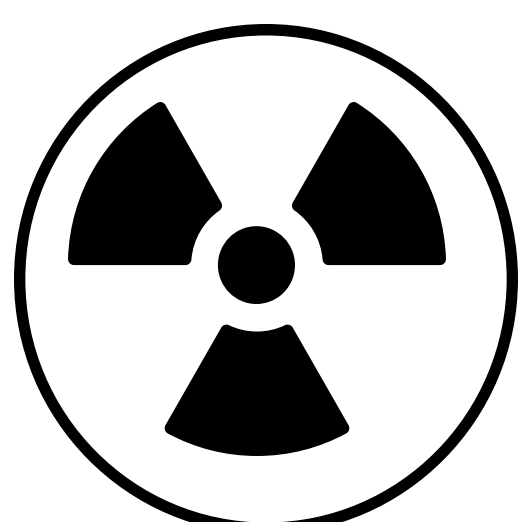


Multilateral talks have the U.S. and Iran on the cusp of a return to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), or Iran Deal, a process that, if completed, would be a historic success for diplomacy and a relief for people in Iran and the U.S. Today, the U.S. has an opportunity to rectify the Trump administration's failed "maximum pressure" policy and return to a proven diplomatic framework that limits the risk of war, prevents nuclear proliferation, and ends the unjust collective punishment of people in Iran.

- President Biden campaigned on returning to the JCPOA and now has an opportunity to deliver on that promise. People in the U.S. [overwhelmingly support](#) JCPOA reentry.
- Congress must not stand in the way of this major diplomatic achievement. People are what matter in these moments — and Congress should prioritize avoiding a senseless war and cementing the benefits of diplomacy.

REJOINING THE JCPOA



- In 2018, the Trump administration unilaterally withdrew the U.S. from the JCPOA — the international agreement signed and [adopted](#) in 2015 that successfully curtailed Iran's ability to develop nuclear weapons. The U.S. withdrawal allowed Iran to step up its uranium enrichment and conduct advanced centrifuge research.
- President Biden made JCPOA reentry a key campaign promise and has almost fulfilled it. In the interim, however, many have ginned up opposition to a return to the deal. Their efforts have failed — clear majorities in both the U.S. and Iran [support](#) returning to the deal.
- **There is now a unique opportunity to reenter the JCPOA and realize the security and economic benefits the deal provides.**

RISKS OF A RETURN TO "MAXIMUM PRESSURE"

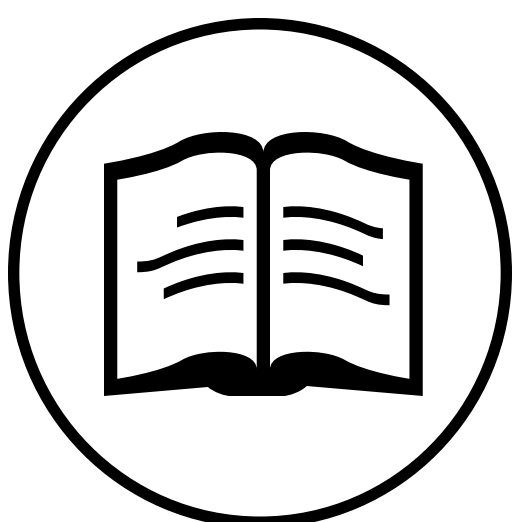
If the U.S. rejects this chance at JCPOA reentry and resumes "maximum pressure," outcomes will likely be disastrous:



- Failure to return to the deal will leave Iran's nuclear program unchecked, courting devastating war and nuclear proliferation in the region.
- During the Trump administration, tit-for-tat attacks culminated in an Iranian missile strike on a U.S. base in Iraq. Majorities in Congress acted to prevent the president from going to war with Iran. Now, Congress has the chance to prevent this escalation before it starts by embracing the JCPOA.
- "Maximum pressure" also means needless suffering for people in Iran. The harms built up by years of U.S. sanctions are massive, and piling on further sanctions will just deepen suffering without making anyone safer in the U.S. or Iran.

"MAXIMUM PRESSURE" UNDERMINES ACTIVISM IN IRAN

Blanket U.S. sanctions and failed "maximum pressure" policies have long caused people in Iran to suffer and undermine activists pushing for change:



- The Trump administration's threats of war and economic warfare — which spilled into the start of Biden's term — further destabilized Iran's economy, undercut the middle class, and empowered hardliners keen to crack down on a civil society pursuing more openness and democratic change.
- Compounded by COVID-19, people in Iran are increasingly forced to focus on meeting basic survival needs, undermining their ability to organize, advocate for human rights, and push for political change — especially in marginalized communities that are often hit hardest by sanctions.

SANCTIONS ARE NOT THE SOLUTION

While targeted sanctions can be effective, **blanket sanctions harm everyday people**. Years of U.S. sanctions on Iran have only empowered hardliners, inflamed anti-American sentiment, and exacerbated the suffering of people in Iran. Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the sanctions compounded by Iranian government corruption have been particularly cruel. Even after the Biden administration belatedly issued sanctions waivers for vaccines, U.S. financial restrictions have made it difficult for Iran to acquire medical supplies to fight the pandemic. The results have been devastating: 140,000 deaths by [official count](#), with independent [estimates](#) well over twice that. Ending blanket sanctions creates an opportunity for the U.S. and Iran to work together to confront the pandemic, rather than forcing hundreds of thousands of people in Iran to suffer.



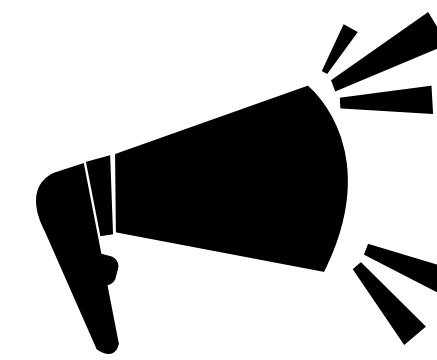


POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONGRESS

Members of Congress must be vigilant and vocal against policies that undermine U.S. long-term interests, drive the U.S. further from its allies, and threaten an escalation to war. Congress can take action to support a productive U.S. policy towards Iran in several ways:

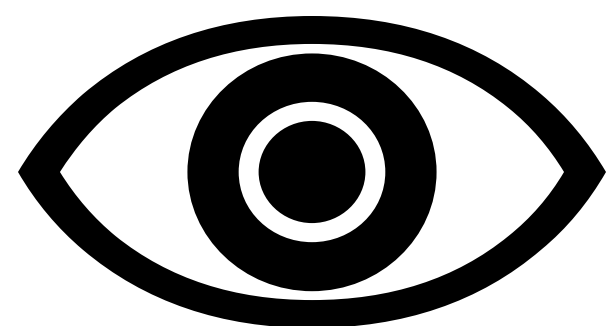
SUPPORT PRO-DIPLOMACY EFFORTS & OPPOSE LEGISLATION TO KILL THE JCPOA

Members of Congress should support measures that promote diplomacy and oppose legislation that would limit or foreclose the Biden administration's ability to return to compliance with the deal. Congress should also repeal the 2002 Authorization for Use of Military Force, a 19 year-old law used for the 2003 invasion of Iraq that Trump claimed — without merit — provided the legal authority to assassinate Iranian commander Qasem Soleimani, part of the series of escalations that almost brought the U.S. and Iran to war in 2020.



SPEAK PUBLICLY ABOUT DIPLOMACY & THE CONSEQUENCES OF WAR

With Iran hawks ramping up their campaign against U.S.-Iran diplomacy, it's crucial that members of Congress speak out in the media and public events about the benefits of the JCPOA and diplomatic engagement to U.S., Iranian, and international security.



PLEDGE TO CONDUCT OVERSIGHT OF BIDEN'S IRAN POLICY

Congress should conduct oversight into any military operations in Iran, as well as other regional conflicts where the U.S. is indirectly confronting Iran.

END U.S. MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN REGIONAL CONFLICTS

Defund U.S. military operations and withdraw U.S. military forces from Iraq, Syria, and Yemen, through which confrontation with Iran and Iranian-backed forces could be used as a pretext for escalation inside Iran.

SELECT PAST LEGISLATIVE ACTION ON IRAN

- **May 2015:** Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA) [enacted](#).
- **June 2019:** Majority of Senate votes in support of [Udall/Kaine amendment](#) to S. 1790 (FY20 NDAA) that would prohibit unauthorized military force against Iran but amendment fails to achieve 60-vote threshold.
- **July 2019:** House votes 251-170 (with 27 GOP "ayes") on Khanna-Gaetz "No War with Iran" [amendment](#) to H.R. 2500 (FY20 NDAA).
- **Jan 2020:** House passes [H.Con.Res.83 \(Iran War Powers\)](#) and [H.R. 550 \(includes No War Against Iran Act & 2002 AUMF Repeal\)](#).
- **Feb/March 2020:** Senate and House [pass S.J.Res. 68](#), Iran War Powers Resolution.
- **May 2020:** Trump **veto**es S.J.Res. 68 and Senate fails to override veto.
- **July 2020:** The House includes the No War Against Iran Act and 2002 AUMF Repeal in the FY21 Defense Appropriations Act (which are later stripped in conference).
- **Feb 2021:** Senators introduce the [Iran Diplomacy Act](#) to support a diplomatic resolution to tensions over Iran's nuclear program.



For further questions and additional resources:



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