

# Forcing Hard Choices on Tehran: Raising the Costs of Iran's Nuclear Program

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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**D**espite U.S. efforts to forge a multinational coalition aimed at curbing the Iranian nuclear program, questions have arisen about the effectiveness of this approach. For example, has Iran converted discussions on the issue into a stalling tactic while it continues to make progress in its nuclear program? Can any international effort succeed in the face of seemingly intractable Russian opposition to meaningful sanctions? Could Tehran initiate new, unexpected conflicts that divert attention from the nuclear issue, based on its reading of the recent summer war between Israel and Hizballah?

In this new Washington Institute Policy Focus, Patrick Clawson and Michael Eisenstadt argue that, given these drawbacks in the current UN-centered approach, the United States should take unilateral and multilateral steps parallel to the UN track, without undercutting the European-led effort by agreeing to bilateral negotiations that exclude the Europeans. These steps include pressuring Iran economically through stricter enforcement of existing regulations, offering Tehran the prospect of appropriate inducements, implementing security measures that dissuade and deter the regime, making the preventive military option more credible, and promoting reform regardless of the nuclear situation. Even if such measures prove ineffective in the face of a clerical leadership dead set on nuclear development, they can still serve as proof that Washington is pursuing every peaceful option possible, thus strengthening the U.S. position if more severe measures become necessary.

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