



Terrorism and Political Violence Association

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Image: The Iran Project

Key points:

- Iran's sanctions lifted, how will this effect their relationship with the US?
- Bacha Khan University attacked in Pakistan, how will they prevent further attacks?
- Syrian talks in Geneva, will they reach a consensus?

Iran's sanctions lifted:

The nuclear agreement titled "Implementation Day" has now enabled Iran to become an actor at the global economy after 10 years of sanctions. It's frozen assets can be injected back to the economy through new goods and technology and the market of over 80 million people is likely to attract investment and trade deals from the West. As oil prices are currently falling, an increase in supply coming from Iranian oil will push prices even lower, causing uncertainty among other exporters. Immediately after the lift of

sanctions, the price of oil has fell to a historically low \$27 per barrel, which has since rose to \$32, while Iran has pledged to export 500,000 barrels a day. (CBC News, 2016) It is no surprise therefore that the Gulf state have already expressed discontent with the nuclear deal, perhaps fearing that rapprochement between Tehran and Washington could undermine their own relations with the US. Despite of removing one of the barriers between Iran and US, the diplomatic ties remain non-existent and tensions persist and each country is suspicious of the other. As parliamentary elections approach in February, the nuclear deal had solidified Rouhani's promise for a deal. The actual political and economic effects of the sanctions, however, are only to be seen in the upcoming decade.

Bacha Khan University attack in Pakistan:

The 5 facilitators have been detained in Pakistan on 23th January after carrying attacks at the Bacha Khan University in Charsadda, Khyber Pakhtunkwa under the command of Umer Mansour. (Tribune, 2016) While the TTP have condemned the attack, its fraction Darra Adam Khel, located in the FATA in Pakistan have claimed responsibility since. (Al Jazeera, 2016) The confusing reaction from the TTP could point out to their attempts to regain influence in the region in spite of internal factions. This attack resembles the events at military school in Peshawar in December 2014 and could therefore be seen as another act of vengeance by the Pakistani Taliban towards the army. What is important, therefore, is to ensure better security for education establishments to prevent future attacks which could reoccur if the Pakistani government decides to respond in a form of more operations in the FATA regions. The US President Obama has also urged Pakistan to take a more "serious" approach to targeting extremists. (Khaleej Times, 2016) Will this mean more finances coming to Pakistan to support this notion and will they be used accordingly?

Syrian Talks in Geneva:

The latest round of Syrian talks are due to begin on Monday 25th January 2016 in Geneva, Switzerland. The US Vice-President Joe Biden has stated, that the US is prepared for a military solution

against the IS if the Syrian government and the Syrian rebels fail to reach an agreement. The talks are still at risk of delay due to the lack of consensus regarding the composition of the opposition. (Reuters, 2016) The Chief negotiator has been announced as Mohammed Alloush of Jaish al-Islam (meaning the “Army of Islam” in Arabic) stirring controversy, as his group is considered a terrorist organisation by the Russian and Syria governments. (Al-Monitor, 2016) The problem that this situation presents is not only the willingness of all parties to negotiate, but particularly the willingness to “negotiate with terrorists”. The last Geneva talks 2 years ago, have not focused so much on the Syria and its governance, as on targeting terrorism in the country. What has been proposed now again, is the focus on the IS and it’s elimination, not Syria itself as a whole, as the US Vice-President Joe Biden has stated that the US is ready for a military solution against the IS in Syria (Reuters, 2016) We are therefore to see whether there will be at all any consensus reached between the present parties and what another US military involvement will do to the situation in the Middle East.