



U.S. Must Engage Iran in Grand Bargain for Peace

The United States should engage Iran for peace. Threats of sanctions and military confrontation will further isolate Iran and increase threats to US interests in the region. U.S. policy towards Iran should focus on engagement and diplomacy through a “U.S.-Iranian Grand Bargain.” The goals of this new approach would be to incorporate Iran back into the international community and increase Iran’s sense of security, turning them into a U.S. partner for stability and peace in the region.

Sanctions are not Diplomacy

Through three consecutive United Nations’ resolutions since 2006, the United States has led an effort with European allies to sanction Iran. In response, Iran weakened its cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Full and enhanced IAEA cooperation is needed to verify that Iran’s nuclear energy technology is not being diverted to a weapons program. New legislation that supports divestment from companies invested in Iran would make the nation feel more isolated and less secure, pushing Iran to strengthen its ability to threaten U.S. interests in the region and increasing its perceived need for a nuclear deterrent.

Military Buildup is not the Answer

With increasing tension in U.S.-Iranian relations, and the encroachment of U.S. military forces and bases on Iran’s borders, the threat of a deliberate or accidental military conflict is high. A war with Iran would have enormous human costs. Military and civilian deaths in just the first wave of attacks are estimated to be in the thousands. An attack on Iran could plunge the entire Middle East into chaos and violence - disrupting public health services and putting the well-being of thousands more civilians at risk. Even a limited border war between the U.S. and Iran would validate the arguments of those in Iran that support nuclear weapons acquisition for security reasons.

Needed: A US-Iranian Grand Bargain for Peace

The harder the US pushes with sanctions and a military buildup, the more likely Iran will be to push back through nuclear achievements, terrorism and influence in Iraq. A new policy of diplomacy and engagement with Iran is urgently needed.

US-Iranian Grand Bargain

Flynt Leverett and Hillary Mann Leverett both worked at the National Security Council during the Bush Administration. After years of access to high level intelligence on the Middle East, they left government and devised a comprehensive policy of rapprochement with Iran through a “US-Iranian Grand Bargain.”

The Grand Bargain would engage the United States in comprehensive talks with Iran without preconditions, with the goal of resolving bilateral differences, normalizing bilateral relations, and legitimizing a significant and positive Iranian role in the region. The Leveretts laid out at least three sets of issues that a U.S.-Iranian grand bargain would need to address:

- **U.S. security interests** - stopping what the United States views as Iran’s pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, its support for terrorism, its opposition to a negotiated settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and its problematic role in Iraq and Afghanistan;
- **Iran’s security interests** - extending U.S. security assurances to the Islamic Republic, lifting unilateral U.S. and multilateral sanctions against Iran, and acknowledging the Islamic Republic’s place in the regional and international order; and
- Developing a **cooperative approach to regional security**.

This approach is similar to the Nixon Administration’s policy of engagement with China, which acknowledged that a quarter century of US policies aimed at weakening and isolating China did nothing to further secure U.S. interests in East Asia. It is time to turn our relations with Iran around and resolve differences through diplomacy and cooperation.

Take Part in Citizen Diplomacy

With a new administration and a new congress there is a new opportunity to resolve differences with Iran through real diplomatic engagement.

Call the Capital Switch Board (1- 202-224-3121) to ask for your Congressional Representative and your Senators and tell them that you support the U.S.-Iranian Grand Bargain, a new approach to Iran that incorporates Iran back into the international community, and turns Iran into a US partner for peace and security in the region.



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