

IRAN IN FOCUS

JULY 14, 2016

Iran's Extremism Persists Despite JCPOA

July 14 marks the one-year anniversary of the announcement of the Iran nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Since then, Iran has shown no signs of moderating its extreme behavior. It has defiantly advanced its ballistic missile program, expanded support for terrorist organizations, stepped up efforts to destabilize the Middle East, escalated involvement in regional conflicts, and increased domestic repression—all while continuing to threaten Israel and the United States. Congress must demand robust enforcement and the expansion of sanctions targeting Iran's illicit behavior. As the past 12 months have shown, failure to hold Iran accountable will encourage further aggression.

Iran has repeatedly launched ballistic missiles.

- Since the JCPOA's announcement, Iran has conducted eight test launches of ballistic missiles capable of delivering a nuclear payload. Iran has increased the range of its missiles and continues to improve upon their accuracy—many U.S. allies and U.S. military facilities are now within reach.
- Iran has advanced its missile program without consequence. Russia and China have prevented enforcement of U.N. Security Council Resolution 2231, which calls on Iran “not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles.”
- America has responded to these tests by imposing a set of limited sanctions against subsidiaries of already-sanctioned entities.
- On May 24, 2016, Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei boasted, “They have engaged in a lot of hue and cry over Iran's missile capabilities, but they should know that this ballyhoo does not have any influence and they cannot do a damn thing.”



Since the JCPOA was announced, Iran has test fired at least eight missiles.

Iran has used sanctions relief to increase terrorist funding.

- Secretary of State John Kerry admitted in January that some of Iran's sanctions relief windfall, valued at roughly \$100 billion, “will end up in the hands of the IRGC [Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps] or other entities, some of which are labeled terrorists.”
- Following the JCPOA's Implementation Day and the lifting of sanctions, Iran immediately stepped up funding to its terrorist proxies and restored ties with Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

- In February, Iran announced its support for the “Jerusalem intifada,” pledging \$7,000 to every family of a “martyr” and \$30,000 to any family whose home was demolished by the Israel Defense Forces.

Iran has intensified its meddling in regional conflicts.

- Iran has stepped up meddling in regional conflicts since the JCPOA took effect, heightening sectarian tensions throughout the region.
- Although UNSCR 2231 restricts Iran from shipping conventional arms abroad for five years, U.S. and Saudi forces have recently interdicted thousands of Iranian weapons bound for Yemen. Also, Bahraini and Kuwaiti authorities have uncovered illicit Iranian arms transfers, discovered a large IRGC-linked bomb factory, and foiled several Iranian-led plots to sow instability.
- Iran has significantly increased its involvement in Syria’s civil war, reversing a number of the Assad regime’s setbacks. Iran has stepped up recruitment for the conflict throughout the Middle East and the Afghanistan/Pakistan region, and deployed to Syria increased numbers of Special Forces and IRGC “military advisors.”

Iran has engineered a repressive human rights crackdown.

- Iran’s hardline regime has dispelled the illusion that the economic benefits of the JCPOA would boost “moderates” in Iran. Instead, the regime has actively consolidated its power through increased repression.
- Iran executed nearly 1,000 people in 2015, the most since 1989. Since the deal, it has stepped up summary arrests of journalists, dissidents, ordinary citizens accused of ‘morality’ crimes, and dual-nationals perceived as threatening the IRGC’s political and economic control.
- Iranian officials rigged the elections for Parliament and the Assembly of Experts—the body tasked with electing the next Supreme Leader. They permitted only 30 out of 3000 reformist candidates to run for Parliament, and disqualified four-fifths of candidates from running for the Assembly of Experts.

Iran has provoked confrontation with America, escalated threats against Israel.

- Iran has made clear that, from its perspective, the JCPOA does not signify a broader rapprochement with the West. In August 2015, Supreme Leader Khamenei declared, “They thought this deal...will open up Iran to their influence. We blocked this path and will definitely block it in the future. We won’t allow American political, economic or cultural influence in Iran.”
- Iran has provoked multiple direct confrontations with the U.S. military. In December 2015, an IRGC vessel fired unguided rockets in close proximity of the USS Harry Truman. In January 2016, Iran released a video of a surveillance drone flyover of a U.S. aircraft carrier and illegally detained 10 U.S. soldiers at gunpoint. In May, Iran threatened to block U.S. access to the Straits of Hormuz.
- Iran has escalated its threats toward Israel. Over the past year, Iranian officials have stated, “Israel should be annihilated,” “God willing, there will be no Zionist regime in 25 years,” and “We will raze the Zionist regime in less than eight minutes.” Thousands of IRGC troops held a war game in November 2015 simulating the violent seizure of Jerusalem’s Al-Aqsa Mosque.