

Statement by National Security Leaders on the Announcement of a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

July 20, 2015

We applaud the announcement that a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) has been reached with Iran to limit its nuclear program. We congratulate President Obama and all the negotiators for a landmark agreement unprecedented in its importance for preventing the acquisition of nuclear weapons by Iran.

Though primarily a nonproliferation agreement, the JCPOA has significant implications for some of America's most important national objectives: regional stability in the Middle East, Israel's security, dealing with an untrustworthy and hostile nation, and U.S. leadership on major global challenges.

This JCPOA will put in place a set of constraints and monitoring measures that will help to assure that Iran's nuclear program will be for peaceful purposes only. Major U.S. objectives have been achieved: uranium enrichment limited to 3.67% and only at the Natanz plant; the Arak reactor will be re-designed to minimize the amount of plutonium produced and Iran is barred from separating plutonium and all spent fuel will be removed from Iran; a 98% reduction in Iran's stockpile of low enriched uranium for 15 years; unprecedented surveillance of nuclear activities and control of nuclear related imports; a two-thirds reduction in the installed centrifuges for ten years; constraints on research and development of advanced centrifuges. The agreement will set up a highly effective multilayered program to monitor and inspect every aspect of Iran's nuclear supply chain and fuel cycle, including continuous monitoring at some sites for 20-25 years, and permit inspections on short notice. We have followed carefully the negotiations as they have progressed and conclude that the JCPOA represents the achievement of greater security for us and our partners in the region.

We acknowledge that the JCPOA does not achieve all of the goals its current detractors have set for it. But it does meet all of the key objectives. Most importantly, should Iran violate the agreement and move toward building nuclear weapons, it will be discovered early and in sufficient time for strong countermeasures to be taken to stop Iran. No agreement between multiple parties can be a perfect agreement without risks. We believe without this agreement, the risks to the security of the U.S. and its friends would be far greater. We have also not heard any viable alternatives from those who oppose the implementation of the JCPOA.

We, the undersigned, have devoted our careers to the peace and security of the United States in both Republican and Democratic Administrations. U.S. presidents and Congresses over the past 20 years have joined in a bipartisan policy of sanctioning and isolating Iran to prevent a nuclear weapon. There was bipartisan understanding that when the Iranians indicated a readiness to talk the U.S. would lead the negotiations to test Iran's seriousness. Indeed the Corker-Cardin legislation, which was approved this past spring by an overwhelming bipartisan vote in both the House and Senate was signed into law by the President, defines the review process that the Congress will use over the coming months. Members of both political parties can deservedly take credit for bringing us to this moment.

We welcome the discussion that will unfold over the merits of this agreement. We urge members of Congress to be closely involved in the oversight, monitoring and enforcement of this agreement. As Congress was so diligent and constructive in pressing forward the highly effective sanctions regime that helped get Iran to the table, it must now play a key role in the implementation of the agreement which they helped bring about. Congressional approval will eventually be required to lift sanctions under the agreement. Arrangements now need to be made to assure that Congress is a full partner in its implementation.

Those who advocate rejection of the JCPOA should evaluate whether there is a feasible alternative for better protecting U.S. security and more effectively preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. The consequences of rejection are grave: the unraveling of international sanctions; U.S. responsibility for the collapse of the agreement; and the possible development of an Iranian nuclear weapon under significantly reduced or no inspections. A rejection of the agreement could leave the U.S. with the only alternative of having to use military force unilaterally in the future.

We call on the Administration to place the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in a strategic context: assuring our partners in the region that the United States remains fully committed to their defense and to countering any destabilizing Iranian actions in the region. We also call on the Administration, with the express support of the Congress, to make clear that it will remain the firm policy of the United States, during the agreement's initial 10 to 15 years as well as after key restrictions expire, to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon by all available means.

We will join in a bipartisan effort to formulate a balanced and objective assessment and implementation of this agreement. We are committed to building an effective strategy for its full implementation. This effort will be critical in view of the agreement's significance for the protection of the security of the U.S. and its friends and for preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

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Madeleine Albright, *U.S. Secretary of State*

Samuel Berger, *U.S. National Security Advisor*

Zbigniew Brzezinski, *U.S. National Security Advisor*

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BGen. (ret.) Stephen A. Cheney, *U.S. Marine Corps*

Joseph Cirincione, *President of the Ploughshares Fund*

Amb. (ret.) Chester A Crocker, *Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs*

Amb. (ret.) Ryan Crocker, *Ambassador to Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, Kuwait, and Lebanon*

Tom Daschle, *U.S. Senator and Senate Majority Leader*

Suzanne DiMaggio, *Director of the 21st Century Diplomacy Project at New America*

Amb. (ret.) James Dobbins, *Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan*

Robert Einhorn, *Assistant Secretary for Nonproliferation and Secretary of State's Special Advisor for Nonproliferation and Arms Control*

Amb. (ret.) Stuart E. Eizenstat, *Deputy Treasury Secretary and Department of State's Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs*

Michele Flournoy, *Under Secretary of Defense for Policy*

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Morton H. Halperin, *Director of Policy Planning, Department of State*

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Amb. (ret.) William C. Harrop, *Ambassador to Israel and Inspector General of the State Department*

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Amb. (ret.) Carla A. Hills, *U.S. Trade Representative*

James Hoge, *former Editor, Foreign Affairs Magazine*

J. Bennett Johnston, *U.S. Senator*

Nancy Landon Kassebaum, *U.S. Senator*

LTG (ret.) Frank Kearney, *U.S. Army*

Carl Levin, *U.S. Senator and Chairman of the Senate Committee on Armed Services*

Amb. (ret.) Winston Lord, *Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and the Pacific, Ambassador to China and Director of State Department Policy Planning*

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Joseph Nye, *Assistant Secretary of Defense and Chairman National Intelligence Council*

Paul O'Neill, *U.S. Secretary of the Treasury*

Admiral (ret.) Eric Olson, *U.S. Navy and Commander of U.S. Special Operations Command*

William Perry, *U.S. Secretary of Defense*

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Timothy E. Wirth, *U.S. Senator*

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* *The signers of this statement were either former senior officials of the U.S. government or prominent national security leaders who have not held senior government positions. The positions listed after the names of the former government officials are senior posts held while in office. The positions listed after the names of those who were not from the government are listed with their current position.*

End

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