions and issues that no one can answer

and therefore calls for a respectful debate on the issue. They emphasise that US Middle Eastern relations must be emphasised in order to protect both American and Middle Eastern interests.

### *The Jewish Communities Reaction*

The Jewish Communities reaction is somewhat mixed. They seem to be reporting that they approve of this agreement however many declare apprehension at its potential implications for Israel.

Two polls have been conducted in the USA which can provide a vague insight into Jewish attitudes to this issue.

Looking first at a poll by JStreet we see that 60% of Jewish people interviewed supported the agreement and want Congress to approve it. When looking at the L.A. Jewish Journal's poll however, we see that although support remains with a slight majority, 49% think that the agreement will endanger Israel more.

These polls are producing the same base line as the Jewish Media in the UK which shows that the general consensus of agreement is met with some trepidation about its implication for Israel.

## **Useful Links**

- Article on how the JCPOA will improve the safety of the world:  
<http://www.economist.com/news/briefing/21657820-imperfect-deal-better-alternatives-making-world-bit-safer>
- Discussion on if the JCPOA will make the Middle East more or less safe:  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-33519808>
- Article on Netanyahu's reaction to the JCPOA:  
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/14/netanyahu-denounces-iran-nuclear-dealcriticism-israel>
- Video of Press conference with President Netanyahu and Foreign Secretary Phillip Hammond: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/16/netanyahu-hammond-spar-iran-nuclear-agreement>
- JStreet JCPOA Policy :<http://jstreet.org/policy/pages/iran-understanding-the-p51-agreement>
- AIPAC's Press Release on the JCPOA: <http://www.aipac.org/learn/resources/aipac-publications/publication?pubpath=PolicyPolitics/Press/AIPAC%20Statements/2015/07/AIPAC%20Statement%20on%20Proposed%20Iran%20Nuclear%20Agreement>
- AJC's press release on the JCPOA :  
<http://www.ajc.org/site/apps/nlnet/content3.aspx?c=7oJILSPwFfJSG&b=9302337&ct=14752037&notoc=1>
- Overview of JStreet Poll. Links at the bottom of the article take you to view the actual poll results: [http://jstreet.org/blog/post/new-poll-majority-of-american-jews-support-iran-nuclear-deal\\_1#](http://jstreet.org/blog/post/new-poll-majority-of-american-jews-support-iran-nuclear-deal_1#)
- Analysis and discussion of the results from the L.A. Jewish Journal's poll on Jewish opinions of the JCPOA:  
[http://www.jewishjournal.com/nation/article/new\\_poll\\_u.s.\\_jews\\_support\\_iran\\_deal\\_despite\\_misgivings](http://www.jewishjournal.com/nation/article/new_poll_u.s._jews_support_iran_deal_despite_misgivings)