



The Iran Deal Is Done, but the Political Theater Is Just Beginning

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Donald Trump, the 2016 Republican presidential front-runner, warned that the Iran nuclear deal would **make** U.S. politicians “look like fools.” His partner-in-crime, Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas, said the next president **should** “rip to shreds this catastrophic deal.” Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, who is also running for the GOP nomination, **argued** that containing the regime of Iran’s supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, after he potentially got a nuclear weapon would be a “non-starter for people who lived through the first Holocaust.” Mike Huckabee, another GOP hopeful, said the agreement would “take the Israelis and **march** them to the door of the oven.”

The apocalyptic warnings weren’t enough to block President Barack Obama from winning a potentially legacy-defining victory Thursday as Senate Democrats prevented Republicans from even voting on a disapproval resolution, all but **assuring** the controversial pact will survive unscathed. But if you think the fiery rhetoric GOP presidential candidates used before Thursday’s vote will be a thing of the past, think again: Trump and his rivals are just getting started.

Experts who spoke to **Foreign Policy** after Democrats blocked the GOP vote said candidates for the Republican 2016 ticket are likely to continue to bash the pact, made between Iran and **six** world powers, with fire and brimstone. There’s a simple reason: Attacking the deal plays well with the party’s base, as well as the GOP money machine.

“It’s a very useful political issue because there’s no downside. They are free to say whatever they want,” Justin Logan, **director** of foreign policy studies at the **libertarian** Cato Institute in Washington, told **FP**. “Ten different ways of demagoguing the deal is useful, and there’s no cost for it if what they’re saying is untrue.”

Logan said any efforts to overturn the deal would be nothing more than “political theater.”

According to Alon Ben-Meir, a **professor** and senior fellow at New York University's Center for Global Affairs, Obama's enforcement of the deal will also impact how it's treated by Republican hopefuls. Under the terms of the pact, Iran must significantly limit its nuclear program in exchange for economic **sanctions** relief. If it doesn't, these punishments would theoretically **snap back** into place.

"Obama has to make absolutely certain that we are not going to take any cheating, however minute. That has to be made abundantly clear during the election and beyond," Ben-Meir said.

"If he does this, he will disarm the attacks by Republicans," he added.

After the deal was reached, it was clear GOP attacks on it were far from over, as evidenced by the tweets by Graham, Cruz and Rubio below.