Iran—the world’s leading state sponsor of terrorism—remains Israel’s and America’s greatest long-term threat in the Middle East.

Since implementation of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal—the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)—Tehran has only become more emboldened. Iran has illicitly carried out at least 15 ballistic missile tests, bolstered support for its terrorist proxies and Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad, challenged America’s presence in the Persian Gulf, increased human rights violations, and escalated threatening rhetoric against America and Israel. The United States must confront Iran’s aggression, take firm action to support regional allies, and fix the flaws of the JCPOA to ensure that Iran can never obtain nuclear weapons as the deal’s restrictions expire.

**Nuclear Threat Delayed, Not Halted**

In acceding to the nuclear deal, Iran accepted temporary constraints on its nuclear program in exchange for permanent sanctions relief. The deal required it to ship most enriched fuel out of the country, disable the Arak heavy-water reactor, and temporarily store most centrifuges. While Iran took these steps in return for sanctions relief, it has a long history of covert nuclear activity and failing to meet its international obligations. Since 2015, Iran has tested the limits of the deal, reinterpreting key provisions and exceeding restrictions on its nuclear stockpile. Of concern, the nuclear deal allowed Iran to retain most nuclear infrastructure and enhance its capabilities to build nuclear weapons at a future date. The deal's key provisions begin to expire in 2021. By 2031, virtually all limits will cease to exist, leaving Iran with the full legal authority to construct an industrial-sized nuclear program. This capability would make Iran a nuclear weapons threshold state, able to rapidly break out to a bomb at a time of its choosing.
Expanding Ballistic Missile Program

Iran holds the largest, most diverse stockpile of ballistic missiles in the Middle East. Since July 2015, it has carried out at least 15 test fires in defiance of U.N. Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2231. Iran’s missiles can already reach Israel, other U.S. allies, and U.S. forces in the region, and it is developing ICBMs capable of hitting America.

Supporting Hezbollah Terrorists

Iran provides significant financial and military support to Hezbollah, its terrorist proxy in Lebanon. In addition to an estimated $1 billion in annual support, Hezbollah has received massive weapons transfers from Iran, helping it stockpile 150,000 rockets and missiles—putting all of Israel within range. The group has killed more Americans than any other terrorist group except al-Qaida.

Supporting Syria’s Assad Regime

Despite Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad’s slaughter of his own people and loss of international legitimacy, Iran continues to provide his regime with financial, material and military support. Iranian involvement in the conflict has contributed to the chaotic maelstrom on Israel’s northern frontier.

Purchasing New Weapons

Under UNSCR 2231, the United Nations Security Council must approve the sale and transfer of offensive weapons to and from Iran. Nonetheless, Iran is seeking to purchase advanced weapons systems. “Tehran is putting considerable resources into conventional military priorities such as ballistic and cruise missiles naval systems, unmanned aerial vehicles, air defense systems that could threaten the U.S. and our interests in the region,” said Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency Lt. Gen. Vincent Stewart on May 23, 2017.
**Fomenting Regional Instability**

Iran foments unrest throughout the region by using its Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps to fund and train Shiite militias and terrorist proxies. Iran has backed insurgencies in Iraq, Afghanistan, Bahrain, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Yemen aimed at dominating its neighbors, attaining regional primacy and exporting its Islamic Revolution.

**Expanding Human Rights Abuses**

Iran’s brutal theocratic regime engages in systemic human rights abuses against its own people in an effort to preserve its hold on power and its revolutionary ethos. Despite the 2013 election and 2017 re-election of the more pragmatic hardliner President Hassan Rouhani, Iran has increased executions and heightened repression of women, minorities, journalists and political dissidents.

**Supporting Palestinian Terrorists**

Iran has provided large-scale financial and material support to Palestinian terrorist groups, including Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. With this aid, Hamas has dramatically bolstered the size, accuracy and range of its rocket arsenal. Iranian expertise can also be seen in Hamas’ complex underground tunnel network.

**Challenging America in the Region**

Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei continues to make clear that he has no desire to improve relations with the United States. Iran’s government-sponsored rallies and parades continue to feature “Death to America” chants—and its military has made numerous unsafe approaches to U.S. naval vessels, fired a rocket within 1,500 yards of a U.S. warship, and illegally detained ten U.S. service members. Iran also continues to unjustly hold Americans captive.
America’s Iran strategy must:

- Overhaul the problematic sunset clauses of the nuclear deal.
- Press the International Atomic Energy Agency to strengthen and expand its inspection of Iran’s nuclear program.
- Oppose Iran’s regional aggression and support for terrorism, including any permanent military presence in Syria.
- Toughen sanctions against those supporting Iran’s missile program, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and Hezbollah.
- Ensure Israel has the means to defend itself against the growing Iranian threat.