

# The Perfect Handshake with Iran:

## Prudent Military Strategy and Pragmatic Engagement Policy

by [Patrick Clawson \(/experts/patrick-clawson\)](/experts/patrick-clawson)

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### ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Patrick Clawson is the Morningstar Senior Fellow and Research Counselor at The Washington Institute.



### In-Depth Reports

On January 12, 2010, The Washington Institute hosted a daylong conference on Iran cosponsored with U.S. Central Command and the U.S. Army Directed Studies Office. Featuring talks by a dozen leading international experts, the event provided a uniquely candid forum for the attendees, many of whom serve as key Iran watchers in the U.S. government. The ensuing discussion was one of the best informed and most enlightening of its kind, focusing on the troubling fact that many of the most important and basic questions about the Iranian nuclear issue remain open. Indeed, early hopes that U.S. engagement would yield transformative results have now been tempered, and coordinating a common position at the international level is consuming much of the energy needed for concrete, vigorous action.

In this new Strategic Report, Washington Institute deputy director Patrick Clawson presents an in-depth summary of this important set of discussions, focusing on how participants accounted for the ongoing impasse with Iran over its pursuit of nuclear weapons. The report offers insights on how the United States might navigate obstacles and make visible progress on this urgent issue, ideally by balancing continued diplomatic engagement with prudent preparations.

## the author

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(<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateI02.php?>

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A widely published writer and media commentator, he has authored more than seventy articles about the Middle East and international economics as well as twelve books or studies on Iran, most recently *[Much Traction from Measured Steps: The Iranian Opposition, the Nuclear Issue, and the West](#)*

(<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC04.php?CID=322>) (2010). Prior to joining the Institute, he was senior research professor at the National Defense University's Institute for National Strategic Studies and a senior economist at the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.;

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