

# The Coming Iran Nuclear Talks: Openings and Obstacles

by [Dennis Ross \(/experts/dennis-ross\)](#)

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Also available in

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



[Dennis Ross \(/experts/dennis-ross\)](#)

Dennis Ross, a former special assistant to President Barack Obama, is the counselor and William Davidson Distinguished Fellow at The Washington Institute.



In-Depth Reports

Part of a series: [Transition 2021 \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/series/transition-2021\)](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/series/transition-2021)

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## A reimagined approach to Iran nuclear talks could extend the country's breakout time, preserve U.S. negotiating leverage, and strengthen American alliances in Europe and across the Middle East.

In the first in a series of TRANSITION 2021 memos examining policy challenges across the Middle East, esteemed diplomat and policymaker Dennis Ross provides an innovative approach to reengaging Iran in nuclear diplomacy. His ideas have the potential to extend Iran's breakout time, preserve U.S. negotiating leverage, and strengthen U.S. alliances in Europe and across the Middle East.

Ross explains: "If regime change is not a realistic or advisable goal, the objective must be one of changing the Islamic Republic's behavior. While this would be difficult, history shows that the regime will make tactical adjustments with strategic consequences when it considers the price of its policies to be too high."

In the coming weeks, TRANSITION 2021 memos by Washington Institute experts will address the broad array of issues facing the Biden-Harris administration in the Middle East. These range from thematic issues, such as the region's strategic position in the context of Great Power competition and how to most effectively elevate human rights and democracy in Middle East policy, to more discrete topics, from Arab-Israel peace diplomacy to Red Sea security to challenges and opportunities in northwest Africa. Taken as a whole, this series of memos will present a comprehensive approach for advancing U.S. interests in security and peace in this vital but volatile region. ❖

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