

# The Abiding Question of the Iranian Bomb

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Mar 5, 2026

*Also published in Foreign Affairs*

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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**The nuclear program is still the paramount threat, and both of the main options for permanently ending it are unpalatable—but Washington needs a plan nevertheless.**

One asset has been curiously absent from the Iran target list published by U.S. Central Command: the Iranian nuclear program. As of this writing, Iran’s major nuclear facilities—at least those not destroyed by U.S. and Israeli strikes last June—have not been featured in any description of recent U.S. or Israeli military accomplishments. There have been reports of strikes on targets that are possibly related to Iran’s weapons research infrastructure and of some in the vicinity of significant facilities, but little of apparent consequence in comparison to June. This omission is especially surprising given that the nuclear program was allegedly one of the reasons behind the Trump administration’s turn to force. Iran still retains the material needed to build multiple nuclear weapons, and it may also have the capabilities to turn that material into weapons components. It is unlikely that airstrikes alone can prevent this. If the United States is going to continue the attack, it must ensure that Iran is unable to produce nuclear weapons. To achieve this, the United States has two options to choose from—cutting a deal or forcing the regime’s collapse—both of which are unpalatable and carry huge risk. But each is better than doing nothing...

[Read the full article on the Foreign Affairs website. \(https://www.foreignaffairs.com/iran/abiding-question-iranian-bomb\)](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/iran/abiding-question-iranian-bomb) ❖



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