

# Sander Levin

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## Rep. Sander Levin Statement on the Iran Nuclear Agreement

“Consideration of the Iran nuclear agreement represents one of the most challenging and crucial foreign policy decisions for me during 33 years in Congress. Iran represents a real danger – exponentially more so if it has a nuclear weapon.

“After earlier efforts to negotiate by the Bush Administration failed and Iran dramatically increased its number of centrifuges and nuclear material, it was critical that Iran's nuclear program not result in Iran's possession of a nuclear weapon. I actively participated in increasing U.S. sanctions against Iran. These sanctions were strengthened by their multi-lateral structure and broad adoption, and they helped produce the framework agreement and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

“Currently, Iran is only two months away from the ability to produce enough material for one nuclear weapon. The restrictions in the Agreement provide the world with a year to respond if Iran broke out of the Agreement and moved toward acquiring the material for a bomb.

“The Agreement requires Iran to reduce its stockpile of enriched uranium by 97 percent and refrain from enrichment above a 3.67 percent level for 15 years. It cuts the number of installed centrifuges allowed by two thirds, while retaining only older model centrifuges. The Agreement also requires Iran to render its heavy water reactor inoperable, denying them a source of weapon-grade plutonium. It requires Iran to convert the Fordow enrichment facility into a technology center and places limits on research and development. It allows the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to monitor the uranium supply chain for at least two decades.

“Requirements are meaningless if they are not enforced and if violations cannot be detected. The JCPOA includes enhanced resources for the IAEA, including over 100 inspectors, and is buttressed by major U.S. and EU surveillance capabilities. As to all declared sites (those with known nuclear programs) there is continuous access. If there is a suspicion of activities of Iran's obligations at any other location, the standard is to gain access with 24 hours notice. If there is a dispute about access, there is a process that provides access within 24 days. In our many briefings, Energy Secretary Moniz, a respected nuclear physicist, has been persuasive that any activities involving nuclear materials would leave traces detectable for at least that long.



“Effective enforcement also requires that the multi-lateral sanctions currently in place can be quickly reinstated if Iran violates the Agreement. The JCPOA contains a method to do so at the United Nations that could not be stymied by a veto from China or Russia.

“In my discussions with opponents of the Agreement, they have urged that Iran may well not cheat the first 10 or 15 years because Iran's main purpose is to become the dominant power in the Middle East and that sanctions relief during this period would provide Iran the funds to finance further terrorist actions. In this regard, the U.S. retains its rights to take a full range of actions to prevent shipments of arms or missiles to Hezbollah or other terrorist groups, as it does to take other actions against aggressions elsewhere, unrestricted by the JCPOA.

“It is also argued that if the Agreement is rejected by the Congress there would remain sufficient sanctions to deter Iran from a nuclear weapon and they could be increased. The much greater likelihood is that the sanctions regime would quickly fall apart. Sanctions likely would not be continued even by our closest allies and the U.S. would be isolated trying to enforce our unilateral sanctions as to Iran's banking and oil sectors.

“If Iran broke out of the Agreement and proceeded to build a nuclear weapon, the U.S. and its allies would retain all options to stop it, including the military option. If the U.S. rejects the Agreement, support from even our best allies if we move to the military option would be less likely. As a result, the threat of military action would become less effective a deterrent to Iran's building a nuclear bomb. That is another reason I believe the Agreement offers the best option to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

“We must also act to bolster the security of our ally Israel. We should promptly conclude the next ten-year Memorandum of Understanding on Foreign Military Financing and accelerate the co-development by the U.S. and Israel of the Arrow-3 and David's Sling missile defense systems and increase funding for Israel's life-saving missile defense, the successful Iron Dome system.

“Each Member of Congress will bring both private and public life experiences to address this difficult issue.

“I along with my brother and late sister when we were in our teens experienced with our parents great personal joy when President Truman announced U.S. recognition of Israel. It was something that we could take hold of amidst the unfolding horrors of the years before. Israel's security has and always will be of critical importance to me and our country. I believe that Israel, the region, and the world are far more secure if Iran does not move toward possession of a nuclear weapon. I believe the Agreement is the best way to achieve that.

“In my view, the only anchors in public life are to dig deeply into the facts and consult broadly and then to say what you believe.”