

June 24, 2022

President Joseph R. Biden  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Mr. President,

The landmark nuclear agreement with Iran has never been closer to collapse. Iran's decision to disconnect 27 surveillance cameras in response to the International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors resolution censuring Tehran will result in a 'fatal blow' to efforts to restore the nuclear deal in 3-4 weeks, according to Rafael Mariano Grossi, the head of the IAEA. As organizations committed to diplomatically preventing a nuclear-armed Iran, we are incredibly concerned about the nonproliferation implications of this development. Now more than ever, leadership and political courage are needed to prevent the complete death of the agreement and evade its likely consequences - war with Iran or a nuclear-armed Iran.

We strongly urge you to show that leadership.

Mr. President, we completely agree with your assessment that Donald Trump's "[Iran strategy is a self-inflicted disaster](#)." When the nuclear deal was fully implemented, it proved to be an effective nonproliferation agreement that verifiably blocked Iran's pathways to nuclear weapons. By withdrawing from the nuclear deal and imposing "maximum pressure" sanctions on Iran, despite Iran's compliance, Trump predictably prompted Tehran to reduce its obligations under the JCPOA and begin expanding its nuclear activities. As a result of these breaches, Iran could now move more swiftly to build a bomb than at any point in its history.

Many of your senior officials were also correct in pointing out that several of Trump's measures were designed to render the return to the JCPOA by a future administration decisively more difficult. (Proponents of the move admitted as much [publicly](#).) The most effective of these cynical moves was the inclusion of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps on a list of non-state terrorist actors, even though the IRGC is heavily targeted under separate authorities, including terrorism sanctions.

In 2017, your Secretary of State Antony Blinken correctly warned in [The New York Times](#) of the escalatory potential of this decision. He [told](#) CNN then that this was precisely why both the Bush and Obama administrations had rejected this move. Your former Press Secretary wrote in [The Hill](#) that "This is a solely political move because it accomplishes nothing new."

This is why it is all the more perplexing that your administration has allowed this "political move" to stand in the way of a strategically vital renewal of the JCPOA. As you and your former colleagues in the Obama administration correctly made clear: Iran is a dangerous actor - but it will be all the more dangerous if it possesses nuclear weapons.

The same is true for the IRGC – it is a nefarious actor. But what matters most is not whether it is on the FTO list, but whether it has a path to nuclear weapons. Keeping it on the FTO list only to forsake the only opportunity to peacefully prevent Iran from building doomsday weapons does not serve US national security interests.

Failure to renew the JCPOA will force your administration to double down on Trump's disastrous maximum pressure strategy. Just as this strategy was a self-inflicted wound under Trump, it will be so under your watch as well. Rather than moving closer to Iranian capitulation, Tehran will ratchet up its nuclear capabilities and we will inch closer to war with Iran.

Mr. President, it lies within your power - and it is your responsibility - to avoid this disaster and take the necessary steps for the JCPOA to be renewed. We strongly urge you to exercise this leadership.

Sincerely,

American Friends Service Committee  
Americans for Peace Now  
Common Defense  
Council for a Livable World  
Demand Progress  
Foreign Policy for America  
Indivisible  
J Street  
National Iranian American Council  
Peace Action  
Ploughshares Fund  
Presbyterian Church Office of Public Witness  
Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft  
Win Without War  
Women's Action for New Directions (WAND)