

## **Rejoining the Iran Deal Benefits US National Security**

### **An Open Letter from Retired National Security Leaders**

As retired military leaders, diplomats, and national security professionals, we strongly support restoring constraints on Iran's nuclear program by swiftly returning both Iran and the United States to the nuclear accord as a starting point for further negotiations to address the many threats posed by Iran.

We are clear-eyed about the threats posed by Iran to U.S. national security. The most threatening would be the development of an Iranian nuclear weapon. Preventing a nuclear-armed Iran must be the paramount objective of our Iran policy, and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) remains the best path to achieving this objective.

Current U.S. policy towards Iran has proved disastrous for U.S. national security. After the U.S. unilaterally withdrew from the nuclear accord, Iran began breaching several of its limits: increasing its stockpile of low-enriched uranium, enriching uranium to a higher purity level, and installing advanced centrifuges at its nuclear facilities. Our current policy has not only led to an unconstrained Iranian nuclear program; it also failed to address Iran's other dangerous behavior, including support for terrorist proxies and ballistic missile development.

This policy, characterized by a rejection of diplomacy and reliance on empty, belligerent rhetoric, has induced increased attacks against our troops and allies in the region, and increased the likelihood of conflict in the Middle East. War with Iran would be an unmitigated disaster. While there is no question that the U.S. would prevail, military conflict with Iran would incur unacceptable costs to the United States and ultimately fail to advance U.S. national security.

We are deeply concerned that our current course could lead to military conflict with Iran and Iran's development of a nuclear weapon. We must urgently reverse course, beginning by rejoining the JCPOA. Rejoining the nuclear deal, including selective lifting of sanctions, is key to de-escalating tensions that threaten to spiral into military conflict and key to ensuring that Iran never develops nuclear weapons. By rejoining the JCPOA, we will be in a stronger position to engage in follow-on negotiations over other concerns with Iran - concerns we share with our allies.

We encourage policymakers to act quickly to bring both Iran and the United States back into compliance with the nuclear accord. Rejoining the nuclear agreement will benefit U.S. national security and is critical to restoring U.S. credibility, influence, and ability to secure U.S. interests and the interests of our allies worldwide.

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