

If Obama's past is prologue, Iranian nuke deal is a dud

Michael Costello/Lewiston Tribune

Should we trust Barack Obama to forge an acceptable uranium enrichment agreement with Iran? If past results are any indicator of future performance, Obama's past judgments should leave us skeptical.

Just recently, the U.S. Army recommended charges against Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl.

Bergdahl spent years keeping company with Taliban terrorists after walking away from his post in Afghanistan. Last year Obama showered himself in praise after exchanging Bergdahl for five of the most dangerous terrorists incarcerated in Guantanamo Bay.

Susan Rice, whom Obama previously assigned to lie on every news talk show about the Benghazi terrorist attack, praised Bergdahl for serving with "honor and distinction."

The problem that Obama overlooked was that Bergdahl had deserted his post and far better men than he died attempting to recover him. The terrorists who Obama released are likely to kill again.

That deal was just the latest in a lengthening series of misjudgments and missteps that have become the hallmark of his Middle East policies.

Let's look at just one year of his failures.

In 2011, Obama ignored conditions on the ground and withdrew U.S. forces from Iraq. After dismissing the objections that Iraq was not yet ready to stand on its own, Obama promised, "a strong and enduring partnership." He predicted that Iraq would be "stable, secure and self-reliant." He anticipated that Iraq would build a future "worthy of their history as a cradle of civilization."

How'd that hopey changey stuff work out for Iraq?

That was also the year that Obama decided to toss Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi onto the ash heap of history. Afterward, he promised to rebuild Libya. "That's not to say that our work is complete. In addition to our NATO responsibilities, we will work with the international community to provide assistance to the people of Libya."

He then abandoned Libya to the terrorists. Today Libya has no real government and is used as a training base and terrorist launching pad by both Al Qaida and the Islamic State (ISIS).

Also in 2011, Obama boasted that "Some nations may be able to turn a blind eye to atrocities in other countries. The United States of America is different. And as president, I refused to wait for the images of slaughter and mass graves before taking action."

In reality, even images of slaughter and mass graves have failed to move Obama. He ignored his own "red line" in Syria. And he turned a blind eye to the Syrian people's suffering. His neglect allowed ISIS to incubate before unleashing its horrors on the world.

In September, Obama hailed his Yemen policy as a successful model that he intended to follow. Within months, the U.S.-backed government was overthrown by Iranian-backed rebels. Our special forces were forced to abandon their base. And yet, Obama still claims that his policy there was successful.

Even more amazing was Obama's claim that his Ukrainian policy was a triumph of "American strength and diplomacy. We're upholding the principle that bigger nations can't bully the small by opposing Russian aggression and supporting Ukraine's democracy."

Ukrainians might see that a little differently.

Obama tipped his hand regarding his attitude toward Iranian nuclear ambitions eight years ago. While his presidential campaign was still embryonic, he actually defended Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons as primarily defensive in nature, and even managed to make excuses for North Korean belligerency in the process.

"I think Iran is like North Korea," he said. "They see nuclear arms in defensive terms, as a way to prevent regime change."

Iran's public proclamations read a little differently. They openly boast of the day when they will incinerate all the Jews in Israel. Former president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad proclaimed that, "Israel must be wiped off the map."

And for countries such as the U.S., which have long supported Israel, he threatened that "Anybody who recognizes Israel will burn in the fire of the Islamic nation's fury." Any Islamic leader "who recognizes the Zionist regime means he is acknowledging the surrender and defeat of the Islamic world."

Lest you think that they've mellowed, just this last Tuesday the commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guard blustered that his nation's goal of "erasing Israel off the map" was "non-negotiable."

It would seem that everybody in the world, other than those associated with Obama, understand Iran's nuclear intentions. Only Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry could believe that Iran's nuclear intentions are peaceful or defensive.

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