

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**As the Biden-Harris Administration Crafts a Strategy for the Middle East,  
A New Report Assesses Forty Years of American Policy with Iran**

*None of the Iran strategies pursued by seven U.S. administrations since the Islamic Revolution in 1979 has succeeded in neutralizing the wide range of threats Iran still poses to U.S. interests and allies.*

**[LINK TO REPORT](#)**

**(New York, NY – February 18, 2021)** After more than forty years of the Islamic Republic of Iran, no United States strategy has yet successfully addressed the broad range of threats posed by the country argues a new report, [A Way Forward with Iran? Options for Crafting a U.S. Strategy](#), produced by The Soufan Center. From the outset, U.S.-Iran relations have been fraught with mistrust, animosity, threats, and occasional active hostilities, but interspersed with periods of negotiation and even tacit cooperation in selected circumstances. A Biden administration strategy on Iran should start with an analysis of this complex history.

“After four decades, America cannot answer the most basic question about its national strategy: should the U.S. pursue policies that force Iran to collapse, or should the U.S. engage Iran and work to find common ground on the major issues? This uncertainty has shaped the shifts and indecisiveness in responding to the threats posed by Iran,” notes Naureen Chowdhury Fink, Executive Director of The Soufan Center. “Our report highlights that every Iran policy option employed in the past remains open to the Biden administration: engagement, military action, economic sanctions, regime change and so on. But first, we need to learn the lessons of previous decades, and these are laid out in our new report.”

**The Biden administration’s way forward with Iran**

The Biden administration appears intent on implementing an Iran policy that is similar to that pursued by the Obama administration. However, as the new report outlines, considerable obstacles remain to a straightforward U.S. rejoining of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Further, the domestic debate on this issue within the United States, which involves numerous powerful constituencies, could delay the Biden administration’s efforts to rejoin the agreement.

The Soufan Center’s report outlines some of the initiatives that both the United States and Iran need to undertake in order to return to the negotiating table. From altering U.S. defense posture in the Gulf region to avoid a U.S. “shows of force” as a signal to Tehran that it seeks to improve relations and abandon the maximum pressure strategy of its predecessor, to some relaxation of the Trump administration’s sanctions policy as a foreshadowing of the broader sanctions relief that would accompany a U.S. return to the JCPOA. However, as the report lays out, Iran will also need to undertake a number of confidence-building measures.

All potential U.S. actions will need to be considered in light of Iran’s activities, including a return to the status quo at the time of the JCPOA’s adoption, reining in the nuclear program, and a curb on support to regional allies and armed groups, which continue to fuel instability and insecurity throughout the Middle East the report concludes.

## **ABOUT THE SOUFAN CENTER (TSC)**

Based in New York, [The Soufan Center](#) is a non-partisan strategy center dedicated to increasing awareness of global security issues in the United States and around the world. Please contact **Stephanie Foggett** with any media inquiries or interview requests: [stephanie.foggett@thesoufancenter.org](mailto:stephanie.foggett@thesoufancenter.org).

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