



## Iran

J Street believes that an Iran with nuclear weapons, especially one that continues to support terrorist groups, would present a major threat to Israel and American interests, and a challenge to peace and stability in the Middle East. The United States therefore shares a clear interest with Israel and the international community in ensuring that Iran does not acquire a nuclear weapons capability.

We believe that any serious and realistic attempt to halt Iran's nuclear ambitions demands a comprehensive and multilateral approach, rooted in active diplomatic engagement with Iran and the international community. J Street commends President Obama for his efforts in 2009 to engage Iran diplomatically and for the offer made in October by the international community to supply Iran's civilian need for further enrichment of the uranium in its possession. We believe that the offer should be accepted as a basis for progress by the Iranian government. The President's approach has strengthened the resolve of the community of nations which will be important in moving forward with multilateral action.

Unfortunately, Tehran's initial response to this new international solidarity was to reject the proposals of the international community and announce provocative expansions of its uranium enrichment program. Iran cannot be allowed to defy the will of the international community on the nuclear issue. The time has therefore come for the United States and its international partners to ready new multilateral sanctions on the Government of Iran as a means of gaining leverage alongside the diplomatic track. We urge the United States to pursue this through the United Nations and to create as broad-based a consensus in the international community as possible.

To enhance the tools at the disposal of the United States as part of a broad multilateral effort to increase pressure on Iran, J Street supports Congressional passage of the Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act of 2009 (IRPSA). Presentation of this bill for the President's consideration will highlight, at a critical juncture for the Iranian Government, that they face a real choice between one path that leads to further isolation and another that leads to full integration in the international community and the ability to develop their economy to its full potential.

It is important to note that nothing in IRPSA should be taken as authorizing or encouraging the use of military force against Iran. J Street is strongly opposed to any consideration at this time of the use of military force by Israel or the United States to attack Iran.

Finally, J Street, like most Americans, is inspired by the Iranian people's struggle for democracy and outraged by the Iranian regime's violent crackdown on peaceful demonstrations by the Iranian people seeking to express and struggle for their democratic rights. J Street applauded President Obama's declaration that he was "appalled and outraged by these events." J Street also supports the Iranian Digital Empowerment Act, which would update US sanctions to allow

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for the export of communications software and Internet services, such as instant messaging, to Iranian democracy activists and ordinary citizens who made use of similar technologies to bypass their government's censorship efforts during the crackdown.

Moreover, J Street believes that human rights should be part of the agenda of US and international engagement with Iran (and the region as a whole). We believe the US should affirm its support for the legitimate hopes and aspirations of the Iranian people for freedom, human rights, and democracy – a commitment that should apply to all people's of the region. Accordingly, J Street supports the Stand With The Iranian People Act, which would strengthen travel restrictions on Iranian human rights abusers and bar US government contracts with companies that provide censorship software and other tools of repression to the Iranian regime, while updating US sanctions to allow American nonprofits to provide humanitarian and civic development assistance in Iran to parties wholly unconnected to the regime.

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