

Not By Sanctions Alone Using Military and Other Means to Bolster Nuclear Diplomacy with Iran

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July 2013

Enhanced economic sanctions on Iran -- in place for more than a year now -- have dramatically impacted its economy, though the same cannot be said of its nuclear calculus. In this Strategic Report, military expert Michael Eisenstadt explains why U.S. policy has failed to curb the regime's progress on uranium enrichment or its propensity for high-risk retaliatory actions. It describes how the Obama administration continued in the path of its predecessors by strengthening military partnerships with allies, reinforcing the U.S. military presence in the Gulf, and continuing covert activities to disrupt Iran's nuclear program, and highlights the limitations of these efforts. The report also prescribes an additional set of subtle but powerful measures that could play on the regime's fears, such as limiting Tehran's own cyberoperations, disrupting the activities of its intelligence operatives and proxies, demonstrating that the U.S. military is actively preparing for possible conflict, using information activities and soft power to create internal pressure, and undermining the regime's closest regional ally, the Syrian regime.

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Michael Eisenstadt directs the Military and Security Studies Program at The Washington Institute. A specialist in Persian Gulf and Arab-Israeli security affairs, he has published widely on irregular and conventional warfare and nuclear weapons proliferation in the Middle East. Previously, he worked as a military analyst with the U.S. government and served for twenty-six years as an officer in the U.S. Army Reserve.

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