

Failure of Iran nuclear pact will lead to war, Kerry warns

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Congressional rejection of the nuclear and political deal negotiated by the Obama administration with Iran would likely lead to war between the two countries, US Secretary of State John Kerry warned during testimony in front the House Foreign Affairs Committee on Tuesday.

Congress has 60 days to review the proposed agreement, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Rejection of the pact—which would require a two-thirds majority in both houses to override a presidential veto—would render military conflict between the US and Iran essentially unavoidable, Kerry argued.

“They [Iran] would instead push the program ahead potentially forcing military conflict. And we will have squandered the best chance we have to solve this problem through peaceful means,” Kerry said.

The collapse of the deal with Tehran would, moreover, leave the US to confront Iran without support from its European “partners,” Kerry said.

“If Congress rejects this, Iran goes back to its enrichment. The ayatollah will not come back to the table. The sanctions regime immediately falls apart,” Kerry said. “If we walk away, our partners will not walk away with us. Instead, they’ll walk away from the tough multilateral sanctions regime they helped us to put in place. We will be left to go it alone.”

Kerry’s remarks are only the latest war threats to emanate from the Obama administration in recent weeks. In his previous remarks on “Face the Nation” last week, Kerry declared that the failure of the deal will lead to, “what President Obama said the other day—you will have a war.”

For all their belligerence, the positions advanced by Kerry are those of the supposed “peace” faction in the debates over Iran policy. Within the ultra-reactionary framework of today’s American politics, discussion ranges from pro-war and to even more pro-war positions.

In his opening statements to the hearing, Representative Ed Royce of California harshly criticized the Obama administration’s Iran deal from the right.

Speaking on behalf of the explicitly pro-war faction,

Royce made clear the determination of leading sections of the ruling class to press forward full-throttle toward war with Tehran.

“This deal guts the sanctions web that is putting intense pressure on Iran. Virtually all economic, financial, and energy sanctions disappear. And where does all that money go? To the largest terror network on earth,” Royce said.

“Iran has cheated on every agreement they’ve signed,” Royce proclaimed.

Pointing to the deepening conflicts between the US and the European and Asian powers in the region, Royce advocated enhanced sanctions “to deter countries and companies from investing in Iran.”

From the other side of aisle, Democratic Representative Eliot Engel warned that Iran poses a “global threat.” The pact would leave the door open for Tehran to “quickly move towards the next stage of its enrichment activities,” Engel said.

“If this agreement goes through, Iran gets a cash bonanza, a boost to its international standing, and a lighted path toward nuclear weapons,” Engels said.

A number of Democrats in both the House and Senate are expected to vote against the deal, reflecting in part an aggressive lobbying effort by the Israeli government and Zionist organizations in the US.

In response to this bipartisan warmongering, Kerry was at pains to reassure his congressional critics that the nuclear pact would represent only a stepping stone toward intensified confrontation with Tehran.

“We will push back against Iran’s other activities,” Kerry said. “It’s a lot easier to push back against an Iran that does not have a nuclear weapon.”

The White House has developed a “detailed policy of working with the Gulf states” to roll back and counter Iranian influence across the region, Kerry added.

The inspection regime proposed by the JCPOA, which opens the way for US-backed political operatives to take up residence around critical components of the Iranian state, would effectively last “forever,” Kerry assured the

congressmen.

Though formally centered on the nuclear issue, the Obama deal is, in effect, a political test aimed at probing whether elements of the existing regime can be integrated into the US sphere of influence. According to US strategists, Washington is seeking “regime transformation,” a sort of regime change “lite,” as an integral part of the nuclear deal.

“You can’t understand the nuclear deal with Iran without believing that in the decade ahead, there will be regime change in Tehran—although they [the deal’s proponents] call it regime transformation,” according to Mark Dubowitz of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

“It’s regime change, but in a sense it’s being flipped on its head,” Dubowitz commented.

Assuming that, over the objection of the more war-hungry sections of the US ruling elite, the deal is approved, this will represent a significant tactical shift in US imperialist policy.

Nonetheless, Kerry’s comments make clear that this would not imply any change in the overall policy of strategic aggression pursued by Washington against Iran over decades, as part of virtually continuous efforts to overthrow the government that emerged out of the Iranian revolution and reimpose a loyal pro-imperialist regime.

During the 2000s, the Bush administration threatened to launch all-out war against Iran on two separate occasions during the years following 9/11 and the declaration of the “Global War on Terror.”

Obama’s Iran policy has unfolded along these same lines, aimed at the restoration of direct imperialist control but seeking to achieve this outcome by methods short of full-scale war.

In 2009, the Obama administration helped orchestrate the “Green Revolution,” in an effort to mobilize pro-imperialist petty bourgeois forces against the regime. Since 2011, the US and European powers have imposed economic sanctions on Iran which experts say are unprecedented outside of war time.

Far from a decisive break with previous policy, Obama’s turn to negotiations with Tehran was adopted as a means to pressure and shape Iran’s political order in line with the needs of US regional dominance.

Obama and his top officials have made clear that despite the negotiations, the possibility of military intervention against Iran, including full-scale war, has not been foreclosed.

“Our preference is to achieve a comprehensive and verifiable deal that assures Iran’s nuclear program is solely for peaceful purposes,” the Obama administration’s National Security Strategy for 2015 noted.

“However, we retain all options to achieve the objective of preventing Iran from producing a nuclear weapon,” the NSS

states.

Iran’s geographical dominance of the Strait of Hormuz, the only maritime access to the Persian Gulf, and its position at the crossroads of Eurasia render the country indispensable from the standpoint of US geo-strategy.

Untrammelled control of Iran would allow Washington to enormously intensify its leverage over rival powers that depend on Iranian energy resources and commerce, including China, Japan, Russia and the European powers.

In pursuit of this agenda, the US is building up a militarist coalition led by the region’s most reactionary states, including Saudi Arabia, UAE and Qatar. In a report released Monday, the Nuclear Agreement with Iran and the Growing US Strategic Partnership with the Arab Gulf States, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) argued that nervousness among the US Gulf allies over the Iran deal is unfounded.

The US is outfitting and mobilizing the Gulf states for war against Iran, the CSIS argued: “Few in the Gulf and Arab world know the full extent of the existing US strategic partnerships, the recent increases in the US role in the region, and the extent to which the United States has steadily built up the scale and depth of its military ties to the Arab Gulf states, its cooperation in counterterrorism, and its role in providing the Arab Gulf states with far more modern arms and military technology than is available to Iran.”

“The United States is making continuing efforts to create both a stronger strategic partnership and give the Arab Gulf states a decisive military superiority over Iran. This involves major new arms transfers that will continue to build up Arab capabilities through at least 2020,” the CSIS added.



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