



# Toward An Economic Warfare Strategy Against Iran

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America's strategy toward Iran is faltering. Nearly seven years after the disclosure of the Iranian regime's nuclear program, and a year-and-a-half after the start of "engagement" on the part of the Obama administration, Washington has yet to see a substantive diplomatic breakthrough in the deepening international impasse over the Iranian regime's nuclear ambitions. To the contrary, mounting evidence suggests that Iran's rulers have used the strategic pause afforded by American outreach to forge ahead with their nuclear endeavor, adding permanence to Iran's increasingly mature and menacing atomic effort.

Multilateral efforts at sanctions, meanwhile, have failed to keep pace with these advances. Between 2006 and 2008, three rounds of international sanctions were authorized and enacted by the United Nations Security Council, with little perceivable impact on Iran's nuclear decisionmaking. A fourth round of sanctions has just been finalized by the United States and other Permanent Security Council members. Yet already, there are clear signs that this effort, like its predecessors, will fall far short of applying the broad, comprehensive economic pressure necessary for Iran to begin to rethink its nuclear drive.

As a result, the United States and its allies in the international community will soon be confronted by the stark binary choice best outlined by French President Nicolas Sarkozy several years ago: an Iran with the bomb, or the bombing of Iran. If it hopes to avoid such a state of affairs, the United States will need to marshal a comprehensive economic warfare strategy toward the Islamic Republic — one that leverages the latent vulnerabilities inherent in the Iranian economy to ratchet up the cost of the regime's nuclear endeavor. Such an approach starts by focusing on six discrete areas of economic activity that could be used to alter the Iranian regime's behavior.

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