

# Comprehensive U.S. Strategy Toward Iran After the JCPOA

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*JINSA's Gemunder Center Iran Task Force*

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# Executive Summary

The Trump Administration potentially is opening a new chapter in America's relationship with Iran. In withdrawing from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran's nuclear program, it has discarded its predecessor's misplaced hopes of moderating Tehran's increasing aggression through engagement, in favor of a set of demands that, if realized, could significantly roll back Iran's nuclear program and regional aggression and possibly hasten the end of the regime.

A sea change indeed is required. For too long the United States has been self-deterred from confronting the Iranian regime, out of concern to empower purported moderates in Tehran or an overriding desire simply to wash its hands of the Middle East. This retrenchment has only encouraged the regime's inherently malign behaviors, including its periodic testing of the limits of the nuclear deal, continued progress on advanced centrifuges and ballistic missiles, regional expansion, support for terrorism and propagation of virulent anti-American ideology. Paradoxically, many of these actions make the regime increasingly unpopular at home and overextended in the region.

The United States needs a forceful and clear policy to roll back the growth of the Iranian threat. To secure the administration's demands that Tehran abandon its pursuit of nuclear weapons and regional hegemony as well as its continuing support for terrorism, the United States must develop a comprehensive strategy utilizing all elements of American and allied power – diplomatic, economic and military – to apply maximum leverage over the Iranian regime, including by targeting its underlying vulnerabilities. The administration's formation of an Iran Action Group to manage government-wide policy and coordinate with allies is a potential step in the right direction. As part of this strategy, American policymakers must be prepared to deter or thwart a range of responses by Iran intended to counter these new pressures.

This new approach entails more than returning to the pre-JCPOA focus on sanctions, even as the administration re-imposes these measures. With Tehran already facing persistent and widespread domestic protests, sanctions appear better poised now than before the deal to starve the regime of precious resources for maintaining control at home and exporting its revolution. This in turn could magnify internal opposition to the regime and reinforce its abiding fear that the United States actively seeks its overthrow.

Yet it would be a mistake to expect even robust sanctions, on their own, to deter or deny Iran's nuclear weapons progress, arrest its aspirations for Middle East dominance, and convince the regime its very survival could be at stake if its aggression persists. Instead, such economic measures should be supplemented by other forms of pressure that will maximize the coercive impact of U.S. policy against Tehran, including credible options for use of force.

Currently U.S. regional allies provide the most credible and ready options for compelling Iran to roll back its regional presence, given the uncertainties about President Trump's willingness to remain engaged in the Middle East past the defeat of ISIS. Always proactive in self-defense, Israel shoulders the burden of pushing Iran out of Syria and interdicting its military supplies to Hezbollah, while Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) are taking it upon themselves to confront Iranian influence and weapons proliferation in Yemen. The United States also has partners on the ground in Syria and Iraq, chiefly the Kurds, who present real obstacles to Tehran's ambitions of dominating both countries.

It is squarely in the U.S. interest to shore up its allies as they lead the fight on the front lines against Iran. This includes providing them both the tools to defend themselves, and explicit U.S. backing for their efforts to diminish Iran's destabilizing regional footprint. By strengthening and supporting Israel and other Middle Eastern allies, American policymakers can improve their chances of reducing Iranian aggression and avoiding major regional conflict.

A separate U.S.-Israel Security Task Force at JINSA's Gemunder Center earlier this year issued recommendations to ensure Israel has the proper tools to defend itself by itself against Iran, and thereby also defend U.S. security interests.<sup>1</sup> The proposed measures – which include elevating Israel's official standing as a U.S. ally, frontloading the 2016 bilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on U.S. defense assistance to Israel, prepositioning advanced munitions in Israel and driving Israel-Arab security cooperation – mutually reinforce the recommendations laid out below to bolster U.S. and allied pushback against Iran.

Regionwide, the United States should step up its own efforts and bolster those of its allies to interdict Iranian arms transfers. It should provide Israel with critical military capabilities and unmistakable official support for Israeli redlines in Syria and Lebanon. American policymakers also should capitalize on growing coordination between Gulf allies against Iran by promoting integrated regional missile defense and providing explicit military backing for Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates against direct Iranian attack, among other measures.

Support for allies against Iran is essential, but should not be viewed by American policymakers as an adequate substitute for credible U.S. commitments to confront Iran. The United States should leverage its own presence, as well as that of its partners, in Syria and Iraq, the two flashpoints which play a central role in Middle East stability and where Tehran is most deeply committed. Given its support for brutal sectarianism, and the roadblocks posed by U.S. forces and their partners on the ground, Iran also is most vulnerable to counterpressure in these two countries.

To address threats from both Iran and ISIS – whose persistence only increases Iran's leverage and influence in these countries – the United States must make clear it will maintain a limited force presence in Syria and Iraq, primarily special operations forces. It also should bolster military support for its Syrian and Iraqi partners, first and foremost the multi-ethnic, Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), and update rules of engagement to appropriately defend its forces, the SDF and other partners on the ground. In tandem with a more concerted policy of blocking land routes via Iraq and Syria, these measures will constrain Iran's entrenchment in the heart of the region.

A concerted U.S. political warfare campaign can reinforce these measures by targeting the growing fissures in the very pillars of the regime's domestic power and exploiting the regime's fear that the United States is making progress in undermining its security and longevity. Borrowing from successful Cold War-era policies and building from Secretary Pompeo's speech at the Reagan Library in July, this campaign would seek to counter the regime's anti-American propaganda, curtail its repressive powers and bolster the Iranian people and their demand for change by exposing the rampant corruption of the theocracy and the costs of its imperial adventures abroad.

Diplomacy also has a vital role in any strategy to coerce Iran. The United States should explore areas of cooperation with European, Asian and Middle East allies to isolate Tehran and mitigate

fallout from leaving the JCPOA. At the same time, proactive public diplomacy can expand on the strategic rationales already provided by the Trump Administration in announcing its new approach to Iran, and can highlight Iran's legally-binding non-proliferation obligations regardless of the nuclear deal.

Last but certainly not least, the United States must rebuild direct military leverage over Tehran. By updating contingency plans against Iran's nuclear program and military forces – including its ballistic missile program – American policymakers can strengthen their hand in pursuing the other elements of a comprehensive strategy of coercion. With the potential for Iran to leave the JCPOA and resume its nuclear enrichment activities, such military preparations are also vital to deter and if necessary prevent Tehran from advancing toward nuclear weapons capability.

## Enforce Sanctions as One Form of Pressure Among Others

In ceasing U.S. adherence to the JCPOA, the Trump Administration vowed to reinstate sanctions suspended by the deal until Tehran abandons its pursuits of nuclear weapons, terrorism and regional hegemony.<sup>2</sup> These sanctions, which target the regime's primary revenue sources, are critical to any strategy of pressure against Iran. With Tehran already facing persistent widespread protests, they appear better poised to exploit the regime's vulnerabilities now than when they were first implemented before the JCPOA.

This stems primarily from the regime's disintegrating authority at home. Having delegitimized the Islamic Republic in many Iranians' eyes with the fraudulent presidential election of 2009, the regime has largely maintained power since then through patronage and coercion. But endemic government mismanagement, high-level corruption and costly regional interventions have siphoned off patronage funds and prevented everyday Iranians from realizing the expected benefits of sanctions relief since the JCPOA was announced in 2015.<sup>3</sup>

The regime now governs chiefly by repression, alienating the populace even further and leading to widespread sustained protests since late 2017 – including among traditional bastions of regime support – against unemployment, inflation, foreign adventurism and, tellingly, the regime itself.

Against this backdrop, sanctions could seriously hamstring the regime by reducing the resources at its disposal to continue enriching itself, support its nuclear program and fund its expanding regional footprint and proxy networks. Sanctions also could accelerate drivers of internal opposition to the regime by diminishing further its ability to govern through patronage, and by exacerbating economic problems caused by corruption and mismanagement. This could heighten Tehran's fear that the United States is successfully undermining the regime's security and longevity – a fear that in the past helped convince Tehran to soften or even abandon aggressive policies.

While economic sanctions have become an increasingly powerful tool in America's foreign policy arsenal, combatting the full spectrum of threats posed by Iran should ideally draw on all elements of U.S. power.

In particular, while reducing the resources available to the regime, sanctions may not produce certain desired outcomes quickly enough – particularly regarding Iran's nuclear program. Tehran has made clear it will leave the JCPOA and potentially “restart its [nuclear] activities without any limits” if the other parties – chiefly Europe – prove incapable of providing it with sufficient economic benefits in the face of renewed U.S. sanctions.<sup>4</sup> Iran would then be free to sprint for a nuclear weapons capability in a year or less.

Strong sanctions therefore must be reinforced with military pressure, which has been deployed successfully in the past to influence Tehran's decision-making in a timely and decisive manner. In 1988, as U.S. intervention in the Iran-Iraq War threatened to collapse Iran's entire front and potentially the regime itself, Supreme Leader Khomeini agreed to end the seemingly interminable conflict. Concerned it could be next, Tehran unilaterally suspended key parts of its nuclear program in 2004 after the United States toppled the Taliban and Saddam Hussein in quick succession. In 2012 Iran capped its nuclear program short of a “red line” drawn literally by Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu in a speech to the U.N. General Assembly.<sup>5</sup>

## Strengthen Allies' Military Capabilities Against Iran

### *A. Bolster Interdiction of Iranian Weapons Proliferation*

When it comes to pushing back against Iran, there is no substitute for direct U.S. engagement in the Middle East. However, with America's role in the region uncertain, regional allies currently provide the readiest military options against the spearheads of Iranian expansion and should be supported alongside more robust U.S. commitments to regional stability.

As part of its ongoing entrenchment in Syria, Yemen and elsewhere, Iran is proliferating missiles and other weaponry to target U.S. ships and alter the strategic balance against key U.S. allies like Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates. Increasingly these countries take it upon themselves to interdict Iranian weapons shipments, but they need U.S. capabilities and support to more effectively reduce Iranian aggression and deter Tehran from further escalation. Greater U.S. interdiction efforts are also needed to reinforce those of our allies and to prompt more determined actions on their part.

Amid these regional developments, a separate U.S.-Israel Security Task Force at JINSA's Gemunder Center earlier this year issued recommendations to ensure Israel has the proper tools to defend itself by itself against Iran, and thereby also defend U.S. security interests.<sup>6</sup> The proposed measures – which include elevating Israel's official standing as a U.S. ally, frontloading the 2016 bilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on U.S. defense assistance to Israel, prepositioning advanced munitions in Israel and driving Israel-Arab security cooperation – mutually reinforce the recommendations laid out below to bolster U.S. and allied pushback against Iran.

Countering Iranian proliferation is one of the most immediate areas to address in this regard. In devising policy to implement the Trump Administration's recurrent calls for tougher collective action and to support its allies, the United States should:



- Transfer precision munitions, missile defense interceptors and other relevant weapons systems to Israel.
- Provide full diplomatic backing for Israeli redlines and military actions against Iranian arms transfers via Syria, and against Iranian efforts to build weapons production sites in Syria and Lebanon.
- Work with regional allies including Israel, Saudi Arabia and U.A.E. to provide maritime domain awareness and step up interdiction efforts in the Red, Arabian and Mediterranean seas, as well as efforts to hinder Iran’s use of civilian aircraft to transport military supplies and personnel.
- Fully enforce legally-binding U.N. Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2216 prohibiting arms supplies to Iran’s Houthi surrogates in Yemen, including by leveraging authorities under Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter permitting economic sanctions or use of force.
  - These transfers also violate UNSCR 2231, which prohibits (among other things) Iranian transfers of missiles and other conventional weapons, and prohibits countries from assisting Iran in the manufacture of such weapons systems.<sup>7</sup>
- Prepare contingency plans and conduct joint exercises to deter or deny potential Iranian responses, including threats of the use of force by Tehran.
- Expand the administration’s strong strategic communications campaign to publicize Iranian violations of these UNSCRs.

## *B. Reinforce Military Cooperation Among Gulf Allies*

Saudi Arabia and U.A.E. are increasingly working in concert against Iran, which remains the primary threat to Persian Gulf security.<sup>8</sup> Iran’s continuing work on nuclear delivery vehicles also creates the potential for a dangerous proliferation cascade, in which Saudi Arabia, U.A.E. and possibly others develop their own nuclear weapons programs as the best option to deter a nuclear Iran. This incentive would gain urgency if Tehran responds to U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA by progressing toward nuclear weapons capability.

To forestall a proliferation cascade, strengthen allies’ cooperative self-defense and send a strong deterrent message to Tehran, the United States should:

- Pursue an integrated regional missile defense and shared early warning system, including joint command and control centers, between the United States, Saudi Arabia, U.A.E. and potentially other regional allies.
  - Significant infrastructure is already in place to coordinate intelligence and operations, including common U.S.-supplied anti-ballistic missile systems and a U.A.E.-based air warfare center, though the United States will need to provide technical assistance for real-time data sharing among allies.
- Articulate clear U.S. support for the Saudi-Emirati Coordination Council, including explicit military backing for alliance members against direct Iranian attack.
- Promote greater interoperability and readiness among maritime defenses of U.S. Gulf allies by coordinating procurement of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities, including early-warning aircraft, patrol boats, radars, communications systems and support and utility helicopters.
- Ensure contingency plans are in place to address potential Iranian aggression in the Gulf in reaction to closer military cooperation among the United States and its allies.

- Conduct highly-visible joint exercises to make U.S. and allied intentions, capabilities and unity abundantly clear to Tehran.

## Block Iranian Expansion in Syria and Iraq

The United States should maintain a limited force presence and reinforce its partners on the ground to challenge and constrain Iranian entrenchment in Syria and Iraq. These countries simultaneously form both the center of gravity and a weak link in Iran’s hegemonic ambitions to consolidate control over the geopolitical heart of the region stretching from Tehran directly to the Mediterranean and Hezbollah in Lebanon. Syria and Iraq are artificial constructs riven by ethno-sectarian fissures, leaving Iran with only the Assad regime and Iraqi Shiite militias as allies on the ground. Backed by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and Iranian-recruited militias, their brutality has turned large swathes of their own populations against them and Tehran’s meddling. U.S. forces and their partners in these countries pose additional roadblocks, both physical and political, for Iran – most notably the SDF which controls the strategically valuable northeastern third of Syria, including most of the country’s hydrocarbon resources.

Ultimately reversing Iran’s regional expansion pivots around these two flashpoints, whose fate plays the biggest role in determining the Middle East balance of power and where Tehran is most deeply committed and potentially vulnerable. The United States can signal its commitment to regional stability and impose real constraints on Iran by retaining a troop presence and supporting forces outside Tehran’s control in these countries, chiefly the multi-ethnic, Kurdish-led SDF. Conversely, a precipitous U.S. withdrawal would threaten a repeat of 2011, when the pullout of American troops from Iraq undermined U.S. credibility and created a vacuum for Iran and Sunni extremists.

To date the administration has not articulated a comprehensive plan to secure its demand that Iran withdraw all forces under its command from Syria and relinquish its control over Iraqi militias. To help thwart Iran’s objectives and build leverage against it in Syria and Iraq, the United States should:

- Adopt a forceful declaratory policy for its military missions in these countries:
  - o Make clear the United States will maintain a limited military presence in and over Syria and Iraq, both to prevent the reemergence of ISIS and preserve relations with local partners in the anti-ISIS campaign, as well as to maintain diplomatic leverage and bargaining power over Iran’s efforts to dominate postwar Syria.
  - o Underscore that U.S. forces will defend themselves and their Syrian and Iraqi partners if attacked.
    - The United States sent a strong deterrent message in retaliating overwhelmingly against a February 7 incursion by Syrian regime-partner forces across the agreed Euphrates River demarcation line. American policymakers must make clear they are prepared to do so again if necessary.
- Strengthen U.S. capabilities and support allies to underpin this declaratory policy:
  - o Maintain a limited U.S. military presence, primarily special operations forces, to assist local partners like the SDF in preventing strategic territory liberated from ISIS from being used in support of Iranian objectives.

- o Provide updated rules of engagement (ROE) permitting appropriately forceful self-defense responses to future provocations like that of February 7.
- o Continue U.S. missions to train, advise, assist and equip the Iraqi Counterterrorism Service, Iraqi Special Operations Forces and SDF, in exchange for Iraqi commitment to isolate Iranian-led forces in the country.
  - The U.S. military should consider embedding U.S. personnel in the Iraqi military at lower levels than it does currently.<sup>9</sup>
  - Assisting the SDF likely will entail pushing back against objections from Turkey.
- o In tandem with other interdiction efforts in the region, develop a more concerted policy to block or hinder Iran's use of land routes across Iraq and Syria to entrench itself in Syria and resupply Hezbollah.
- Preempt and counter Iranian efforts to delegitimize the U.S. presence in Syria by highlighting U.N. resolutions strongly condemning abuses by the IRGC, Hezbollah and associated militias in Syria and calling upon them to leave the country.

## Wage a Concerted Political Warfare Campaign Against Iran

A serious political warfare campaign could bolster U.S. diplomatic, economic and military pressures against the regime. Such a campaign would target and exploit Tehran's growing domestic vulnerabilities through information operations, cyber, sanctions and support for dissidents, among other measures. Secretary Pompeo's speech at the Reagan Library on July 22 detailing the corruption and misdeeds of senior Iranian leaders is an excellent first step in this regard.<sup>10</sup>

In amplifying the Trump Administration's strong rhetoric critical of the regime, a political warfare campaign should target the growing fissures in the very pillars of Tehran's power. American policymakers should:

- Use existing laws for countering Iranian censorship to highlight the regime's misdeeds via information operations, including U.S. public broadcasting inside Iran, to publicize:
  - o The extent of economic and political corruption in key regime organs, including the Supreme Leader and other regime leadership, IRGC, regime-affiliated charitable trusts (*bonyads*) and major state-run companies.
  - o The dire socioeconomic consequences for everyday Iranians of regime policies, including unemployment, inflation, brain drain and resource shortages.
  - o The financial and reputational costs of Tehran's brutal and illegal support for the Syrian regime, Hezbollah and other proxies, and its support for terrorism.
  - o The regime's systemic human and civil rights abuses, and the abject failure of President Rouhani's 2016 "Charter of Citizenship Rights" to uphold these rights.
- Create a dedicated task force covering Iranian regime entities and proxies at the State Department's General Engagement Center, which coordinates and disseminates U.S. counterterrorism communications.
- Develop U.S. cyber capabilities and plans targeting Iranian cyber efforts to control discourse on its domestic internet, conduct cyberespionage against its own citizens

- and block efforts by Iranians to communicate with each other.
- Expand and enforce U.S. sanctions supporting the above measures, including sanctions against Iranian entities and individuals complicit in human rights violations, censorship and suppression of dissent, as well as any foreign entities that support them.
- Explore possibilities for covert support of dissident and minority groups inside Iran and Iranians in exile that share American values.

American policymakers also must make serious efforts to address Tehran’s aggressive political warfare campaign against the United States, which likely would heighten in response to above measures. Using state-controlled media like Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting and its affiliate Press TV, plus social media from Iranian leadership, Tehran promulgates messaging to delegitimize American values and policies before Iranian and international audiences, and to promote regime policies abroad. A strategic communications campaign must hold a mirror up to Tehran’s hypocritical running narratives of U.S. domestic issues, U.S. duplicity in negotiating and implementing the JCPOA and the illegitimacy of the U.S. presence in Syria and Iraq.

## Conduct Proactive Diplomacy

Diplomacy must play a key role in any strategy to coerce Iran. The U.S. departure from the JCPOA and re-imposition of sanctions has generated tensions with allies in Europe and Asia that, if mitigated, could help isolate Tehran. U.S. partners in the Middle East, many of them more favorable to the decision to leave the JCPOA, should be mobilized to support and reinforce these efforts. At the same time, consistent, coherent public diplomacy can address potential diplomatic fallout from leaving the nuclear deal and counter Tehran’s self-depiction as the aggrieved party.

To help bring allies and other partners onboard to pressure Iran, American diplomats should:

- Seek to alleviate U.S.-E.U. differences over the JCPOA by pursuing other areas of cooperation against Iran’s malign behaviors, including:
  - o Addressing threats from Iran’s advancing ballistic and cruise missile programs.
  - o Working with NATO and other allies in the anti-ISIS coalition to prevent the reemergence of ISIS and maintain diplomatic leverage and bargaining power over Iran’s efforts to dominate postwar Iraq and Syria.
  - o Cooperating on intelligence against Tehran’s pursuit of illicit and dual-use materials for its nuclear program.
  - o Pursuing multilateral maritime security measures against Iranian weapons proliferation in the Middle East.
  - o Targeting Tehran’s continuing support for terrorism, including in Europe.
- Mobilize U.S. partners in the Middle East to build diplomatic support in Europe, Asia and the U.N. for U.S. policy goals against Iran, including by encouraging partners in the Persian Gulf to support U.S. sanctions policy against Iran by applying their significant financial and trade leverage with international companies.
- Under U.S. auspices, promote mutually beneficial, if tacit, cooperation between Israel and key U.S. Arab allies against Iran on regional missile defense, Red Sea security, intelligence and cyber (among others).

- o Broader Israel-Arab cooperation, including on water security, agriculture, medicine and technology, can underscore Iran's growing isolation in the region.

Another key element is public diplomacy that expands on the Trump Administration's new approach to Iran. An effective campaign should include:

- The many dangerous flaws in the JCPOA – many of which worsen the longer the deal continues – beyond those already identified in Trump Administration statements, including:
  - o An enrichment research and development (R&D) plan, agreed initially in secret as part of the JCPOA, which allows Iran to scale up its enrichment capacity significantly prior to the deal's sunsets.
  - o The JCPOA's failure to secure a full and complete declaration of the possible military dimensions (PMD) of Iran's nuclear program, as highlighted by the recent retrieval by Israeli intelligence of Iranian nuclear files from storage.<sup>11</sup>
  - o Unacceptable reductions in IAEA reporting on Iran's adherence to the deal.
  - o Incomplete accounting of Iran's centrifuge production and storage capacity.
  - o The end of conventional weapons and missile embargoes on Iran, beginning no later than October 2020.
  - o By October 2023, the termination of all U.S. nuclear-related sanctions, which would eliminate the president's prerogative to snap back sanctions in response to Iranian violations.<sup>12</sup>
  - o By October 2025, the elimination of a legal basis for any future U.N. sanctions on Iran's nuclear program.<sup>13</sup>
- Iran's legally-binding non-proliferation obligations, regardless of the JCPOA's fate:
  - o The absence of any Iranian "right" to enrich.
    - The NPT does not imply – let alone articulate – any such right, especially the possession of potential military elements of nuclear technology.
  - o A prohibition on developing nuclear-capable ballistic missile technology.<sup>14</sup>
    - American officials must also anticipate and rebut Tehran's stock-in-trade refrain that these missiles are solely for conventional warheads.<sup>15</sup>
  - o Adherence to Modified Code 3.1 of its IAEA Safeguards Agreement, which requires Iran to inform the IAEA in advance of any plans to construct new nuclear-related facilities.
    - Iran accepted the code in 2003 before reneging in 2007. The IAEA maintains no safeguards can be suspended unilaterally, and therefore the code remains in force on Iran's nuclear program.<sup>16</sup>
  - o UNSCR 2231 prohibitions on ballistic missile cooperation with other countries.<sup>17</sup>

## Update Military Contingency Plans for Iran

At key junctures, the realistic prospect of military action against its forces and nuclear program has compelled decisive changes in Tehran's policies. A comprehensive strategy of pressure must include credible U.S. military options against the Iranian regime's most critical assets, including its nuclear and ballistic missile programs. Preparing for such contingencies, and communicating U.S. military readiness, will strengthen American policymakers' hands as they pursue a coercive approach against Iran more broadly. With Tehran already expanding its

capacity for nuclear enrichment in response to U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA, preparation for military action as a last resort is also necessary to deter or ultimately halt an Iranian breakout from its current enrichment limitations and/or clandestine activity that violates the nuclear deal it purports to be honoring.<sup>18</sup>

Accordingly, American policymakers and defense planners should:

- Update contingency plans to neutralize Iran's nuclear facilities, should Iran resume its progress toward nuclear weapons capability or obstruct IAEA inspectors' access to declared or suspected undeclared nuclear-related facilities.
  - The Pentagon also should update plans to counter potential retaliation by Iran and its proxies against an Israeli strike on Iranian nuclear facilities, including possible attacks on Saudi Arabia and U.A.E.
- Prepare contingency plans to defend the United States and its allies from further Iranian tests of nuclear-capable missiles, including unequivocal threats to shoot down these tests if necessary.
- Ensure U.S. force protection measures account for the growing potential for direct conflict with Iran and its proxies, as Tehran's expanding regional footprint generates friction points in Syria, Iraq, the Persian Gulf, Bab el Mandeb and elsewhere.
- Announce publicly each of these steps and convey unequivocally to Iran, its proxies and Russia that the United States is fully prepared to execute these plans.



# Endnotes

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4. Amir Vahdat, "Iran opens new nuclear facility for centrifuge production," Associated Press, June 6, 2018.
5. Michael Makovsky, "Beyond sanctions, how the U.S. can pressure Iran," Reuters, May 29, 2018.
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7. UNSCR 2231 Annex B §5 prohibits any country, unless approved specifically by the UNSC, from "the supply, sale or transfer directly or indirectly from or through their territories" of conventional weapons to Iran, or for the use in or benefit of Iran. This section also prohibits any country, unless approved specifically by the UNSC, from "the provision to Iran by their nationals or from or through their territories of technical training, financial resources or services, advice, other services or assistance related to the supply, sale, transfer, manufacture, maintenance, or use" of such weapons.
8. Shireena Al Nowais, "First meeting of Saudi-Emirati Coordination Council takes place in Jeddah," *The National* (UAE), June 7, 2018.
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12. Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action Annex II §3-§4, and Annex V, §20-§21, §23.
13. UNSCR 2231 §8, "Decides, acting under Article 41 of the Charter of the United Nations, that on the date ten years after the JCPOA Adoption Day [October 2015], as defined in the JCPOA, all the provisions of this resolution shall be terminated, and none of the previous resolutions described in paragraph 7 (a) [UNSCRs 1696, 1737, 1747, 1803, 1835, 1929, 2224] shall be applied, the Security Council will have concluded its consideration of the Iranian nuclear issue, and the item 'Non-proliferation' will be removed from the list of matters of which the Council is seized."
14. In March 2016, then State Department spokesman John Kirby said Iran "doesn't have the right, according to the international community and the U.N., to develop ballistic missile technology. They do not." See: "John Kirby: Daily Press Briefing," U.S. State Department Office of Press Relations, March 8, 2016.
15. On Iranian claims that its missiles are solely conventional, see, e.g.: Bozorgmehr Sharefedin, "Iran vows to pursue missile program despite new U.S. sanctions," Reuters, March 28, 2016.
16. See: Kelsey Davenport, "Under a Microscope: Monitoring and Verification in an Iran Deal," Arms Control Association, April 29, 2015.
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