



## CALL TO ACTION | JULY 11, 2024

### AMERICANS MUST TAKE THE IRAN THREAT SERIOUSLY

We write today speaking with one voice, united in our concern over the multifaceted threats posed by the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Iranian regime continues to engage in a range of malign activities that threaten America’s security and the security of our allies both independently, and as part of the Russia-China-Iran anti-American nexus. The regime funds terrorist proxies across the Middle East and beyond, develops and proliferates dangerous weapons systems, brutalizes its own people, and takes hostage innocent foreign nationals. In the 45 years of its existence, it has, time and time again, proven its unwillingness and inability to reform itself or change its behavior. Since the terrorist attacks it helped organize on October 7th, Iran has also taken advantage of a distracted world to double down on its nuclear program, moving closer than ever to potential weaponization. **These threats require a comprehensive response from U.S. policymakers, which we outline below.**

#### IRAN’S RELENTLESS NUCLEAR AMBITIONS

Tehran’s persistent efforts to develop its nuclear capabilities have always presented a grave threat to global security, but we are now at a crucial juncture. While diplomacy is always our first course of action, as National Security Council (NSC) Spokesman John Kirby said in a September 2023 press briefing, diplomacy “is just not a viable option right now.” The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has repeatedly reported on Iran’s non-compliance with its safeguards agreement under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and warned that Iran’s nuclear enrichment activities have accelerated to a point where the regime can now produce enough weapons-grade uranium for multiple nuclear weapons within days. According to the most recent IAEA report, there has been feverish Iranian activity around Iran’s nuclear sites — from plans to double output, to new equipment, to faster enrichment speeds — even production of a more highly enriched uranium, reaching upwards of 60 percent. At the same time, there is now public imagery of the construction of a new hardened nuclear site, buried as far as 150 meters underground and likely designed to be impervious to future American or Israeli bombs. When production eventually moves to this facility, the world will have little recourse to stop it.

The advancement and hardening of its nuclear program, coupled with Iran’s refusal to grant full access to IAEA inspectors, raises alarming concerns about the regime’s intentions. As IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi has warned, “we are moving closer to a situation where there is a big, huge question mark about what they are doing and why they are doing it.” Of course, a nuclear-armed Iran

would not only endanger Israel and the United States but would also provoke a regional arms race. Countries like Saudi Arabia and Turkey could very well likely pursue their own nuclear programs, leading to heightened instability.

## **RECENT IRANIAN ELECTIONS WILL NOT LEAD TO REFORMS**

The election of Masoud Pezeshkian as Iran's President will not solve any of these problems nor will it deflect Iran's trajectory. Iran's security policy is under the strict control of the Supreme Leader, and the President has no authority over its security services or the actions of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. Unfortunately, despite many efforts at negotiations with previous "reformist" presidents, none have resulted in abandonment of Iran's nuclear weapons program nor any cessation in its violent activities or those of its proxies. Indeed, only Western pressure has ever produced any serious change in Iran's conduct.

Therefore, Iran's advancing nuclear program, coupled with the full spectrum of its destabilizing activities, underscore the urgent need for a cohesive and comprehensive strategy in response to counter these threats. We are in what Institute for Science and International Security President David Albright calls a moment "of extreme danger." We can be distracted no longer.

## **THE PATH FORWARD**

Below we have outlined a plan for U.S. policymakers to deter, weaken, and reverse the Islamic Republic of Iran's capability and willingness to threaten American security. The strategy proposes four pathways to sufficiently address Iran's nuclear program, erode its regional power projection, and support the freedom-seeking people of Iran. The first is to degrade and eventually reverse Tehran's weapons expansion and nuclear weapons program through U.S., international, and multilateral pressure. The second is to deter Iran from threatening the region by expanding our alliance system in the Middle East, ensuring those allies are armed sufficiently to provide both for their own defense and to counter Tehran's aggression, and holding Iran accountable for the actions of its proxies. The third is to empower dissidents within Iran with knowledge, access, and resources to pressure and hold the regime accountable from inside Iran; and the fourth is to ensure appropriate American protections against Iranian efforts to threaten us here at home.

## **DEGRADE & REVERSE IRAN'S WEAPONS EXPANSION AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROGRAM**

- Seek a resolution through the IAEA Board of Governors to find Iran non-compliant with its obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty for failing to declare nuclear material, sites, and activities, and refer the matter to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for further action.
- Work with the United Kingdom, France, and Germany to trigger snapback provisions to restore the UN arms embargo, retain the missile embargo indefinitely, and increase political, strategic, and economic isolation against Iran.
  - Once snapback is implemented, work with allies to restore the UN Panel of Experts (UNSCR 1929) to publish independent assessments of the regime's nuclear and dual use procurement efforts.



- Require quarterly reports from the U.S. Department of Energy in consultation with the Director of National Intelligence on regime efforts to stockpile natural uranium, and expansion of commercial processing and enrichment with estimates on breakout times.

## **DETER IRAN FROM AGGRESSION AND TERRORISM**

- **Urge Allies to Join Pressure Campaign**
  - Press the European Union (EU) and Five Eyes countries of the UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand to designate the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist organization.
  - Declassify and disseminate information on regime activities to maximize transparency and expose the regime’s activities. This includes its planning, support, and execution of proxy activity, potential false flag operations, disinformation operations, etc.
  - Condemn, prosecute, and designate all Iranian officials involved in the regime’s ongoing efforts to kill Iranian dissidents and current and former American officials.
- Expand sanctions designations and enforcement actions related to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, regime senior leadership, and those involved in the regime’s trade in conventional weapons — advanced fighter aircraft, air defense systems, cruise and ballistic missiles, armor, and anti-access/area denial naval weapons platforms — as well as other sanctioned goods, services, and industries.
- Restrict the travel of Islamic Republic officials to the United States and urge our allies to do the same.
- Facilitate collection of over \$53 billion in outstanding U.S. court judgments against Iran owed to American victims of Iran-sponsored acts of terrorism.
- Reaffirm U.S. policy not to pay ransom for hostages.
- **Hold Iran Responsible for Its Proxies**
  - Affirm publicly that it is the policy of the United States to hold the regime accountable for the actions of the terrorist proxies it trains, equips, and funds, and implement a detailed plan, including information operations and military actions, to demonstrate to Tehran that it will enforce such policy. Attacks by proxies in Syria, Iraq, and elsewhere on U.S. forces will be treated as attacks by Tehran.
- **Expand Regional Alliance Against Tehran**
  - Encourage normalization between Israel and other Middle Eastern nations and create, as an incentive for normalization, military exercise planning and intelligence sharing among American, Israeli, and Arab partners to counter Iranian aggression and strengthen the regional defense architecture.
- **Equip Partners With Sufficient Defensive and Offensive Capabilities**
  - Assist key partners in the region to defend themselves from and respond to Iranian aggression.
  - Reverse decision to withhold aid from and delays of aid to Israel and clarify lasting, bipartisan support for Israel.
  - Expedite the delivery of Israeli arms purchases and related Congressionally appropriated and authorized aid.



- Improve U.S. and partner intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and missile defense strike and force protection capabilities throughout the region.
- Resource existing multinational constructs, such as Combined Task Forces 150-153, to increase partner capabilities while reducing the burden on the U.S. military.
- Work with and through regional partners to strengthen ability to identify and disrupt shipments of Iranian arms and related material to proxy groups.

## **EMPOWER INTERNAL DISSIDENTS WITHIN IRAN**

- Complement a policy of maximum pressure on the regime with a policy of maximum support of the Iranian people and their democratic aspirations.
- Conduct a comprehensive review of funding streams aimed at supporting the people of Iran, including through the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM), the State Department’s Near East Regional Democracy (NERD) program, the Global Engagement Center (GEC), and other initiatives. Scale up support for programs that are demonstrating tangible impact and measurable outcomes inside Iran and reform those that are not.
- Provide Iranian people unfettered access to internet via Virtual Private Networks (VPN) and satellite.
- Create a strike fund to support Iranian workers who are willing to stand up to the regime at great personal cost.
- Encourage Members of Congress to highlight the plight of Iranian dissidents.
- Adequately resource the USAGM to provide for medium wave broadcasting capability.
- Fund and improve broadcasting to Iran, and ensure proper coverage of regime repression and corruption.

## **ENSURE APPROPRIATE AMERICAN DEFENSE AGAINST IRANIAN EFFORTS**

- Provide the Department of Defense (DOD) with adequate resources to deter Iran from developing a nuclear weapon.
- Develop credible military options for preventing Iranian acquisition of a nuclear bomb.
- Reveal expansion of Iran’s nuclear weapons program and task the U.S. intelligence community with conducting a red team assessment of gaps in U.S. collection and other vulnerabilities related to weaponization detection.
- Provide DOD with adequate resources to rapidly execute military contingencies if deterrence fails, including sufficient protection for U.S. personnel, assets, bases and embassies, and the ability to project sufficient force to prompt Iran to de-escalate following a U.S. strike response.
- Strengthen U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) targeting systems in and between U.S. ports of entry, coastlines, and borders to identify and interdict potential terrorist threats associated with the regime and its proxies.
- Strengthen Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) investigation efforts for persons of interest connected to the regime or aligned terrorist groups within the United States awaiting immigration adjudication.
- Vigorously screen current visa holders for nonimmigrant eligibility, including participants of the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SVEP).



- Increase threat advisory information sharing and coordination among federal, state, local, and private sector officials responsible for protecting soft and hard critical infrastructure and assets.
- Increase national cyber resilience to withstand cyberattacks from Iran and other adversaries.
- Coordinate with the private sector and state governments to identify and designate U.S. entities, assets, and critical infrastructure as vital to U.S. national security to ensure they are properly protected against Iranian threats.

## **GETTING U.S. POLICY TOWARDS IRAN ON THE RIGHT TRACK**

It is impossible to predict the outcome of the 2024 elections on either end of Pennsylvania Avenue; however, Americans of both political parties have a unique opportunity and the responsibility to develop a comprehensive plan against a leading American adversary, Iran. We must set the agenda for a future American president to shut down Iran's nuclear development, target its proxy terrorist network, and ensure the survival of the state of Israel. The United States has already lost over 7,000 brave servicemembers in the fight against global terrorism, with over 603 of these deaths linked directly to Iran. If we fail to deter Iran from continuing its support for terrorism or working toward a nuclear weapon, we may risk losing far more. Iran's increasingly hostile behavior over the past year underscores that a world absent strong U.S. leadership is more dangerous and unstable for America and our allies. In this fight, the long-suffering and freedom-seeking Iranian people have proven that they are our allies and we should reciprocate their support with tangible support of our own for their movement. By starting now, we can give the next President — whomever that may be — a running start to maintain American national security and re-establish American deterrence against an increasingly dangerous Iran.

