

MEMO

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Consequences of Falling Short

A nuclear agreement with Iran that fails to close off all Iranian pathways to a bomb will have devastating consequences for the region and shatter the nuclear nonproliferation regime. The United States should continue to employ diplomacy to reach an agreement that blocks Iran's nuclear quest, but should not accept a deal that falls short of American objectives. As President Obama and a bipartisan group of congressional leaders have said, "No deal is better than a bad deal."

A deal that falls short of U.S. objectives will:

- 1. Allow Iran to become a nuclear threshold state:** A deal that falls short will allow Iran to continue perfecting its nuclear program so that Tehran can rapidly break out to a nuclear weapon. For example, research on advanced centrifuges would allow Iran to produce weapons-grade uranium with little notice and leave virtually no time for a peaceful international response.
- 2. Raise the prospect for war:** If a deal enables Iran to become a nuclear threshold state, then political, diplomatic, and economic pressure will likely be inadequate to quickly stop a nuclear weapons breakout. This enhances the likelihood that Iran will obtain a nuclear weapon, or that America or her allies will need to resort to force to prevent an Iranian bomb. A deal that fails to stop Iran's nuclear quest will leave the Middle East in a far less stable place, potentially leading to devastating conflict.
- 3. Spur a regional nuclear arms race:** A deal that falls short will drive other nations to pursue nuclear capabilities. Senior Saudi officials have already said, "What Iran gets...we get." Such a deal will encourage proliferation in the world's most unstable region and potentially mark the death knell of the global non-proliferation regime, including its cornerstone, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.
- 4. Provide significant resources to fund terrorism:** Today, Iran is already the world's foremost state sponsor of terror. It provides funds, arms and training to groups ranging from Hamas and Hezbollah to the Taliban. There are currently upwards of \$150 billion locked up in Iranian accounts held abroad. If Tehran gains access to these funds – in addition to new oil revenue and foreign investment – it will be able to dramatically step up its support for terrorism in the Middle East and beyond.
- 5. Embolden Iran's expansionist efforts:** Iran continues to foment unrest throughout the Middle East. Using its Islamic Revolutionary Guard's Quds Force, Shiite militias, rebel groups and terrorist organizations, Iran causes chaos from Lebanon to Yemen. If Iran receives new financial resources and international legitimacy, it is likely to step up these nefarious actions and undercut U.S. efforts to stabilize the region.
- 6. Weaken our allies and undercut U.S. credibility:** For 25 years, successive U.S. presidents have declared it U.S. policy to prevent an Iranian nuclear weapons capability. An agreement that falls short will call into question America's leadership on the global stage and commitment to the security of our allies.