

Statement on the First Anniversary of the Implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action To Prevent Iran From Obtaining a Nuclear Weapon

January 16, 2017

Today marks the 1-year anniversary of the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), a deal that has achieved significant, concrete results in making the United States and the world a safer place. This historic understanding reached between the United States, France, the United Kingdom, Germany, China, Russia, the European Union, and Iran has rolled back the Iranian nuclear program and verifiably prevents Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

One year ago, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) verified that Iran had fulfilled key commitments spelled out under the JCPOA. Instead of steadily expanding, Iran's nuclear program faces strict limitations and is subject to the most intrusive inspection and verification program ever negotiated to monitor a nuclear program. Iran reduced its uranium stockpile by 98 percent and removed two-thirds of its centrifuges. Meanwhile, Iran has not enriched any uranium at the Fordow facility nor used advanced centrifuges to enrich. In short, Iran is upholding its commitments, demonstrating the success of diplomacy.

While this deal was intended to address Iran's nuclear program, we have remained steadfast in opposing Iran's threats against Israel and our Gulf partners and its support for violent proxies in places like Syria and Yemen. We continue to be deeply concerned about U.S. citizens unjustly imprisoned in Iran. And our sanctions on Iran for its human rights abuses, its support for terrorist groups, and its ballistic missile program will remain until Iran pursues a new path on those issues. There is no question, however, that the challenges we face with Iran would be much worse if Iran were also on the threshold of building a nuclear weapon.

The United States must remember that this agreement was the result of years of work and represents an agreement between the world's major powers, not simply the United States and Iran. Moreover, the Iran deal must be measured against the alternatives. A diplomatic resolution that prevents Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon is far preferable to an unconstrained Iranian nuclear program or another war in the Middle East.

Remarks During White House Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest's Final Briefing and an Exchange With Reporters

January 17, 2017

[*The President joined the briefing in progress.*]

The President. I'm not interrupting because he was saying nice things about you guys—[*laughter*—because I largely concur.

When I first met Josh Earnest, he was in Iowa. I think he was wearing jeans. He looked even younger than he was. And since my entire campaign depended on communications in Iowa, I gave him a pretty good once-over. And there are a couple things I learned about him right away. Number one, he's just got that all-American, matinee, good-looking thing going.

[*Laughter*] That's helpful. Let's face it. Face made for television. [*Laughter*] Then, the guy's name is Josh Earnest—[*laughter*—which, if somebody is speaking on your behalf, is a pretty good name to have. [*Laughter*]

But what struck me most, in addition to his smarts and his maturity and his actual interest in the issues, was his integrity. There are people you meet who you have a pretty good inkling right off the bat are straight shooters and were raised to be fundamentally honest and to treat people with respect. And there are times where that first impression turns out to be