

Rouhani Feels The Pressure, Too

by [Mehdi Khalaji \(/experts/mehdi-khalaji\)](#)

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Failure to reach a nuclear agreement would have grim consequences for Iran's president and the wider reformist movement, but even a successful deal would leave him open to further conservative challenges on the resultant concessions.

President Obama is not the only leader who feels he must deliver as the March 31 deadline nears to reach a framework for a nuclear agreement. Iran's president, Hassan Rouhani, has staked his political present and future on his ability to conclude a deal. So far, the great majority of the Iranian people are staying with him, beckoned by the promise of lifted sanctions and better economic times -- not to mention immunity from potential U.S. or Israeli military strikes.

Yet just as Obama is facing strong resistance from certain domestic blocs, Rouhani and his fellow negotiators are contending with powerful conservative opponents. On March 14, Hossein Shariatmadari, an appointee of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei who edits the hardline newspaper *Kayhan*, penned an op-ed titled "A Nuclear Agreement Is Impossible" in which he argues that expecting sanctions relief is unrealistic given that sanctions are the "most effective weapon in U.S. hands, which it would not put down." Such statements from a Khamenei acolyte -- indeed someone who often voices the Supreme Leader's direct views to lend him personal immunity -- beg some sort of explanation...

[Read the full article on the *Hill* website. \(http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/foreign-policy/236323-rouhani-feels-the-pressure-too\)](http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/foreign-policy/236323-rouhani-feels-the-pressure-too) ❖

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