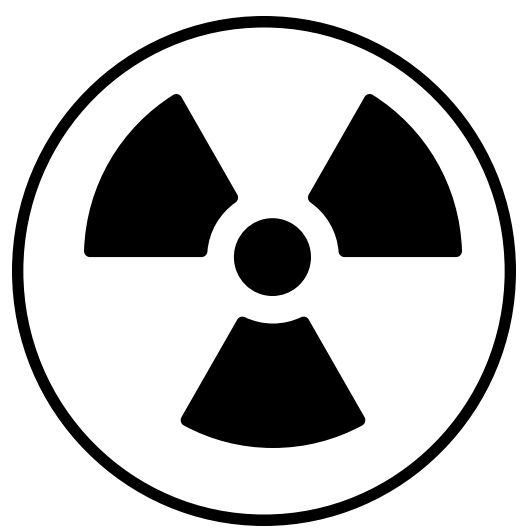


The Trump administration's failed "maximum pressure" policy towards Iran undermined diplomacy, complicated nuclear nonproliferation efforts, and led us to the brink of war. The Biden administration and Congress can chart a new course with Iran and put us back on the path to diplomacy. The U.S. must de-escalate tensions and re-enter the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), or Iran deal, on a compliance-for-compliance basis:

- From assassinating Iranian military leader Qasem Soleimani to imposing devastating sanctions on Iran, Trump and his advisors sought to provoke a reaction from Iran in order to justify war and make diplomacy with Iran more difficult for the Biden administration.
- The Biden administration should resist calls to renegotiate the terms of the JCPOA, instead focusing on ensuring the U.S. and Iran precipitously return to compliance with the deal and then pursue follow-on agreements.

REJOINING THE JCPOA



- In 2018, the U.S. unilaterally withdrew from the JCPOA - the international agreement signed and [adopted](#) in 2015 that was successfully limiting Iran's ability to develop nuclear weapons.
- After Trump withdrew from the JCPOA and reimposed nuclear-related sanctions lifted under the deal, Iran restarted some aspects of its nuclear program, including stockpiling low enriched uranium, enriching its uranium stockpiles above what is allowed under the deal, and conducting advanced centrifuge research.
- **It is still possible for the U.S. and Iran to swiftly come back into compliance with the JCPOA and realize the security and economic benefits the JCPOA provides.**

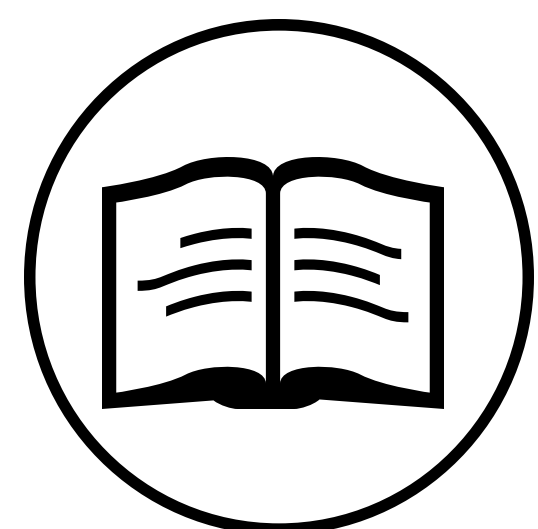
REGIONAL FLASHPOINTS



U.S. military involvement in the region creates additional potential for escalation:

- Confronting Iran militarily in the region has resulted in strained relations between the U.S. and Iraq, with the Iraqi parliament voting to end U.S. military presence in the country, and the U.S. threatening occupation rather than troop withdrawal.
- The purported threat of Iran has also long been used as an excuse in Washington to prolong or justify U.S. "boots on the ground" or support for reckless partner forces in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen with dubious legal justification and often massive human suffering.

"MAXIMUM PRESSURE" UNDERMINES ACTIVISM IN IRAN

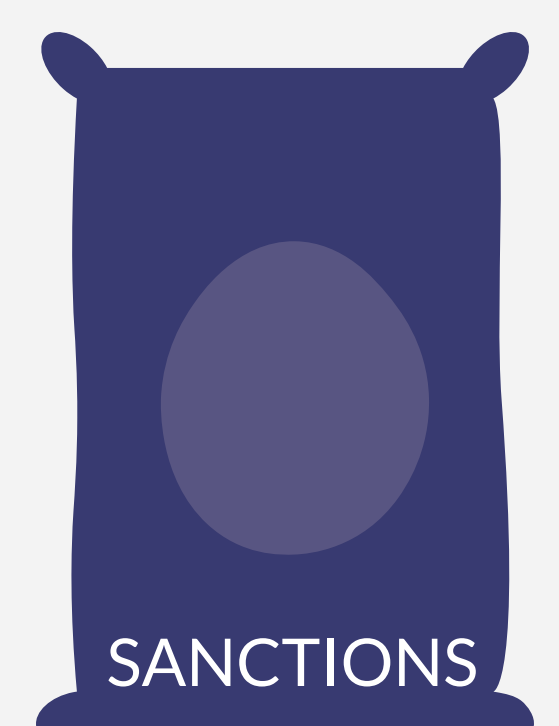


Blanket U.S. sanctions and failed "maximum pressure" policies have long caused regular Iranians to suffer and undermine activists pushing for change. That dynamic worsened under Trump:

- Renewed threats of war and economic warfare further destabilized Iran's economy, undercut the middle class, and empowered hardliners keen to crack down on civil society pursuing more openness and democratic change.
- Compounded by the COVID-19 crisis, Iranians are increasingly forced to focus on meeting basic survival needs, undermining their ability to organize, advocate for human rights, and push for political change in Iran.

SANCTIONS ARE NOT THE SOLUTION

While targeted sanctions can be effective, research shows that **blanket sanctions harm civilians**. For years, the U.S. has imposed sanctions on Iran, which has only empowered hardliners, inflamed anti-American sentiment, and exacerbated the suffering of the Iranian people. Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the sanctions are particularly cruel, preventing critical medical supplies from entering Iran. The Biden administration should pursue statutory sanctions waivers, revoke Executive orders, and remove companies from U.S. sanctions lists. At a minimum, it should immediately issue a temporary general license to allow coronavirus-related humanitarian trade to flow to Iran, as the Bush administration did in 2003 after a devastating earthquake in Iran.





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:

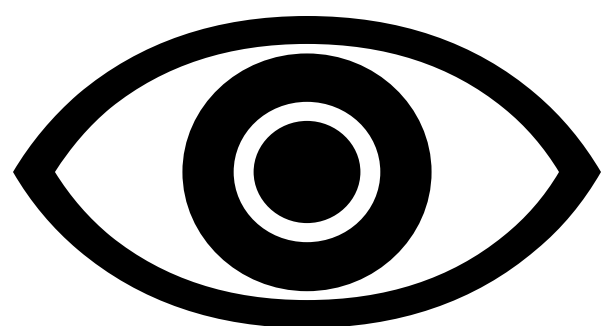
SUPPORT PRO-DIPLOMACY EFFORTS & OPPOSE LEGISLATION TO KILL THE JCPOA

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, an 18 year-old law used for the 2003 invasion of Iraq that Trump claimed – without merit – provided the legal authority for the Soleimani operation.



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 failures of "maximum pressure" and the benefits of the JCPOA and diplomatic engagement to U.S., Iranian, and international security.



PLEDGE TO CONDUCT OVERSIGHT OF TRUMP'S IRAN POLICY

Trump's maximum pressure policy included several assassinations of senior Iranian officials in Iraq and Yemen. Congress should conduct oversight into those military operations, as well as other regional conflicts where the U.S. is indirectly confronting Iran.

END U.S. MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN REGIONAL CONFLICTS

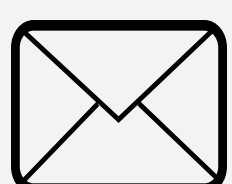
Defund U.S. military operations and withdraw U.S. military forces from Iraq, Syria, and Yemen, through which confrontation with Iran and Iranian-backed forces could be used as a pretext for escalation inside Iran.

SELECT PAST LEGISLATIVE ACTION ON IRAN

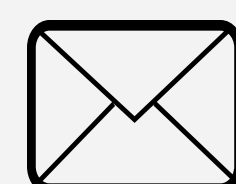
- **May 2015:** Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA) [enacted](#).
- **June 2019:** Majority of Senate votes in support of [Udall/Kaine amendment](#) to S. 1790 (FY20 NDAA) that would prohibit unauthorized military force against Iran but amdt. fails to achieve 60-vote threshold.
- **July 2019:** 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 [vetoes 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).



For further questions and additional resources:



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