

Myth

The United States, the West and America's regional allies were the big winners in the Iran deal.

Fact

The Iran deal is subject to a great deal of debate as proponents and opponents dissect the agreement and argue over the merits of the deal. Below is a chart assessing who came out ahead based on the terms of the agreement and America's overall foreign policy goals in the Middle East.

The Iran Nuclear Deal: Who are the Winners and Losers?

	<u>Iran</u>	<u>US/West</u>	<u>Regional Allies</u>
The Deal Prevents War	WINNER Iran succeeded in taking all military options off the table.	WINNER/LOSER The agreement allows the U.S. to say that war is not necessary; however, this may only be a temporary victory.	LOSER Many options were available to pursue a better deal short of war. The deal, however, may make war more likely because Iran's neighbors may have to react to ensure that it does not get the bomb through cheating or outlasting the agreement.
Nuclear Proliferation	WINNER Iran is accepted as a threshold nuclear state.	LOSERS One of the major U.S. goals is to stem proliferation but this agreement will produce an incentive for Iran's enemies to seek their own nuclear capability.	LOSERS Faced with a continued threat from Iran remaining on the threshold of nuclear weapons, Saudi Arabia has said it will seek the bomb. Others may be expected to follow suit.
Anytime, Anywhere Inspections	WINNER Inspections can be delayed by Iran to be at least 24 days after decision to ask for inspections, which allows time to hide any deal-breaking activity.	LOSERS The agreement will be unverifiable.	LOSERS Regional actors must act based on the assumption Iran will get a bomb.
Accounting of past nuclear research	WINNER This had been a major concern from the beginning of negotiations but Iran held firm and refused to agree. ¹	LOSERS Unless there is a full accounting of Iran's past nuclear activities, it will be impossible to show what Iran is doing now and has done in the past. Without those benchmarks, it will be impossible to verify whether Iran is abiding by the agreement. ²	LOSERS This will be evidence of Iran's insincerity and duplicity.
Pushing Iran's "breakout" time from 3 to 12 months	LOSER Iran's route to the bomb may be slowed, but not stopped.	WINNER The administration claims the agreement achieves this goal; however, others question whether the breakout time has been increased by more than a few weeks. ³	LOSERS The idea of pushing Iran's breakout time to a year does not bring comfort to Israel or the Sunni states who were told by Obama that Iran would be cut off from any pathway to a nuclear bomb.

Israeli Security	WINNER Few of Israel's concerns were met and both the government and opposition believe the deal endangers Israel as Iran continues to threaten Israel's destruction and may soon have the means to act on this goal.	LOSER The Israeli government and opposition are united in disapproval of the agreement, convinced a better deal is possible, and fearful that Iran's pursuit of a nuclear weapon will continue.	LOSERS If Israeli security is weakened, Arab states such as Jordan will be more vulnerable to Iranian subversion and no Arab state will be capable of preventing Iran from pursuing its hegemonic ambitions.
Gulf State Security	WINNER The Saudis and their allies in the Gulf have been angered by the deal and now see Iran on the threshold of a bomb and a cash windfall to use to pursue its hegemonic goals.	LOSER The West remains heavily dependent on Gulf oil and it will now be at greater risk. Freed of sanctions, Iran will have greater influence on oil prices.	LOSERS The Gulf States will be insecure and unable to challenge Iranian adventurism and subversion. They will seek additional arms though they will still be unable to defend themselves. Iran may also exacerbate divisions within OPEC.
Length of agreement	WINNER At most 15 years, assuming no cheating, but Iran can cancel the deal with 35 days notice. ⁴ For the West, 15 years is a lifetime, but for a 2,500 year-old civilization it is a momentary delay.	LOSER The agreement was meant to ensure that Iran never gets a nuclear weapon, but it could have one in a matter of months.	LOSERS Israel and the Arab states expected the Iranian nuclear facilities to be dismantled but they will remain in place so they can be used in the future to resume the nuclear program.
Ban on Iran obtaining highly enriched uranium or plutonium from abroad	LOSER Iran still has its own supplies of uranium and could find a seller willing to circumvent the agreement.	WINNER Iran agreed to this concession but it has a 15-year time limit.	WINNERS Iran's ability to obtain critical nuclear materials will be much more difficult.
Sanctions Relief	WINNER Iran conceded little and will immediately be open for business, with companies clamoring to sign new deals on weapons, nuclear facilities and commercial goods.	WINNER/LOSER Companies win because they will be free to engage in business with Iran and oil supplies will increase. The world will lose because of the way Iran will spend the money.	LOSERS Iran will be much stronger, economically and militarily, and will further destabilize the region and threaten the Sunni regimes.
No sanctions relief without Iranian compliance with the framework agreement.	WINNER Obama agreed to release \$11.9 billion of Iranian assets during the negotiations.	LOSER Acceded to Iranian demands to provide sanctions relief and agreed to undo sanctions that were not even in dispute.	LOSER Iran will have billions of dollars to spend on subversion, terrorism, weapons and support for Hezbollah and Bashar Assad.
Sanctions remain in place related to Iran's support of terrorism, its human rights abuses, and its ballistic missile program.	LOSER Based on Lew's comments, these sanctions may be dropped. Even if they are not, Iran will have no trouble continuing these practices, which have not been impeded by the current sanctions.	WINNER These sanctions will not be lifted under the nuclear agreement; however, Treasury Secretary Jack Lew said the administration was considering suspending all sanctions on Iran. ⁵ These sanctions have had no impact on Iranian abuses.	LOSERS Iran will continue its current practices and will have even more money available because of the unraveling of other sanctions.

Unfreezing of Assets	WINNER Iran will receive a \$100-150 billion windfall to boost its economy, fund its nuclear and missile research, escalate terrorism and threaten its neighbors.	LOSER The West will essentially underwrite Iranian policies.	LOSERS Israel and the Sunni Arab states will remain targets of a strengthened Iran.
Arms Embargo	WINNER Conventional arms and missile embargo lifted after 5 years. Iran vows to buy weapons anytime, anywhere ⁶ and already has a missile defense deal with Russia.	LOSER This was not supposed to be part of the nuclear talks but was nevertheless conceded.	LOSERS Iranian arms will be directed at Israel and its Arab enemies and rivals.
Dismantling Nuclear Facilities	WINNER No facilities are dismantled.	LOSER A fundamental requirement for a deal at the outset conceded.	LOSERS Israel and Arabs will have to assume Iran will not abandon its objective of building nuclear weapons
Destroying Centrifuges	WINNER While they will reduce the number of active centrifuges by half, Iran will keep all of their current centrifuges and will be allowed to continue centrifuge research.	LOSER Not only does the deal leave thousands of centrifuges in place, Iran will have access to more sophisticated equipment that can speed its development of a bomb.	LOSERS Along with dismantling the facilities, the agreement was expected to require destruction of all the centrifuges.
Removal of Nuclear Material	WINNER Restrictions on enrichment are lifted after 8 years and should it choose to cheat, it could quickly increase the purity of its stockpile.	LOSER Conceded critical point in exchange for meaningless time limit.	LOSERS At best, the agreement buys the region a few years before Iran is likely to ramp up its nuclear program again.
Ship out all 20% enriched uranium not needed for research reactor	LOSER Iran will retain some enriched uranium in forms that could be reconverted for military use.	WINNER Iran agreed to this concession, but this will not deprive it of uranium that could be used in a weapons program.	LOSERS Any uranium remaining in Iranian hands is dangerous so long as they have the means to enrich it to weapons grade.
Access to Iranian Military Sites	WINNER Iran's defense minister stated that international inspections of military sites would be forbidden	LOSERS After insisting on this point, the negotiators ultimately caved.	LOSERS Denying access to military sites heightens suspicions about Iran's capabilities and intentions.
Limitations on Iranian Missile Development	WINNER Ballistic missile embargo lifted after 8 years	LOSERS Iran is developing missiles capable of reaching the United States and already has weapons that can reach Europe and U.S. bases in the Middle East.	LOSERS Iran's regional enemies are within missile range.
Freedom for American Hostages	WINNER No currently held hostages are to be released as part of the deal.	LOSERS The administration made no effort to link the release of American hostages to the deal.	LOSERS Allies see another example of the U.S. being outnegotiated.

Ceasing Terrorism	WINNER Iran was not required to commit to ending terrorism and, to the contrary, remains committed to funding terror groups, which may one day have access to Iran's nuclear materials.	LOSERS Iran has reiterated its hatred of the U.S. and the West and will continue to instigate terror against them.	LOSERS Regional states are on the frontlines and immediate targets of Iranian terrorism.
Improved Relations with the USA	WINNER The Supreme Leader has repeatedly said the U.S. remains Iran's principal enemy.	LOSERS U.S. officials continue to repeat fantasy that relations will improve even as Iranian leaders denounce the United States.	LOSERS There is no indication of any change in Iran's policies toward the region. Iran's Supreme Leader has reiterated his genocidal intentions toward Israel.
Stopping Iranian Support for Syrian President Assad	WINNER The deal did not require Iran to cease support for the autocratic regime.	LOSERS Iranian support is keeping Assad in power and contributing to the ongoing war and humanitarian disaster.	LOSERS Iran continues to try to maintain and extend its hegemony in the region with support for Syria one of the linchpins in the strategy.
Stopping Iranian Support to Hezbollah	WINNER The deal has no impact on Iran's support for Hezbollah; moreover, the financial windfall following sanctions relief will allow Iran to increase support for Hezbollah.	LOSER By failing to impose any restrictions on Iranian support for Hezbollah, the deal ensures that Iran will continue to rule Lebanon by proxy and threaten Israel.	LOSERS The people of Lebanon have suffered from Hezbollah's effective takeover of the country and dashed hope for a return to democracy. Israel faces tens of thousands of Hezbollah rockets targeting most of Israel. Hezbollah acts as Iran's proxy in the war against Israel.
Stopping Iranian Support to Houthis in Yemen	WINNER The deal says nothing about Iran's subversion of Yemen through its support of the rebel Houthis.	LOSERS The deal did not address the situation in Yemen where Iran seeks to spread its influence.	LOSERS Saudi Arabia has been drawn into the civil war and faces an Iranian supported threat along its border.
Stopping Iranian Meddling in Iraq	WINNER Fear of ISIS has led the U.S. to ally with Iran in Iraq while allowing Iran to strengthen its position to eventually control some or all of Iraq.	LOSERS The modicum of success achieved in the Gulf War has been erased by Iranian interference in Iraqi affairs and, under the pretext of joining the fight against ISIS, may establish a lasting beachhead in Iraq.	LOSERS Iraq's neighbors see a growing danger of Iranian control of Iraq and the defeat of a Sunni majority state.
Stopping Iranian Meddling in the Gulf	WINNER The deal does nothing to discourage Iranian subversion of its neighbors as well as countries in North Africa.	LOSERS The U.S. did not make this a condition for a deal.	LOSERS Iran will continue to foment instability through support of Shiite minorities in places such as Saudi Arabia, threaten the smaller Gulf states and assert control over disputed lands.

Extending the time before Iran can resume nuclear activities.	WINNER Iran succeeded in convincing the negotiators to significantly reduce the amount of time it must wait before resuming its nuclear program.	LOSERS The ban on reprocessing went from indefinite to 15 years, which opens up a pathway to a plutonium bomb; anytime-anywhere inspections became a 24 day process; the 10 year ban on centrifuge advances shrunk to 8 years.	LOSERS Assuming Iran does not cheat, Israel and the Arabs have to plan for the days when the time limits expire.
Maintaining UN sanctions.	WINNER The arms embargo was never part of the preliminary agreement; the U.S. agreed to drop it in the final deal, allowing Iran to build up its conventional forces. ⁷	LOSERS Hard won victories at the UN Security Council to impose sanctions were swept away with the stroke of a pen despite Iran's failure to comply with terms of the resolutions.	LOSERS Iran will be strengthened.
Ensuring Iran Can't Cheat	WINNER Iran needs to be informed of inspections and must agree to them. Iran can easily hide or move materials it does not want inspectors to see. Inspectors also cannot visit secret facilities the Iranians do not disclose.	LOSERS The agreement cannot stop Iran from cheating and the historical record suggests Iran will indeed cheat.	LOSERS The regional actors assume Iran will cheat and don't expect the West to do anything about it.
Regime Change	WINNER The theocratic government, mullahs, and Republican guard infrastructure will all remain in place.	LOSERS The U.S. will have to continue to deal with a radical Muslim regime that is anti-American and determined to undermine U.S. interests in the region.	LOSERS Israel and the Sunni states will remain targets of the fanatical Shiite regime in Tehran.
Restoring Sanctions for Iranian Violations	WINNER Before sanctions can "snap back," a dispute resolution process must be undertaken that can last two and a half months, after which the matter can be referred to the UN Security Council, where Russia is likely to veto the measure.	LOSERS Reinstating the sanctions regime will be nearly impossible once the economic floodgates open. Russia and China, in particular, are unlikely to reinstitute sanctions. The agreement also provides no clear indication of what violations would lead to a resumption of sanctions.	LOSERS Once the sanctions are removed, they will not be reimposed and Iran will be free to pursue its policy objectives without fear of punishment.
Enhancing America's Position in the Middle East	WINNER By making so many concessions on vital matters, and demonstrating a reluctance to use force, the Administration has reinforced the belief that the U.S. under Obama is weak and unwilling to defend its allies or its interests.	LOSERS The U.S. is viewed as significantly weaker after making catastrophic concessions in the negotiations. Iran does not believe the Obama administration will use force or take measures to stop its hegemonic ambitions.	LOSERS To take risks for peace, Israelis must feel the U.S. has their back; instead, they believe their vital interests were sacrificed. Israelis also fear the U.S. might interfere with any unilateral decision it makes to defend itself from Iran. Arab states see the U.S. as weakened and unreliable, which has led countries such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt to seek support from Russia.

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³ See, for example, Alan J. Kuperman, “The Iran Deal’s Fatal Flaw,” *New York Times*, (June 23, 2015).

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