

Iranian nuclear crisis / United States should negotiate with Iran

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Position: United States should negotiate with Iran

This position addresses the topic Iranian nuclear crisis.

For this position

“ "First, Iran has positioned itself as a regional power and must be dealt with as such. That will mean talking to Iran instead of at it, negotiating rather than demanding. [...] Third, the United States urgently needs instruments that can hurt Tehran short of launching a major war. Those include propaganda and aid campaigns, support for the mullahs' domestic political opponents, and economic pressure." ”

From Ich Bin Ein Tehraner, by Jonathan Rauch (*Reason*, September 5, 2006) (view)

“ "But nukes are useful only if they are not used. If Iran gets them, it will quickly learn--if it doesn't know already--what Kim, Mao Tse-tung, Nikita Khrushchev and Josef Stalin came to understand: Launching a nuclear attack guarantees your destruction. It violates the first mission of every government, which is self-preservation." ”

From Misreading Iranian threat, by Steve Chapman (*Chicago Tribune*, September 28, 2006) (view)

“ "It is both possible and desirable to solve the problems between the United States and Iran through direct talks. Such diplomacy will best serve the interests of the American and Iranian people if it is conducted in a transparent fashion. This transparency would not only make it impossible for advocates of war to increase tensions but also would help isolate them." ”

From Letter to America, by Akbar Ganji (*The Washington Post*, September 21, 2006) (view)

“ "Since 1989, the year the war with Iraq ended and revolutionary leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini died, pragmatic considerations have gradually displaced ideology as the basis of Iran's international orientation. The reality remains that Iran's quest for nuclear arms and assertion of influence over Iraq makes strategic sense, especially in light of Iran's historic goal of regional preeminence." ”

From Ahmadinejad isn't the issue, by Ray Takeyh (*The Boston Globe*, September 2, 2007) (view)

“ "So, what's the harm in taking the Iranians' declarations a bit seriously, in calling their bluff (if that's what it is), and seeing where things lead? If they lead nowhere, at least we'll have demonstrated the sincerity of our intentions and the mendacity of theirs—an important step in rallying allies, whose support will be crucial if sanctions (or other sorts of threats) become necessary." ”

From Calling Iran's bluff, by Fred Kaplan (*Slate*, September 11, 2006) (view)

“ "Large numbers of Iranians are fed up with their government's corruption and repression and with being branded a pariah state. Rain down American bombs, however, and the mullahs and Iran's Holocaust-denying president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, are more likely to be turned into national heroes than hung from lampposts. And that's not even calculating the international fury or the additional mayhem Tehran could wreak in Iraq or what would happen to world oil prices." ”

From Trash Talking World War III, by The New York Times editorial board (*The New York Times*, October 29, 2007) (view)

“ "After winning the presidency in 2005, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad recognized that nuclear weapons could be used as an emotive symbol of sovereignty. He has systematically exploited nationalist resentment of U.S. pressure on the nuclear issue to strengthen his position in dealing with the United States and to counter domestic political rivals. The drive for sanctions will only strengthen Ahmadinejad." ”

From Sanctions Won't Stop Tehran, by Selig S. Harrison (*The Washington Post*, October 2, 2007) (view)

“ "We have been willing to speak with Iran's leaders about Iraq but not about the weapons — a distinction that Iran regards as arbitrary and has thus far yielded few gains in either realm. We would do better to sit down with Iran now, recalling that by the time we began negotiating with North Korea, its nuclear progress had become all but a fait accompli." ”

From Why Not Talk?, by Noah Feldman (*The New York Times*, October 1, 2006) (view)

“ "Bush seems to have gotten it and stopped his administration from heading into the ditch of an isolation-only policy. It is sound, but insufficient, to urge the administration to do more to talk to Iran. That won't get you very far unless you can also figure out how to get President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's regime to respond in a meaningful fashion." ”

From Ping-Pong Diplomacy for Iran, by Jim Hoagland (*The Washington Post*, November 5, 2006) (view)

“ "Iran is fully capable of using its clients to initiate hostilities that, among other things, could send oil prices soaring to a level that makes \$100-a-barrel look like a bargain. There's also the risk that the attacks would fail because Iran has strong air defenses and is thought to have buried and dispersed its nuclear facilities. Captured U.S. pilots would recall the Iran hostage crisis of 1979-80. Further, attacks would rally Iranians behind the ayatollahs just as opposition to hard-liners might be gaining strength." ”

From U.S.-Iran collision course calls for diplomatic brakes, by USA Today editorial board (*USA Today*, November 20, 2007) (view)

“ "The American belligerence and its threats to use force only strengthens the argument of those who suggest that the best way of deterring America is through the possession of the bomb. It is hard for advocates of diplomacy to get far when Washington deploys a large armada off Iran's coast and asserts the right to preemptive use of force. In one of the many paradoxes of Iran, the cause of nuclear defiance is enhanced by Washington's rhetorical excess and aversion to meaningful dialogue with Tehran." ”

From Taking threats off the table before sitting with Iran, by Ray Takeyh (*The Boston Globe*, May 3, 2007) (view)

“ "This latest report is alarming, but it must not be used as an excuse by Washington hard-liners to launch another war. There are no good military options. The United States and the other major powers — Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany — have yet to put together a serious package of incentives and sanctions that might persuade Iran to change course. That must include a credible American offer of security guarantees and normalized relations if Tehran abandons any nuclear weapons ambitions." ”

From Iran and the Inspectors, by The New York Times editorial board (*The New York Times*, May 28, 2008) (view)

“ "Some have asserted that meeting with Iran's leaders would legitimize Ahmadinejad, who is neither Iran's supreme leader nor someone whom Obama specifically promised to meet. Curiously, many critics then hype Ahmadinejad as a threat of historic proportions, thereby granting the stature they seek to deny. Iranian elections in mid-2009 could yield a less objectionable president; engaging Iran makes that more likely." ”

From The Wisdom In Talking, by John Kerry (*The Washington Post*, May 24, 2008) (view)

“ "Iran is a complex and sophisticated nation that offers more plausible diplomatic pressure points than ever did Saddam's Iraq. While Ahmadinejad may eat, drink and make merry on the Pentagon's ineptitude, he must look warily over his shoulder at his boss, Ayatollah Khamenei; at Iran's national security council under the more temperate Ali Larijani, whom Ahmadinejad does not control; and at his old foe, Akbar Rafsanjani." ”

From If this is Ahmadinejad's bluff, it is bluff worth calling, by Simon Jenkins (*The Guardian*, May 10, 2006) (view)

“ "Arab leaders understand that dialogue and commerce may be the most efficient means of taming Tehran and drawing Iran into a stable regional order. The Bush administration should follow the lead of its Arab allies in pursuing regional integration; a framework for doing so already exists: the Gulf Cooperation Council grouping of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates." ”

From Iran just won't stay isolated, by Charles Kupchan, Ray Takeyh (*Los Angeles Times*, March 4, 2008) (view)

“ "The present Iranian regime is as dangerous and violent as Communist China at its worst. To call for an opening to this regime does not deny this fact. Isolation and recrimination, however, do not make for effective policy. The history of improved relations between Washington and Beijing since 1971 provides reason to believe that discussions are possible between the United States and Iran." ”

From A chance for Bush to salvage his foreign policy, by Jeremi Suri (*The Boston Globe*, July 24, 2007) (view)

“engaging Iran tosses the negotiations ball back into its court and exposes its specious argument that the United States wants war. Direct engagement also sends an important signal to our allies that U.S. policy will be more sophisticated and less unilateral than it has been.”

From Bush's foreign policy shift, by The Dallas Morning News editorial board (*The Dallas Morning News*, July 22, 2008) (view)

“Mr. Bush's decision to send William Burns (Ms. Rice's third in command and a well-respected former ambassador to Russia) to join the European Union's foreign policy chief and other top diplomats in talks with Iran makes any incentives package look more credible. It also shifts the diplomatic pressure back to Tehran. And it will make it harder for Beijing and Moscow to resist imposing a new round of sanctions if Iran remains obstinate.”

From A Seat at the Table, by The New York Times editorial board (*The New York Times*, July 18, 2008) (view)

“A one-dimensional, militant approach to Iran by the United States has not and will not be productive. Is it possible to convince Tehran to give up its nuclear program? That's uncertain. The overthrow of Hussein in Iraq certainly gave some in Iran incentive for having a deterrent. A more sophisticated approach by Washington, one with carrots and sticks, always made more sense.”

From Bush's flip-flop on Iran is better late than never, by James Klurfeld (*Newsday*, July 17, 2008) (view)

“Expressions of dissatisfaction with Ahmadinejad's leadership are already being heard inside Iran from both hard-liners and reformers. Iran's internal political dynamics are opaque, to say the least, but conciliation with the Great Satan would probably make it harder for him to divert attention from the costs his people are paying for his mischief-making, domestic repression, and inability to reform the economy.”

From The Two Clocks, by Jacob Weisberg (*Slate*, January 31, 2007) (view)

“Now that a nuclear threat is not imminent, the US long-range goal for negotiations with Iran ought to be to create a context in which Iran sees it as in its own self-interest to become more closely associated with the West and the international order. The US approach should reflect the mixed nature of shared as well as conflicting interests with Iran. The stabilization of Iraq, Persian Gulf security, nuclear counterproliferation, among others, should be cast as shared interests.”

From Forging ties with Iran, by Mark Brzezinski, Ray Takeyh (*The Boston Globe*, January 11, 2008) (view)

“Paradoxically, to liberalize the theocratic state, the United States would do better to shelve its containment strategy and embark on a policy of unconditional dialogue and sanctions relief. A reduced American threat would deprive the hard-liners of the conflict they need to justify their concentration of power. In the meantime, as Iran became assimilated into the global economy, the regime's influence would inevitably yield to the private sector, with its demands for accountability and reform.”

From The Iran Option That Isn't on the Table, by Vali Nasr, Ray Takeyh (*The Washington Post*, February 8, 2007) (view)

“ "We have not yet done everything we can. Broadly speaking, the US needs to offer more carrots, the EU needs to brandish more sticks." ”

From We must stop Bush bombing Iran, and stop Iran getting the bomb, by Timothy Garton Ash (*The Guardian*, February 8, 2007) (view)

“ "For the last three decades, convoluted historical grievances, emotional barriers, and frequent and mutual misunderstandings have obstructed a rational relationship between two states that often share many interests in common. In one of the paradoxes of the Middle East, the theocratic states' position today is closer to the bipartisan Baker-Hamilton report than is the Bush administration." ”

From To Help Iraq, Let It Fend for Itself, by Mark Brzezinski, Ray Takeyh (*The Boston Globe*, February 6, 2007) (view)

“ "Iran's nuclear program is a threat to peace, but it also presents an opportunity to start rebuilding America's credibility and leadership, which have been weakened by six years of incompetence. This is no time for chest-beating and dangerous brinkmanship. It is time for alliance-building, direct engagement and tough face-to-face negotiations." ”

From Diplomacy, Not War, With Iran, by Bill Richardson (*The Washington Post*, February 24, 2007) (view)

“ "Cannot the world's most powerful nation deign speak to the resentful and scheming regional power that is Iran? Can we not speak of the interests of others, work to establish a sustained dialogue, and seek to benefit the people of Iran and the region? Could not such a dialogue, properly conducted, begin a process that could, over time, help realign hardened attitudes and polarizing views within the region?" ”

From StopIranWar.com, by Wesley Clark (*The Huffington Post*, February 21, 2007) (view)

“ "If the White House tried more energetically to find a diplomatic solution to the nuclear threat, if it demonstrated that it had reached out to Iranian "pragmatists" and "moderates," and that again no one responded, then the military option would likely become convincing to more Americans." ”

From Attack Iran, With Words, by Reuel Marc Gerecht (*The New York Times*, February 20, 2008) (view)

“ "It is difficult to understand why, in the case of Iran, the suspension of the program for enrichment of uranium has been made a precondition for any talks in which such suspension is the main subject." ”

From Will the United States attack Iran?, by Hans Blix (*International Herald Tribune*, February 19, 2007) (view)

“ "Better to get negotiations started so that by the time the next administration settles in, it will be able to assess the progress, or lack thereof, after a year of talks. If it decides it must take strong action, it will have an easier time showing that all other options were exhausted." ”

From Time to Talk to Iran, by Robert Kagan (*The Washington Post*, December 5, 2007) (view)

“ "From the American side, any new approach must address Iran's security by clarifying that Washington is not seeking regime change in Tehran, but rather changes in the Iranian government's behavior. (While Secretary Rice has said recently that overthrowing the mullahs is not United States policy, President Bush has pointedly refused to affirm her statements.) To that end, the United States should be prepared to put a few assurances on the table." ”

From How to Defuse Iran, by Flynt Leverett, Hillary Mann Leverett (*The New York Times*, December 11, 2007) (view)

“ "Rather than trumpeting how dangerous these pariahs are, why can't we begin to talk to them? They're totally fixated on the United States, and that means what they crave is our attention. They want to feel like somebodies, so let's begin an effort to engage in dialogue with them." ”

From The Untouchable in the Room, by Deepak Chopra (*The Huffington Post*, August 28, 2006) (view)

“ "If the neoconservatives were not so adept at claiming the patriotic high ground for themselves -- and convincing the nation that they are interested only in advancing the security of America and Israel and the cause of democracy -- it might be time to start asking which of them are actually agents of Iran. The question is pertinent because "objectively," as they like to say, neoconservative policy has resulted in enormous profit to the Iranian mullahs, at grave cost to the United States and with little or no benefit to Israel." ”

From To Iran with love, by Joe Conason (*Salon.com*, August 25, 2006) (view)

“ "But if sanctions are doomed to failure, what about military options? As a last resort, couldn't America or Israel stop the nuclear programme by threatening to bomb Iran? Sadly or happily (depending on your worldview), the answer is a very clear "no"." ”

From The Iranian paradox: to gain victory the West must first concede defeat, by Anatole Kaletsky (*The Times*, August 24, 2006) (view)

“ "The point is to inch forward and allow no daylight to open up among allies. If and when it becomes clear that Iran won't budge, the alliance against it can be solid enough to inflict what pain is possible. Iran's economy depends on oil riches and handouts. Reducing trade and the refined gasoline Iran that imports (because it doesn't have enough refineries) are potential pressure points." ”

From Iran's double talk leaves U.S., allies plenty of bad options, by USA Today editorial board (*USA Today*, August 23, 2006) (view)

“ "Washington could authorize the European negotiators to make certain conditional offers, and see how Tehran responds. What's the worst that can happen? It doesn't work, the deal doesn't happen and Tehran resumes its nuclear activities. That's where we are today." ”

From Talk to Tehran, by Fareed Zakaria (*The Washington Post*, August 16, 2005) (view)

“ "With hard-liners riding high in Tehran, there's little chance of changing minds there. But the White House should still try, offering security guarantees in exchange for Iran's giving up technology that could feed a nuclear weapons program. Isolating Iran and making itself look more reasonable are still more reasons why Washington should be offering to talk to Syria, Hezbollah's other patron and Iran's best ally." ”

From Still Spinning, by The New York Times editorial board (*The New York Times*, August 14, 2006) (view)

“ "American disengagement from active Middle East diplomacy since 2001 has led to greater violence and a decline in U.S. influence. Others have been eager to fill the vacuum. (Note the sudden emergence of France as a key player in the current burst of diplomacy.)" ”

From The Guns of August, by Richard Holbrooke (*The Washington Post*, August 10, 2006) (view)

“ "To get the other countries to unite around some sort of sanctions (or the threat of sanctions, which may be all that's necessary), President Bush not only has to threaten to penalize Iran for bad behavior but also has to reward Iran for good behavior. They will not go along with this pressure campaign—they will not undermine their economic interests—unless there are carrots as well as sticks." ”

From You Wanna Talk? Let's Talk, by Fred Kaplan (*Slate*, April 17, 2006) (view)

“ "The big players ‘...’ need to agree on a list of new sanctions with a lot more bite: a ban on dealings with major Iranian banks; a ban on arms sales; a ban on new investments in Iran. They need to warn, credibly, of even tougher sanctions to come. At the same time, Washington needs to make Iran a serious offer to talk about everything, including security assurances and diplomatic and economic relations if Iran is willing give up its fuel program and cooperate fully with inspectors." ”

From Adrift on Iran, by The New York Times editorial board (*The New York Times*, April 11, 2008) (view)

Against this position

“ "The Iranian leadership will say anything and do anything to buy the time necessary to acquire nuclear capability. That Foggy Bottom still advises against any strategy that might undercut the possibility of some illusionary breakthrough signals triumph not of realism but of negligence. Diplomacy cannot succeed if one side is playing for real and the other only for time." ”

From The U.S. vs. Iran, by Michael Rubin (*The Wall Street Journal*, September 20, 2006) (view)

“ "No adult can possibly believe that secret talks (of which there have been many, throughout this administration) could isolate President Ahmadinejad. For us to ask for such talks will be seen in Tehran, and throughout the region, for what is is: retreat. And a great part of the credit for bringing us to our knees will go to Ahmadinejad, who has been guaranteeing this outcome in very forceful terms." ”

From Active Appeasement, by Michael Ledeen (*National Review*, October 9, 2006) (view)

“ "As long as Iranian policy is dominated by Ahmadinejad and his allies among the senior clerics of the Islamic Republic, Iran cannot be negotiated with. Their commitment to the destruction of the Jews is a matter of principle, just as the implementation of the Holocaust was for the Nazis and the liquidation of the kulaks was for the Bolsheviks." ”

From Why is Ahmadinejad smiling?, by Waller R. Newell (*The Weekly Standard*, October 9, 2006) (view)

“ "An American invasion is out of the question. But perhaps we could do to Iran what the Iranians are doing to us in Iraq, where they are funneling weapons and money to militias that are killing our soldiers." ”

From How to handle Iran, by Max Boot (*Los Angeles Times*, October 25, 2006) (view)

“ "The proponents of appeasement failed the world in 1939 and they will also fail today. Namely, those political leaders here at home and abroad who preach "dialogue" with Iran and rapid redeployment from Iraq -- based on an artificial timetable, and regardless of the situation left behind -- are risking the same big mistake." ”

From The '39 parallel?, by Dan Burton (*The Washington Times*, November 27, 2006) (view)

“ "It would be an excellent thing to have direct negotiations with Iran, for instance, with all matters on the table. But if the mullahs did not have to sacrifice their ongoing nuclear deception in order to get to that table, then all the efforts of the Europeans, the United Nations, and the International Atomic Energy Agency to get them to do so would have been shown to be risible." ”

From From Beirut to Baghdad, by Christopher Hitchens (*Slate*, November 27, 2006) (view)

“ "The bungled road to a democratic Iraq has been far too bloody but it's now perfectly sensible to believe that Bush's pre-emptive war may have sown the seeds for what could be the least troubled nation of the region in a decade's time. The multilateral approach to Iran may leave us with a nuclear-armed Tehran terrorising Israel and holding the world to ransom over oil supplies." ”

From Where has Bush got with jaw-jaw?, by Tim Montgomerie (*The Times*, November 22, 2007) (view)

“ "Bilateral U.S.-Iran talks are the perfect way to get Europe off the hook. They would preempt all the current discussions about sanctions, place all responsibility for success on the negotiations and set America up to take the blame for their inevitable failure. It is an obvious trap. We should resolutely say no." ”

From Say No to Tehran's Gambit, by Charles Krauthammer (*The Washington Post*, May 26, 2006) (view)

“ "The much-heralded announcement that we were willing to sit down with the Iranians if they halted their enrichment program was either a total collapse or a gambit designed to expose the Iranians' unwillingness to play by the international rules. If the latter, it was too clever by half, as shown by the sorts of Western offers that are now trickling out of the foreign offices. We have actually set a clever trap for ourselves." ”

From Is Bill Clinton Still President?, by Michael Ledeen (*National Review*, June 7, 2006) (view)

“ "Israelis surely don't welcome a war in which they will suffer. Yet they have no choice but to defend themselves against an enemy that vows to obliterate them if Iran acquires the weapon to do so. The tragic paradox of the past six years is that the diplomatic and intelligence evasions offered in the name of avoiding war with Iran have done the most to bring us close to this brink."

”

From Israel on the Iran Brink, by The Wall Street Journal editorial board (*The Wall Street Journal*, June 23, 2008) (view)

“ "Mr. Bush's critics claim the real problem is that the U.S. hasn't opened high-level talks with Iran and Syria. But opening up talks at this point - while these regimes are engaging in abhorrent behavior - would be a serious mistake, particularly when the West faces a major security challenge from state-sponsored terrorism. Doing so would certainly bolster these leaders in the region and normalize their behavior."

”

From Why Bush Must Still Confront Rogue States, by David B. Rivkin Jr., Lee A. Casey (*The Wall Street Journal*, June 2, 2008) (view)

“ "So, as Iranians worry that their nation is becoming an international pariah and perhaps heading down the path of bankruptcy in the process, now is not the time for America to give in by offering direct talks with Ahmadinejad. That propaganda victory would only help him reclaim the legitimacy and stature that he is losing with his own people at home."

”

From The curtain is closing, by Victor Davis Hanson (*Chicago Tribune*, December 29, 2006) (view)

“ "The Iraqi Study Group says Iran also worries about spillover chaos in Iraq. That is laughable. The opposite is true. The present killing and violence in Iraq divert American attention away from its effort to go nuclear and its interests in Lebanon."

”

From Just smile at Iran and wait, don't talk, by Victor Davis Hanson (*Chicago Tribune*, December 15, 2006) (view)

“ "Iran would gladly draw the U.S. into a lengthy discussion of everything and nothing, and use this empty gabfest as a smokescreen to advance its agenda. But diplomacy is not an end in itself; to be meaningful it has to achieve specific aims and be based on confidence that both sides seek a mutually advantageous deal. Nothing suggests the Iranians have reached that stage yet."

”

From Love Thy Enemy, by Michael Young (*Reason*, December 13, 2007) (view)

“ "The obvious next diplomatic step is to show Iran that the world meant what it said by following through with the toughest achievable sanctions. A myth has developed in some circles that there are "no good options" available to pressure Iran, but that's more excuse than analysis."

”

From The Ayatollah's Answer, by The Wall Street Journal editorial board (*The Wall Street Journal*, August 24, 2006) (view)

“ “If Iran gets nuclear weapons, there will be no diplomacy capable of protecting Israel. If Iran continues to fund and equip Hezbollah, there will be no stability or security for Israel. Diplomacy cannot substitute for victory against an opponent who openly states that he wants to eliminate you from the face of the earth.” ”

From *The Only Option Is to Win*, by Newt Gingrich (*The Washington Post*, August 11, 2006) (view)

“ “Lamont seems to think that we should just sit down with the Iranians and show them why going nuclear is not a good idea. This recalls Sen. William Borah's immortal reaction in September 1939 upon hearing that Hitler had invaded Poland to start World War II: 'Lord, if I could only have talked with Hitler, all this might have been avoided.'” ”

From *Short-Term Gain, Long-Term Pain*, by Charles Krauthammer (*The Washington Post*, August 11, 2006) (view)

Mixed on this position

“ “Third, while a diplomatic resolution is still possible, it can succeed only if we negotiate from a position of strength. This will require better coordination with our international partners and much stricter sanctions. Negotiations with Iran would probably be ineffective unless our European allies sever commercial relations with Tehran.” ”

From *Stopping A Nuclear Tehran*, by Daniel Coats, Charles Robb (*The Washington Post*, October 23, 2008) (view)

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