

# Time Never Seems to Run Out for Iran Negotiations

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*It has been seven months since the Biden administration has been warning Iran that time was running out for nuclear diplomacy. For nearly two months, U.S. and European officials have been claiming there are “weeks, not months” left to get to a deal. Yet, talks keep dragging on.*

*In the absence of credible “Plan B” alternatives to further open-ended diplomacy with Iran, these repeated and unfulfilled warnings that time is running out – as detailed in JINSA’s infographic below – merely encourage Tehran to drag out talks, advance its nuclear weapons program and accrue more leverage to extract U.S. concessions. The United States should work urgently with Israel and others to develop viable military options that can deter or prevent Iran’s ongoing march to the nuclear threshold.*

## What Happened?

- On January 22, Secretary of State Antony Blinken warned that talks in Vienna to reenter the Iran nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, were [reaching](#) a “decisive moment” amid both limited progress in negotiations and Iran’s continuing nuclear advances.
- This came a month after National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan [declared](#) that a deadline for reaching an agreement would come “within weeks.”
- The gravity and urgency of Secretary Blinken’s remarks are undercut, however, by American and allied diplomats’ repeated warnings about a ticking clock since at least June 2021.

## Why Does It Matter?

- The predictable, and more importantly unfulfilled, nature of these repeated warnings that time is running out (see graphic) directly undermines the credibility of U.S. threats to explore “Plan B” alternatives to open-ended diplomacy, and encourages Iran to further [drag out](#) negotiations while its nuclear capabilities and bargaining power grow.

- » Four decades of U.S. and Israeli interaction with the Iranian regime show how credible military options are most reliable for compelling significant changes in Tehran’s behavior and strengthening prospects for successful diplomacy.
- » Though the Biden administration and its Israeli counterpart have [discussed](#) cooperating on a “Plan B” since at least September, the Israeli government only recently approved funding to [accelerate](#) preparations for military options.
- In turn, this impasse raises the possibilities of either an [uninterrupted](#) Iranian march to the brink of nuclear weapons capability, or the United States caving and accepting a nuclear agreement even [weaker](#) than the original JCPOA.

## What Should the United States Do Next?

- The administration should live up to its rhetoric, acknowledge that time has run out to reach a deal in Vienna that would credibly prevent a nuclear Iran, and move toward a Plan B.
- The United States urgently must work with its allies – foremost Israel – to [develop](#) viable alternatives to currently fruitless talks in Vienna.
  - » For starters, the administration should state publicly and explicitly that military force can prevent a nuclear Iran and that, together with Israel and others, the United States is prepared to execute such options if necessary.
  - » The United States also can enhance the readiness of military alternatives by updating contingency plans and conducting exercises for operations related to neutralizing Iran’s nuclear-military infrastructure and defending against retaliation by Iran and/or its proxies.
- Because these efforts will require time, the United States simultaneously should bolster Israel’s self-defense against Iran by:
  - » [Ensuring](#) adequate Israeli stocks of U.S.-made precision guided munitions (PGM);
  - » [Expediting](#) delivery of U.S. weapons systems for which Israel has taken measures to move forward the purchase date – most [urgently](#) KC-46A aerial refueling tankers, but also F-35 and F-15 multirole aircraft and CH-53K helicopters, among other systems; and
  - » [Taking steps](#) to ensure Israel possesses sufficiently robust multi-layered air defenses to mitigate – and if possible deter – massive retaliation by Iran and its proxies, chiefly Hezbollah, for any Israeli preemptive action against Tehran’s nuclear infrastructure. This includes additional batteries of, and interceptors for, Israel’s Iron Dome, David’s Sling and Arrow systems, all of which are co-produced with the United States.
- In tandem with these steps to bolster credible U.S. and Israeli military options, the Biden administration should set a [hard and fast](#) deadline for Iran to reenter the original JCPOA.

# Time (Never) Seems to be Running Out for Iran Nuclear Talks

## Key Quotes from U.S. and European Officials

