

Open Letter from U.S. Military Leaders on Supporting Israel to Prevent a Nuclear Iran



As senior retired U.S. military commanders, we are aligned with every American president this century in the belief that preventing a nuclear Iran is critical to U.S. national security. The United States is most fortunate to have a steadfast, resolute, and extremely capable partner, Israel, who not only shares this desired outcome—because a nuclear Iran would threaten its very existence—but is prepared to carry the lion’s share of the burden to defeat it. As President Donald Trump prepares to address a joint session of Congress for the first time in this term, U.S. support for Israeli action to prevent a nuclear Iran should be a top priority.

Since October 7, 2023, when the Iranian axis opened a multi-front war against Israel and the United States, Israel has dismantled one Iranian terrorist group after another, thereby dismembering its “ring of fire” intended to cripple the Jewish state. Now, it is time to let Israel finish the job against the Iranian axis and stop Iran from crossing the nuclear threshold, by rolling back its nuclear program before it’s too late.

What Israel seeks from the United States is support to ensure the maximum effectiveness of its actions and manage the risk of Iranian retaliation. We should provide it expeditiously. With Iran capable of producing weapons-grade uranium in just days, working toward a nuclear weapon, and building ever-deeper underground facilities, time is running out to stop its march to the bomb.

Certainly, it would be preferable to prevent a nuclear Iran diplomatically. But the Iranians are masters at dragging out talks while conceding little. Repeated negotiations with Iran over two decades have led to one dangerous result: the world’s leading state sponsor of terrorism now stands on the cusp of developing the world’s most dangerous weapon.

Whether or not President Trump enters talks to dismantle Iran’s nuclear program, Israel will still retain the existential imperative to act before it’s too late to do so. If it does, it will be in the U.S. interest for Israel to succeed. Thus, we believe the United States should provide Israel with the vital munitions, weapons systems, defenses, and support needed to ensure the effectiveness of its operations against this common threat. We should also be prepared to deter any attempted Iranian retaliation or effort to widen the conflict.

To be sure, the risks of military action have to be considered carefully, but they must be weighed against the heavy price of inaction. Allowing Iran to cross the nuclear threshold, after successive presidents from both parties have for decades vowed to prevent it, would deliver a devastating signal destroying our credibility, weakening our deterrence, and emboldening China, Russia, and North Korea. Other regional states would rush to acquire their own nuclear deterrent. A nuclear Iran would seek to dominate the Persian Gulf, expel the United States and its influence, and threaten Israel and our Arab partners, spiking energy prices for a sustained period. With its global terrorist network, history of plots on American soil, including against President Trump, and missile development, it could even threaten our homeland.

By giving Israel the support it needs to roll back Iran’s nuclear program, and contain the fallout, the United States would be helping Israel defend itself and the rest of the civilized world.

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