

Keeping a Watchful Eye

The interim agreement between the P5+1 (the UN Security Council group of six world powers—five permanent and one rotating—including the United States, Russia, China, the United Kingdom and France, plus Germany) and Iran is a direct result of diplomacy and an effective sanctions regime that have brought the Islamic Republic to the table for the first time in over three decades.

But just as the window for diplomacy is opened wider than ever before, Iran is squandering the trust it has gained from the West. Rather than showcasing that it can be a diplomatic partner, in the last several months Tehran has actually worsened its humanitarian and political standards. At this time, more than ever, the United States must make a crucial effort to keep a watchful eye on Iran.

Since talks with the P5+1 have reopened, the Islamic Republic's human rights abuses, executions, censorship and persecution of minorities and dissidents have intensified. Iran has escalated the pace of its executions—sadly, executing 40 people in the first two weeks of 2014 alone, none of whom were afforded fair trials. Furthermore, the Iranian regime continues to viciously suppress any political opposition by jailing hundreds of dissidents.

Iran's alliance with dangerous regimes is also worrisome show of its bad intentions. While the conflict in Syria rages on, Iran has increased its support to the brutal Assad regime by throwing the weight of Hezbollah behind it, helping Assad to reverse key rebel gains. Furthermore, Iran remains the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism, and its government continues to launch vitriolic attacks on Israel.

Above all else—and as the negotiations focus on its nuclear program—Iran has made clear that it will continue its nuclear program and that the limits placed on it can easily be reversed. Tehran's chief nuclear negotiator is reported to have said “The structure of our nuclear program will be exactly preserved. Nothing will be put aside, dismantled or halted.”

These blatant violations of human rights, dangerous alliances, and broken promises make it all the more clear how closely the Islamic Republic needs to be watched. The United States has stated from the beginning of these talks that we need to judge Iran by its actions and not its words alone. With mounting evidence that the Islamic Republic does not share our values, it has become all the more clear that a watchful eye is a crucial step to keep this groundbreaking deal in motion.