

WIN WITHOUT WAR



No Time to Waste on JCPOA Reentry: Messaging Guidance

Toplines:

- The past week saw hopeful signs from all parties that a compliance-for-compliance return to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is possible. It's time to see that process through.
- Iran's measured, reversible steps away from compliance with the JCPOA are the direct result of the failed Trump-era policy of "maximum pressure." Diplomacy, however, is proven to work.
- The window for a clean return to the JCPOA is closing. It's on the Biden administration to take the final step and lead the way toward swift reentry to the agreement.

Background: Last week, the Biden administration took small but hopeful [steps](#) toward demonstrating a good-faith interest in returning to the JCPOA. In response, Iran announced a temporary, bilateral, technical agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to maintain substantial nuclear inspections past February 23. Earlier this year, the Iranian parliament had set the 23rd as a deadline for the Biden administration to lift sanctions that were unilaterally imposed by the United States under Donald Trump in violation of the JCPOA, or Iran would reduce the level of access afforded to IAEA inspectors.

Messaging:

- The Iran nuclear agreement was working as intended until the Trump administration unilaterally violated the deal by withdrawing and reimposing suffocating sanctions on people in Iran. It is because of Trump's failed "maximum pressure" policy, that we are where we are today.
- This weekend's agreement is proof of what Iran has signalled all along: that it is willing to engage diplomatically and return to JCPOA compliance, provided the same from the United States.
- The last four years are clear proof: "maximum pressure" is a maximum failure. Maintaining sanctions and trying to wait Iran out will only further empower hardliners in the Iranian government and undermine changemakers in Iran and the wider region.
- Diplomacy works. Making the first move to return to the nuclear agreement that we violated is a first step to rebuilding the United States' diplomatic credibility and healing relationships that Trump destroyed. It's also a precondition to follow-on conversations to address additional security challenges in the region.
- The Biden administration has shown welcome signs of interest in reengaging diplomatically with Iran, and Iran has responded in kind. But with elections in Iran approaching, there is no room for delay: we must act first to push reentry ahead, lift sanctions, and return to the JCPOA in full.

Additional Resources:

- ["Issue Brief: Iran"](#) — Win Without War
- ["Biden Takes Steps Forward on JCPOA & What Iran's Feb. 23rd Deadline Means"](#) — NIAC
- ["50+ Foreign Policy and National Security Experts Call on Biden to Return to Iran Deal"](#) — NIAC
- ["Editorial: Biden needs to make the first move to revive the Iran nuclear deal"](#) — *LA Times*
- ["Joe Biden Must Rejoin Iran Nuclear Deal To Avoid 'Unacceptable' War, Former Officials Say"](#) — David Brennan, *Newsweek*
- ["Biden Should Cap, Freeze and Roll Back Iran's Nuclear Program"](#) — Ali Vaez, International Crisis Group
- ["Monitoring Iran's Nuclear Activities"](#) — Arms Control Association