

Let Iran Defeat Itself

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Bailing out the regime’s new batch of hardline leaders would only help them remain a regional menace, so Washington should be very selective about whatever peace deal it signs, leaving room for the Iranian people to seek change themselves.

When President Trump announced that the United States was at war with Iran, he called on the country’s people to rise in revolt: “When we are finished, take over your government...This will be probably your only chance for generations.” But in the days after, his administration backed away from calls for regime change. Eventually, Trump began suggesting that by killing Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and his top deputies, Washington had already done what it needed to make Iran less threatening. “They have a new set of leaders, and we find them very reasonable,” the president said in mid-April. It’s easy to see why the White House has seemingly abandoned its efforts to topple the Islamic Republic wholesale, but if Trump thinks Iran’s new leaders are less radical than their predecessors, he is sorely mistaken. It would be better for Iran and better for the world if they lose power. That does not mean Washington should return to war and keep fighting until the regime is finished. That is a task for the Iranian people, and they are up to it. But it does mean Trump must help their cause by being very selective about the peace deal he signs...

[Read the full article on the Foreign Affairs website. \(https://www.foreignaffairs.com/iran/let-iran-defeat-itself\)](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/iran/let-iran-defeat-itself) ❖

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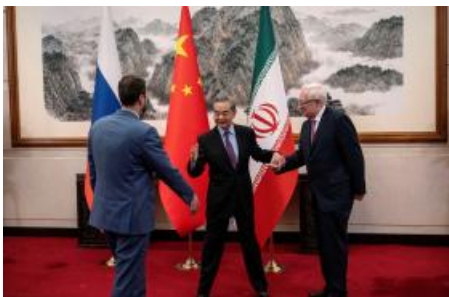
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