

This summer the Wall Street Journal broke news of a secret transfer of \$400 million in foreign currency via an unmarked cargo plane to Iran back in January. Subsequently the White House had been forced to repeatedly deny having paid what was a ransom to Iran for the release of American hostages.

Iran has aired a documentary containing footage of pallets of millions in foreign currency that the video claims was part of the "expensive price" the Obama administration paid to free four U.S. hostages in January.

Obama has broken all the rules to appease the Ayatollahs. His administration has misled the public to spin the apparent \$1.7 billion ransom payment to Iran.

Republicans believe that President Obama's disastrous nuclear deal with Iran was sweetened with an illicit ransom payment and billions of dollars for the world's foremost state sponsor of terrorism,". So, why Iran is still unhappy with Obama?

Iran has violated U.N. Security Council resolutions banning Iranian missile launches. It conducted a naval missile test in dangerous proximity to a U.S. fleet aircraft carrier in the Gulf. It hijacked a U.S. military ship and videotaped the humiliation of its crew.

More recently an Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps missile ship and three fast-attack crafts demonstrated aggressive behavior in the vicinity of a US ship.

And yet, despite the partial lifting of sanctions, the release of billions of dollars and the granting of nuclear exemptions, the Ayatollahs of Iran are not happy.

The nuclear deal hasn't delivered the benefits Iran was hoping to receive. Its ambition to be a global heavy weight and the sole major regional player has not materialised. Others, such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Israel and Egypt are still calling the shots.

The leadership thought the signing of the nuclear accord would mark a new phase in its relations.

However, despite all the hard work of the Tehran funded lobbies in Washington, the pro-Tehran advisers in the White House, and the millions of dollars spent on PR and favourable press reporting, Iran is still not enjoying the fruits of the nuclear deal. Most banks remain reluctant to deal with Iran. American banks are not open for business with Iran.

Washington is fully aware that Iran, like its friends in Damascus, are the biggest sponsors of terrorism and abusers of human rights. It is bogged down in Iraq and Syria. Its military has failed to defeat the anti-Assad opposition despite Russian involvement.

Tehran's relations with Russia are strained. Russia embarrassed Tehran by telling the world that Iran allowed its air-force to use bases in Iran to attack targets in Syria.

Iran has not moderated its human rights policies. It executed 966 people in 2015, over 100 were juveniles. Amnesty International's report for 2015/2016 says "They blocked Facebook, Twitter and other social media websites, jammed foreign satellite television stations, arrested and imprisoned journalists and suppressed peaceful protests."

An important report issued by the Institute for Science and International Security, a Washington, D.C. arms-control think tank, revealed that Iran was secretly granted exemptions to the July 2015 nuclear agreement so it could meet requirements for what the agreement calls "Implementation Day" when Iran was to receive an estimated \$150 billion in sanctions relief.

Not coincidentally, the same day that Implementation Day was announced (January 18), U.S. officials announced a swap of 18 Iranian prisoners held by the United States for five U.S. citizens who had been illegally held by Iran. An additional 14 Iranians were removed from an INTERPOL wanted list. (A London based Iranian opposition figure told the author that the 18 Iranian prisoners refused to go back to Iran).

The Institute report cites an unnamed official who said that without these exemptions, some of Iran's nuclear facilities would not have been in compliance with the JCPOA by Implementation Day.

Some of the exemptions were significant and allowed Iran to not report activities with nuclear weapons-related applications. One of the exemptions allowed Iran to violate a cap of 300 kg for its

enriched-uranium stockpile under certain circumstances.

As the West is trying hard to renew business relations with Iran, the regime continues to oppress its citizens and deny their basic human rights. The regime hopes that the promise of business deals will blind the world to Iran's crimes against its own people.

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