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Trump's Hawkish Advisers and Iran

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Benjamin Friedman expects the Trump administration to be hawkish on foreign policy:

With limited time and thousands of spots to fill, presidents naturally turn to the foreign policy establishment housed in think tanks, law firms, and consultancies. These experts, who are highly interventionist and pro- alliance, regardless of party, gain considerable sway, especially when the president is inexperienced and focused elsewhere. Trump increasingly relied on Washington insiders as his campaign advanced. His defense proposals reflect that. It would be difficult for Trump to find enough non-interventionist experts to fill key security posts, if he were inclined to try. And if rumors about likely appointees are even part right, he isn't. No one among Rudy Giuliani, Michael Mukasey, Jeff Sessions, Duncan Hunter, Jim Talent, and John Bolton seems likely to favor a turn away from military interventions and alliance commitments.

If there was much doubt about this before now, Trump's initial picks for his National Security Adviser (Flynn) and CIA director (Pompeo) today confirm that some of the most important positions in the administration are going to rabid Iran hawks. If Giuliani gets the nod for State and Tom Cotton goes to Defense, Trump's national security team will be even more aggressive and extremely anti-Iranian, and they would be united in their hostility to diplomacy in general and the nuclear deal in particular. That will disappoint many Trump supporters, but Trump has never been a candidate of restraint and his rhetoric over the last year and a half told us he wasn't. Now he is proving it with his appointments.

Friedman also thinks conflict with Iran is now becoming more likely:

Trump's election also boosts the odds of war with Iran. Like most Republicans, Trump says we should withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal. That would likely further destabilize the region and put Iran back on the path to building nuclear weapons. Most Congressional Republicans would then likely advocate bombing. Trump hasn't explicitly agreed, but his rhetoric isn't reassuring.

It is difficult to see why Trump would surround himself with people who are so hostile to Iran if he doesn't share their dangerous views about Iran policy, and they seem certain to advise him to do things that not only jeopardize the nuclear deal but also potentially put the U.S. on a collision course with Iran.