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## Lieberman at odds with CT politicians on Iran deal

By Dan Freedman Updated 12:13 am, Wednesday, July 15, 2015



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Former Sen. Joseph Lieberman, left, co-chair of the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, speaks about Iran while flanked by former CIA director and retired Air Force Gen. Michael Hayden, center, and ... [more](#)

WASHINGTON — Connecticut's two sitting senators offered measured praise for the Iran nuclear deal announced early Tuesday, but a former senator — **Joe Lieberman** — roundly condemned it as “a bad deal for America, a bad deal for Iran's neighbors in the Middle East and a bad deal for the world.”

Debate in the state's political circles mirrored that in the nation as a whole, with Democratic supporters of President **Barack Obama** mostly offering qualified support while Republicans and Jewish groups expressing skepticism, if not outright hostility.

And overhanging the rapid-fire back-and-forth after Obama announced the deal Tuesday is the question of what would happen if the Republican-controlled Congress succeeds in repudiating it.

“The question is not how does this stack up against the perfect deal, but how does this stack up against no deal,” said U.S. Rep. **Jim Himes**, D-Conn., a member of the **House Intelligence Committee**. “Every member of Congress has to ask that question.”

After receiving the agreement, Congress will have 60 days to hold hearings and debate the plan, after which lawmakers can consider a resolution of disapproval. With 60 votes needed in the Senate to override a filibuster, Republicans would require six **Democrats** to join them in opposition. Obama has threatened to veto such a resolution, which would take two-thirds of each chamber to override.

The agreement unveiled Tuesday commits Iran to major reductions in its uranium stockpiles and centrifuges used to make weapons-grade nuclear material. It also ushers in an international inspections regimen that would have wide access to Iran's nuclear sites.

The deal would gradually reduce sanctions and open up oil production to international consumption, a boost for Iran's cash-starved economy. And it would rope off military sites unless there was evidence of nuclear production, with disputes submitted to an arbitration panel dominated by Western nations.

Lieberman, a hawkish Democrat who served his last term as an independent before departing the Senate after the 2012 election, appeared Tuesday before the **House Foreign Affairs Committee** to speak out against the deal.

"When we united across party lines in Congress to pass sanctions (against Iran), it was with a clear and simple purpose to prevent Iran, the No. 1 state sponsor of terrorism in the world, from ever possessing a nuclear-weapons capability," Lieberman said. "This is not what the agreement announced today does."

Israeli Prime Minister **Benjamin Netanyahu** called the deal "a stunning historic mistake," a sentiment reflected by representatives of U.S. Jewish groups.

"Basically, we're relying on Iran to act in good faith, and we're relying on (the **International Atomic Energy Agency**) to effectively carry out inspections," said **Josh Sayles**, assistant director of the Connecticut regional office of the Anti-Defamation League, based in Hamden. "In the past we haven't been able to rely on either of those."

U.S. Sen. **Chris Murphy**, D-Conn., a member of the **Senate Foreign Relations Committee** who is carving out a role as a key Senate player on international issues, said the agreement appears to be "a good deal for American national security."

It keeps Iran from developing nuclear weapons and does not lift sanctions until Iran shows compliance, he said. "By definition, you don't get everything you want in a negotiation and they don't get everything they want."

U.S. Sen. **Richard Blumenthal**, D-Conn., welcomed the announcement but said the ultimate agreement must pass the thorough scrutiny of Congress. U.S. Rep. **Elizabeth Esty**, D-Conn., said: "As with any nuclear arms deal, we must evaluate this proposal not based on trust and faith, but on cold, hard analysis of what best advances the national security interests of the United States and what best enhances global stability."

Part of the political calculation hinges on which Iran was facing Secretary of State **John Kerry** and the other negotiators — the younger pro-Western electorate that voted in Iran's relatively liberal president, **Hassan Rouhani**, or the Ayatollah and mullahs who have referred to the U.S. as "the Great Satan."

"This announcement is a very good move for liberals and moderates in Iran," said **Tarek Sobh**, the Egyptian-born dean of the **University of Bridgeport's** engineering school who closely follows the region. "It emboldens and strengthens the young people who would like to see Iran integrated into the world economy."

*dan@hearstcd.com*

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