

Executive Summary

Iran's leaders have repeatedly called for the destruction of the United States and plotted to assassinate U.S. leaders. Two weeks into his second administration, President Trump restored maximum pressure on Iran to deny the regime a nuclear weapons capability and counter its malign influence abroad. Trump has also expressed interest in a negotiated deal with Iran. If the Trump administration chooses to negotiate, the United States must insist that any deal with Tehran include the full, permanent, and verifiable nuclear disarmament of Iran.

- **Full, Permanent, and Verifiable Disarmament:** An effective deal would not entail a mere freeze or modestly roll back of Iran's nuclear program, like the 2015 nuclear deal — the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) — that aimed low and ultimately paved the way for Iran's emergence as a nuclear threshold state.
- **Essential Precondition of Talks:** The United States should only agree to enter negotiations if Tehran agrees at the outset, and takes actions on the ground to prove, that an agreement will achieve the nuclear disarmament of Iran.
- **Resolute Use of Economic Pressure and Military Force, as Required:** To achieve Iran's full and permanent nuclear dismantlement, the United States will need to impose maximum economic pressure on Tehran and underscore that it will use military force, if necessary, to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.
- **Explore Fundamental Change in Iran:** Trump may need to make clear that unless Tehran dismantles its nuclear weapons program, Washington will explore other policy options to include assuring the success of the Iranian people's goal of replacing the theocratic regime.

Elements of a New Nuclear Disarmament Deal With Iran

To ensure that Iran is permanently and verifiably blocked from acquiring nuclear weapons, any new agreement with the regime would need to contain the following obligations that would eliminate Iran's nuclear weapons program:

1. Require Iran to Permanently Adhere to and Comply with its International Obligations

Iran must permanently adhere to and comply with all of its Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and Chemical Weapons Convention obligations. Separately, the United Nations Security Council should “snap back” prior resolutions and associated trade prohibitions on Iran's nuclear, missile, and military programs or adopt a new resolution achieving the same objective.

2. Eliminate Iran's Access to Nuclear Fuel

Iran must allow the full, permanent, and verifiable dismantlement, export, or in-place destruction of its uranium, plutonium, and heavy water production assets and associated equipment; verified strict limitations on the import of reactor fuel to run permitted research reactors; required export of spent reactor fuel; the permanent and verifiable prohibition on Iran's reconstitution of uranium conversion and enrichment and plutonium production and reprocessing capabilities; and permanent IAEA monitoring of Iran's uranium mines, mills, and ore processing facilities and activities.

3. Require Iran's Complete Disclosure of Past and Current Nuclear Weaponization Work

Iran must provide a correct and complete description of past Iranian nuclear activities, including what the IAEA refers to as “possible military dimensions.” The regime must also provide a correct and complete data declaration of its current nuclear sites, activities, material, and equipment.

4. Require Unimpeded Access to Suspect Sites and Ensure Verification

Iran must ratify and permanently adhere to the IAEA Additional Protocol (AP). It must also implement standard safeguards obligation Modified Code 3.1. The IAEA must conduct intensive investigation and reporting on Iran's past and ongoing nuclear weapons program. Iran must not sanitize, dismantle, destroy, or relocate nuclear program documentation, equipment, and sites without IAEA participation. Iran must facilitate full and timely IAEA access, by inspectors of the IAEA's choosing, to current and former nuclear program personnel, documentation, equipment, and sites, including military sites. The IAEA must provide quarterly reporting on activities taken toward the dismantlement of Iran's non-civil nuclear program and the status of IAEA investigations, as well as the status of any remaining, approved civil nuclear activities and facilities.

5. Permanently and Verifiably Terminate Iran's Nuclear Weapons Research and Development

Iran must declare and provide verification of the permanent closure or reorientation of civilian and military research institutions and personnel that engage in nuclear weapons-related research and the permanent dismantlement, destruction, or export of all components, equipment, computer programs and models, weapons designs, research, and facilities relevant to the manufacture of nuclear weapons, including archived assets. Further, a deal must include a permanent verifiable ban on Iran's weaponization-related research and activities.

6. End Iran's Illicit Nuclear and Missile Imports and Exports

Iran must end non-approved imports for its nuclear and missile programs and end any non-approved exports from these programs. Iran and supplier states must report proposed nuclear- and missile-related imports by Iran, including those with dual civil and military uses, for approval or denial. Further, supplier states must report any suspicious or illicit Iranian nuclear- and missile-related imports or exports, including dual-use. Iran must establish a fully transparent strategic trade control system to oversee and monitor any permitted nuclear- and missile-related procurements and exports.

7. Require Iran to Terminate WMD Delivery Vehicle Efforts and Abide by Arms Embargoes

Iran must fully declare its ballistic missile, cruise missile, and drone arsenals and plans for their elimination. Iran must terminate all tests of surface-to-surface missiles (SSM) and space launch vehicles (SLVs) as well as any space-related activities that can be used to develop medium-range, intermediate-range, and intercontinental ballistic missiles. Iran must abide by UN Security Council resolutions containing arms embargoes, including on Lebanon and Yemen.

8. Terminate Iran's Nuclear, Missile, and Arms Cooperation With Russia, China, North Korea, and Other States

Iran must terminate military and technical assistance to the Russian Federation, including but not limited to support for weapons, material, and training for drones, ballistic missiles, or other platforms. Further, Iran must detail its past, and any ongoing, nuclear and missile cooperation with North Korea, China, Russia, and other states.

Full monograph available at: <https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2025/03/14/irans-nuclear-disarmament/>

