

Don't Let Diplomacy Down

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by Sirous Amerian



Over a year ago, everyone's attention in Iran and the world was turned to the momentous signing of the [Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action \(JCPOA\)](#). Crippling sanctions that had hurt the people of Iran even more than its government could now be lifted, with a brighter future ahead. Diplomacy had succeeded and the risk of war averted.

Against all odds, Iran seems to be [keeping its promises](#): The Arak reactor core is now filled with concrete, no new centrifuges have been installed, and their numbers have been all remarkably decreased. Enrichment has been limited to around 3–4 percent and the underground Fordow site was closed down. The majority of Iran's stockpile of enriched uranium was also eliminated. All of Iran's actions to implement the agreement were also [confirmed by the IAEA](#). In my view, Iran never intended to use its nuclear power because of the immense repercussions this would've had for the country. However, with the precautions taken in the JCPOA and its implementation, the risk of a nuclear Iran is even lower. Whatever is happening now is safeguarded, monitored and agreed upon by all parties.

[President Obama](#) and [President Rouhani's administrations](#) were both faced a lot of opposition from different internal factions on the agreement. Iranian skeptics believed that the US would not keep its promise. On the American side, Republicans & Neo-Conservatives were also not supportive of the talks and did their best to try to [derail the negotiations through congress](#) but ultimately failed.

During his campaign, President Trump made his views of the nuclear deal very clear, claiming he [would tear the JCPOA](#) apart when he gets to office. The JCPOA could be a test for American willingness. During Obama's presidency, the White House was the prime supporter of the JCPOA, but it's now time for Congress to play a more active role in helping maintain the agreement. Keeping the JCPOA alive would allow diplomacy to rule in solving other regional conflicts, such as Syria or Iraq. American legislators should acknowledge that Iran has two parallel lines of power, and the military, strongly linked to hardliners, can act independently from the government in Tehran. It should be no surprise to the West then that military tests and [manoeuvres are happening at this very critical times](#). These are efforts by actors beyond the Rouhani administration's control to meddle with the agreement.

If Donald Trump gets his way, playing into the hands of hardliners in Iran, the trust that was starting to be built, would be withdrawn. The government in Tehran could claim to have done its best, but was faced by lack of will in Washington. For there, there might be a return to enrichment. Alongside, the end of the JCPOA, could also bring an end to moderate and reformist politics in Iran, paving the way for ultra-conservative hardliners like Jalili, Hadad Adel and others who are desperate for such developments to help them to gain power of the government. Rafsanjani's death only weakened moderates and made their possible win in the upcoming elections harder.

If the JCPOA is dropped, Iran could become more volatile and might use its regional assets to cause more complications in the region. These actions are going to be out of President Rouhani's control. Today more than ever European parties involved in the nuclear deal need to show their willingness to keep it enforced. There is enough conflict in the Middle East; let's give diplomacy a chance, reducing the risk of another war.

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