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Iran Nuclear Agreement

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July 22, 2015

Congressional Research Service

7-5700

www.crs.gov

R43333

Summary

On July 14, 2015, Iran and the six powers that have negotiated with Iran about its nuclear program since 2006 (the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, China, and Germany—collectively known as the P5+1) finalized a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, (JCPA) that attempts to ensure that Iran’s nuclear program can be used for purely peaceful purposes, in exchange for a broad suspension of U.S., European Union (EU), and United Nations sanctions. The text of the JCPA appears to reflect largely what was agreed in an April 2, 2015, framework for a comprehensive agreement. Some issues that were left open in the framework accord were clarified and specified in the JCPA. The agreement, if it enters into force following review by the U.S. Congress and Iran’s political system, will replace a Joint Plan of Action (JPA) interim nuclear accord agreed to in November 2013 and in operation since January 2014.

The Administration and the other P5+1 governments assert that the JCPA represents the most effective of several alternatives to ensure that Iran cannot obtain a nuclear weapon—one of which could conceivably be military action against Iran’s nuclear facilities. The Administration also argues that all U.S. options to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear state remain available even after the JCPA expires. The Administration asserts that the JCPA contains provisions for U.N. sanctions to be reimposed if Iran is found not in compliance with its requirements.

Critics of the agreement, including some U.S. allies in the Middle East, express concerns that the accord requires the United States to give up its main source of leverage on Iran, which is the extensive international sanctions regime. Some countries in the region, including Israel and the Persian Gulf monarchies, also express concern that an accord would give Iran additional resources to extend its influence in the region. These critics note that the United States has committed, in a U.N. Security Council resolution that is to endorse the JCPA, to a lifting of a U.N. prohibition on arms sales to Iran in five years and on Iran’s development of nuclear-capable ballistic missiles within eight years—potentially giving Iran the potential to become a more powerful regional actor. Some U.S. allies also are said to fear that the JCPA could produce a broader U.S.-Iran rapprochement that could cause the United States to decrease its support for regional allies or otherwise decline to act against the objectionable aspects of Iran’s foreign policy. Some groups express concern that the deal does not address Iranian human rights abuses or its holding of several Iranian-American nationals on various charges. The Administration asserts that it has ample options available to further counter Iran’s destabilizing activities in the Middle East.

Some supporters of the agreement argue that the accord could produce greater U.S.-Iran cooperation against the threat to the region posed by the Islamic State organization’s seizure of territory in Iraq and Syria. U.S. officials acknowledge that Iran and the United States have held bilateral talks on the Islamic State and other regional issues during the negotiations of a comprehensive nuclear accord, but President Obama has said that the Administration is “not counting on” a broader change in Iranian behavior.

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Introduction

Multilateral negotiations regarding Iran's nuclear program date back to 2003 after the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reported on the existence of clandestine nuclear facilities at Natanz. In October of that year, Iran concluded an agreement with France, Germany, and the United Kingdom that contained provisions designed to alleviate international concerns regarding Iran's uranium enrichment and heavy water reactor programs. Iran temporarily suspended aspects of its nuclear program and signed an Additional Protocol to its IAEA safeguards agreement, but also asserted its right to develop nuclear technology. In January 2006, Tehran announced that it would resume research and development on its centrifuges at Natanz. After that time, Iran held multiple rounds of talks with China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States (collectively known as the P5+1) which bore fruit after the June 2013 election of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani. A November 24, 2013, Joint Plan of Action (JPA; sometimes referred to in international documents as JPoA) set out an approach toward reaching a long-term comprehensive solution to international concerns regarding Iran's nuclear program. The two sides began implementing the JPA on January 20, 2014. The P5+1 and Iran reached a framework of a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPA) on April 2, 2015, and the JCPA was finalized by all parties on July 14, 2015.

As part of the diplomatic efforts cited above, the U.N. Security Council adopted several resolutions, the most recent and sweeping of which (Resolution 1929) was adopted in June 2010. These resolutions require Iran to cooperate fully with an ongoing IAEA investigation of its nuclear activities, suspend its uranium enrichment program, suspend its construction of a heavy water reactor and related projects, and ratify the Additional Protocol to its IAEA safeguards agreement. Resolution 1929 also requires Tehran to refrain from "any activity related to ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons" and to comply with a modified provision (called code 3.1) of Iran's subsidiary arrangement to its IAEA safeguards agreement.¹ Several of these resolutions imposed economic and other sanctions on Iran.

In addition to concluding the JPA, Iran signed a joint statement with the IAEA on November 11, 2013, describing a "Framework for Cooperation."² According to the statement, Iran and the IAEA agreed to "strengthen their cooperation and dialogue aimed at ensuring the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme through the resolution of all outstanding issues that have not already been resolved by the IAEA." The agency has long sought to resolve some outstanding questions regarding Tehran's nuclear program, some of which concern possible Iranian research on nuclear weapons development.

¹ Iran is a party to the nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and has concluded a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the IAEA. Such agreements are designed to enable the IAEA to detect the diversion of nuclear material from peaceful purposes to nuclear weapons uses, as well as to detect undeclared nuclear activities and material. For more information, see CRS Report R40094, *Iran's Nuclear Program: Tehran's Compliance with International Obligations*, by Paul K. Kerr.

² Available at <http://www.iaea.org/press/?p=4018>.

Background on Iran's Nuclear Program³

Iran has nuclear programs that could potentially provide Tehran with the capability to produce both weapons-grade highly enriched uranium (HEU) and plutonium—the two types of fissile material used in nuclear weapons. (In addition to the production of weapons-grade nuclear material, a nuclear weapons program requires other key elements, such as warhead design and reliable delivery systems [see **Appendix B**].) Statements from the U.S. intelligence community indicate that Iran has the technological and industrial capacity to produce nuclear weapons at some point, but the U.S. government assesses that Tehran has not mastered all of the necessary technologies for building a nuclear weapon.⁴

A November 2007 National Intelligence Estimate⁵ assessed that Iran “halted its nuclear weapons program” in 2003.⁶ The 2007 estimate, and subsequent statements by the intelligence community, also assessed that Tehran is keeping open the “option” to develop nuclear weapons.⁷ Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman explained during an October 3, 2013, Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing that Iran would need as much as one year to produce a nuclear weapon if the government made the decision to do so.⁸ Tehran would need two to three months of this period to produce enough weapons-grade HEU for a nuclear weapon.⁹ However, Director of National Intelligence James Clapper stated during a February 26, 2015, Senate Armed Services Committee hearing that Iran has apparently not made a decision to produce nuclear weapons.¹⁰

U.S. officials argue that the IAEA and/or U.S. intelligence would likely detect an Iranian attempt to use its safeguarded facilities for producing weapons-grade HEU.¹¹ The intelligence community assesses that Iran is more likely to produce weapons-grade HEU covertly, Director Clapper stated in a March 2015 interview.¹² But U.S. officials also expressed confidence in the ability of U.S. intelligence to detect Iranian covert nuclear facilities.¹³ President Obama has said that the goal for

³ For more information, see CRS Report RL34544, *Iran's Nuclear Program: Status*, by Paul K. Kerr.

⁴ “Press Briefing by Senior Administration Officials on IAEA Report on Iran's Nuclear Activities,” November 8, 2011.

⁵ “Iran: Nuclear Intentions and Capabilities,” National Intelligence Estimate, November 2007.

⁶ The estimate defined “nuclear weapons program” as “nuclear weapon design and weaponization work and covert uranium conversion-related and uranium enrichment related work.”

⁷ See, for example, Director of National Intelligence James Clapper's February 26, 2015, testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee (Statement for the Record, *Worldwide Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community*, February 26, 2015).

⁸ “Reversing Iran's Nuclear Program,” Senate Foreign Relations Committee, October 3, 2013.

⁹ The White House. “Parameters for a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action Regarding the Islamic Republic of Iran's Nuclear Program.” April 2, 2015.

¹⁰ *Worldwide Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community*, February 26, 2015. Clapper explained during an April 18, 2013, Senate Armed Services Committee hearing that such a decision “would be made singly” by Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamene'i.

¹¹ “Hearing on Security Threats to the United States,” Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, March 12, 2013. Then-IAEA Deputy Director General for Safeguards Herman Nackaerts stated in July 2013 that the IAEA “would know within a week,” if Iran were to use its safeguarded facilities to produce weapons-grade HEU. (Barbara Slavin, “Tight IAEA Inspection Regime Hampers Iran's Nuclear Breakout,” *Al-Monitor*, July 22, 2013.)

¹² PBS “Charlie Rose” Interview with James Clapper, Director of National Security, March 3, 2015.

¹³ “Senior Administration Official Holds A Background Briefing Previewing Iran P5+1 Talks,” November 6, 2013; Colin H. Kahl, “Not Time to Attack Iran: Why War Should Be a Last Resort,” *Foreign Affairs*, January 17, 2012. However, Director of National Intelligence Clapper stated in a February 2015 hearing that, although the United States (continued...)

a JCPA is to increase the time needed for Iran to produce enough fissile material for one nuclear weapon to between six months and one year, as well as to improve the international community's ability to detect such a scenario.¹⁴

IAEA Safeguards

The IAEA's ability to inspect and monitor nuclear facilities, as well as to obtain information, in a particular country pursuant to that government's comprehensive safeguards agreement has been limited to facilities and activities that have been declared by the government. Additional Protocols to IAEA comprehensive safeguards agreements increase the agency's ability to investigate undeclared nuclear facilities and activities by increasing the IAEA's authority to inspect certain nuclear-related facilities and demand information from member states. Iran signed such a protocol in December 2003 and agreed to implement the agreement pending ratification. However, following the 2005 breakdown of the limited agreements with the European countries to suspend uranium enrichment, Tehran stopped adhering to its Additional Protocol in 2006.¹⁵ Subsidiary arrangements to IAEA safeguards agreements describe the "technical and administrative procedures for specifying how the provisions laid down in a safeguards agreement are to be applied."¹⁶ Code 3.1 of Iran's subsidiary arrangement to its IAEA safeguards agreement requires Tehran to provide design information for new nuclear facilities "as soon as the decision to construct, or to authorize construction, of such a facility has been taken, whichever is earlier."

Declared Iranian Nuclear Facilities¹⁷

Iran has not built any new nuclear facilities or expanded the existing ones since beginning implementation of the JPA in January 2014. Iran operates a Russian-built nuclear power reactor, for which Russia provides fuel until 2021. The JCPA focuses on Iran's enrichment program and its heavy water reactor due to their potential for nuclear weapons material production, and all the facilities discussed below are addressed in the JCPA.

Iran has three gas centrifuge enrichment facilities (Natanz Fuel Enrichment Plant, Natanz Pilot Fuel Enrichment Plant, and Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant). Gas centrifuges enrich uranium by spinning uranium hexafluoride gas at high speeds to increase the concentration of the uranium-235 isotope. Such centrifuges can produce low-enriched uranium (LEU), which can be used for fuel in nuclear power reactors or research reactors, and weapons-grade highly enriched uranium

(...continued)

has "a reasonably capable intelligence capability," IAEA safeguards would be an "important aspect of any sort of agreement we might reach with the Iranians" (*Worldwide Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community*, February 26, 2015).

¹⁴ "Exclusive: Full Text of Reuters Interview with Obama," *Reuters*, March 2, 2015. Also see Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken's testimony before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs March 19, 2015.

¹⁵ Iran announced that it would stop implementing the protocol two days after the IAEA Board of governors adopted a resolution in February 2006 which referred Iran's noncompliance with its IAEA safeguards agreement to the U.N. Security Council.

¹⁶ *2001 IAEA Safeguards Glossary*. Available at <http://www-pub.iaea.org/books/IAEABooks/6570/IAEA-Safeguards-Glossary-2001-Edition>.

¹⁷ Unless otherwise noted, this section is based on CRS Report RL34544, *Iran's Nuclear Program: Status*, and reports from IAEA Director-General Yukiya Amano to the IAEA Board of Governors: GOV/2013/27 (May 2013), GOV/2013/40 (August 2013), GOV/2013/56 (November 2013), and GOV/2015/34, (May 2015).

(HEU). LEU used in nuclear power reactors typically contains less than 5% uranium-235; research reactor fuel can be made using 20% uranium-235; HEU used in nuclear weapons typically contains about 90% uranium-235. Tehran argues that it is enriching uranium for use as fuel in nuclear power reactors and nuclear research reactors.

- **Natanz Commercial-Scale Fuel Enrichment Plant.** In this facility, Iran is using first-generation centrifuges, called IR-1 centrifuges, to produce LEU containing up to 5% uranium-235. As of November 2013, Iran had installed about 15,400 of these centrifuges, approximately 8,800 of which are enriching uranium. Iran had also installed about 1,000 centrifuges with a greater enrichment efficiency, called IR-2m centrifuges, in the facility. The IR-2m centrifuges are not enriching uranium.
- **Natanz Pilot Fuel Enrichment Plant.** Iran had been using IR-1 centrifuges in this facility to produce LEU containing approximately 20% uranium-235 until halting this work pursuant to the JPA. Tehran's production of LEU enriched to the 20% level has caused concern because such production requires approximately 90% of the effort necessary to produce weapons-grade HEU, which, as noted, contains approximately 90% uranium-235.¹⁸ Iran is testing other centrifuge models in this facility under IAEA supervision, but such work was monitored by the IAEA, even before the JPA (see below) limited this testing.
- **Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant.** Iran was using IR-1 centrifuges in this facility to produce LEU containing approximately 20% uranium-235 until the JPA took effect. Iran has installed about 2,700 first-generation centrifuges, approximately 700 of which were enriching uranium.
- **Arak Heavy Water Reactor.** Iran is constructing a heavy water-moderated reactor at Arak, which, according to Tehran, is intended to produce radioisotopes for medical use and to replace the Tehran Research Reactor. The JPA limits further development of the facility. Heavy water production requires a separate production plant, which Iran possesses. Prior to the JPA, Tehran notified the IAEA that it had produced enough heavy water to commission the reactor. The reactor is a proliferation concern because heavy water reactors produce spent fuel containing plutonium better suited for nuclear weapons than plutonium produced by light water-moderated reactors.¹⁹ If it were to be completed in its current configuration, the reactor could produce enough plutonium for between one and two nuclear weapons.²⁰ However, plutonium must be separated from the used fuel—a procedure called “reprocessing.” Iran has always maintained that it would not engage in reprocessing.

¹⁸ Former IAEA Deputy Director General Olli Heinonen, “Dealing with a Nuclear Iran: Redlines and Deadlines,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, February 6, 2013.

¹⁹ Both the Tehran Research Reactor and the Bushehr reactor are light-water reactors.

²⁰ Kahl, May 14, 2015.

The Joint Plan of Action (JPA)

Iran has enough uranium hexafluoride containing up to 5% uranium-235, which, if further enriched, would yield enough weapons-grade HEU for as many as eight nuclear weapons.²¹ The total amount of Iranian LEU containing 20% uranium-235 would, if it had been further enriched, have been sufficient for a nuclear weapon. Since the JPA, Iran has either converted much of that material for use as fuel in a research reactor located in Tehran (called the Tehran Research Reactor), or prepared it for that purpose.²² Iran has diluted the rest of that stockpile so that it contains no more than 5% uranium-235. Tehran's uranium conversion facility is not set up to reconvert the reactor fuel to uranium hexafluoride.²³

The JPA text described a two-step process for Iran and the P5+1 to “reach a mutually agreed long-term comprehensive solution that would ensure Iran’s nuclear programme will be exclusively peaceful.” This solution would also “produce the comprehensive lifting of all U.N. Security Council sanctions, as well as multilateral and national sanctions related to Iran’s nuclear programme.” Reiterating previous Iranian statements, the JPA also states that “Iran reaffirms that under no circumstances will Iran ever seek or develop any nuclear weapons.” The two sides began implementing the JPA on January 20, 2014. According to a November 14, 2013, IAEA report, Iran had generally stopped expanding its enrichment and heavy water reactor programs during the negotiations leading up to the JPA.²⁴

Nuclear Program Provisions Under the JPA²⁵

Under the JPA, Iran agreed to refrain from “any further advances of its activities” at the Natanz commercial-scale facility, Fordow facility, and Arak reactor. Tehran was also required to provide the IAEA with additional information about its nuclear program, as well as access to some nuclear-related facilities to which Iran’s IAEA safeguards agreement does not require access.

- **Centrifuge Limits.** The JPA required Iran to refrain from feeding uranium hexafluoride into its installed centrifuges that were not previously enriching uranium, to replace existing centrifuges only with “centrifuges of the same type” and to produce centrifuges for the sole purpose of replacing damaged centrifuges. Tehran was to refrain from installing additional centrifuges at the Natanz facility and pledged not to construct additional enrichment facilities. At its pilot plant,

²¹ Colin Kahl, Deputy Assistant to the President and National Security Adviser to the Vice President, “Arms Control Association Annual Meeting: Unprecedented Challenges for Nonproliferation and Disarmament,” May 14, 2015.

²² This process has generated scrap which contains LEU with 20% uranium-235. Iran also retains .6 kilograms of uranium hexafluoride containing 20% uranium-235, which “had been used as reference material for mass spectrometry” (*Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and relevant provisions of Security Council resolutions in the Islamic Republic of Iran*, Report of the Director General, International Atomic Energy Agency, GOV/2015/34, May 29, 2015).

²³ *Nuclear Industry in Iran: An Overview on Iran’s Activities and Achievements in Nuclear Technology*, Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, 2012, p. 13. Also see GOV/2015/34.

²⁴ *Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and Relevant Provisions of Security Council Resolutions in the Islamic Republic of Iran*, GOV/2013/56, November 14, 2013.

²⁵ Unless otherwise noted, this section is based on the agreement text (available at http://eeas.europa.eu/statements/docs/2013/131124_03_en.pdf), “Background Briefing by Senior Administration Officials on First Step Agreement on Iran’s Nuclear Program,” November 24, 2013, and GOV/2013/56.

Iran was not allowed to accumulate enriched uranium. Iran was permitted to use its previously operating centrifuges in the Natanz commercial facility and the Fordow facility to produce enriched uranium containing as much as 5% uranium-235.

- **Level of Enrichment Limits.** Under the JPA, Iran could only enrich uranium up to 5% uranium-235. Tehran was also to dilute half of its stockpile of uranium hexafluoride containing 20% uranium-235 to no more than 5% uranium-235. The rest of the uranium hexafluoride containing 20% uranium-235 was to be converted to uranium oxide for use as fuel for the Tehran Research Reactor.²⁶ Iran also pledged to refrain from building a line in its uranium conversion facility for reconverting the uranium oxide back to uranium hexafluoride.
- **LEU Stockpile Limits.** The JPA also required Iran, in effect, to freeze the amount of stocks of enriched uranium hexafluoride containing up to 5% uranium-235 by converting it to uranium oxide.²⁷ The uranium dioxide is to be set aside for research and development (R&D) on fuel for Iran's Bushehr nuclear power reactor.
- **Centrifuge R&D.** According to the JPA, Iran continued its "current enrichment R&D Practices" under IAEA safeguards, "which are not designed for accumulation of the enriched uranium." This provision prohibited Tehran from producing enriched uranium hexafluoride containing more than 5% uranium-235 as part of an R&D program.
- **Additional Monitoring.** The JPA provided for additional IAEA monitoring of the enrichment facilities by allowing IAEA inspectors to access video records from those facilities on a daily basis. Previously, inspectors reportedly accessed such records (the video is not streamed in real time to the agency), but not on a daily basis.²⁸
- **Arak Reactor.** Under the JPA, Iran pledged to refrain from commissioning the reactor, transferring fuel or heavy water to the reactor site, testing and producing additional reactor fuel, and installing remaining reactor components. The agreement allowed Tehran to continue some construction at the reactor site and also produce reactor components off-site that are not covered by the agreement. Iran also agreed to refrain from reprocessing spent nuclear material and building a reprocessing facility²⁹ and to submit updated design information about the reactor to the IAEA and agree upon a suitable safeguards approach for the reactor.

²⁶ This material is unsuitable for further enrichment. Uranium hexafluoride is the form of uranium used as feedstock for centrifuge enrichment.

²⁷ Iran began operating a conversion plant for this purpose in July 2014.

²⁸ Then-deputy National Security Adviser Blinken stated in a November 25, 2013, television interview that such access would enable IAEA inspectors to detect Iranian efforts to produce weapons-grade HEU at its declared enrichment facilities "almost instantaneously."^[4] However, as noted, U.S. officials have previously expressed confidence in the IAEA's ability to detect such Iranian efforts; the extent to which the November 24, 2013, agreement improves this ability is unclear.

²⁹ There is no public official evidence that Iran has a reprocessing facility.

- **Additional Information.** Iran was to provide the IAEA with other information about its nuclear programs, such as plans for future nuclear facilities. Tehran is required to provide some of this information by code 3.1 of Iran’s subsidiary arrangement to its IAEA safeguards agreement. Iran has also provided IAEA inspectors with “managed access” to its centrifuge assembly workshops, centrifuge rotor production workshops, centrifuge storage facilities, and uranium mines and mills.³⁰

“Right to Enrichment”

The JPA acknowledged that Iran’s right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) will be part of a comprehensive solution, but shied away from stating that enrichment is part of this right. It stipulated that an enrichment program in Iran would have defined limits and transparency measures.³¹ The Obama Administration has not acknowledged that Iran or any other country has the right to enrich uranium because the United States argues that the NPT does not contain an explicit right to enrichment. A senior Administration official explained on November 24, 2013, that “the United States has not recognized a right to enrich for the Iranian government, nor do we intend to. The document does not say anything about recognizing a right to enrich uranium.”³² Similarly, the JCPA states that, if the agreement is fully and successfully implemented, Iran will fully enjoy its right to nuclear energy for peaceful purposes under the relevant articles of the NPT in line with its obligations therein, and the Iranian nuclear program will be treated in the same manner as that of any other non-nuclear-weapon state party to the NPT.

Sanctions Easing Under the JPA

The JPA provided for what the Administration terms “limited, temporary, targeted, and reversible” sanctions relief for Iran.³³ Almost all U.S. sanctions laws provide the President with waiver authority, as well as the power to determine sanctions violations. Sanctions imposed only by executive order can be eased by a superseding order.³⁴ Its provisions include the following:

³⁰ According to the IAEA, “managed access” to nuclear-related facilities is “arranged in such a way as ‘to prevent the dissemination of proliferation sensitive information, to meet safety or physical protection requirements, or to protect proprietary or commercially sensitive information. Such arrangements shall not preclude the Agency from conducting activities necessary to provide credible assurance of the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities at the location in question.’” (2001 IAEA Safeguards Glossary.)

³¹ Tehran has long argued that it has the right to enrich uranium pursuant to the NPT, Article IV of which states, in part, that nothing in the treaty “shall be interpreted as affecting the inalienable right of all the Parties to the Treaty to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity” with the NPT’s nonproliferation provisions. For example, Iran demanded in a 2012 proposal to the P5+1 that those countries recognize and announce “Iran’s nuclear rights, particularly its enrichment activities, based on NPT Article IV.” Available at http://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Iran_Nuclear_Proposals.

³² “Background Briefing By Senior Administration Officials On First Step Agreement On Iran’s Nuclear Program,” November 24, 2013.

³³ White House Office of the Press Secretary. “Fact Sheet: First Step Understandings Regarding the Islamic Republic of Iran’s Nuclear Program.” November 23, 2013.

³⁴ For information on the use of waivers and other authorities to implement the sanctions relief of the JPA, see CRS Report R43311, *Iran: U.S. Economic Sanctions and the Authority to Lift Restrictions*, by Dianne E. Rennack, and CRS Report RS20871, *Iran Sanctions*, by Kenneth Katzman.

- **Access to Some Hard Currency.** Iran has been able to repatriate \$700 million per month in hard currency from oil sales, and to access an additional \$65 million per month of its hard currency holdings abroad for tuition for Iranian students abroad. According to a determination of waiver provided to Congress on June 17, 2015, the funds have been transferred to Iran’s Central Bank via banks in Oman, Switzerland, and South Africa.³⁵
- **Oil Exports Capped.** Iran’s oil exports have been required to remain at their December 2013 level of about 1.1 million barrels per day (mbd). However, Iran’s sales of oil products such as condensates are not specifically prohibited by the JPA, making Iran’s practical level of sales during the JPA about 1.3 mbd. This is a nearly 50% drop from 2011 levels of about 2.5 million barrels per day.
- **Resumption of Trade in Selected Sectors.** Iran was permitted to resume sales of petrochemicals and trading in gold and other precious metals, and to resume transactions with foreign firms involved in Iran’s auto sector.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPA)

The JPA contained provisions that set the stage for a comprehensive nuclear agreement—a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPA). According to the JPA, Iran and the P5+1 “aim to conclude negotiating and commence implementing” the second step of the comprehensive solution “no more than one year after the adoption of this document” (by November 24, 2014).

Initial U.S. Requirements for a JCPA

As agreed in the JPA, the JCPA would include a “mutually defined [Iranian] enrichment programme with practical limits and transparency measures to ensure the peaceful nature of the programme.” Specifically, the two sides were to reach agreement on the “scope and level” of Iran’s enrichment activities, the capacity and location of Iranian enrichment facilities, and the size and composition of Tehran’s enriched uranium stocks. These limits would continue “for a period to be agreed upon.” Tehran would be obligated to “resolve concerns related to” the Arak reactor, refrain from reprocessing spent nuclear fuel or constructing a facility “capable of reprocessing,” implement “agreed transparency measures and enhanced monitoring,” and ratify and implement its Additional Protocol. The JPA also stated that “international civil nuclear cooperation” would be part of a comprehensive solution.³⁶ “Following successful implementation of the final step of the comprehensive solution for its full duration,” the JPA stated, “the Iranian nuclear programme will be treated in the same manner as that of any non-nuclear weapon state party to the NPT.” Iran’s IAEA safeguards obligations last for an indefinite duration. Potential nuclear-related exports to Iran remain subject to the Nuclear Suppliers Group’s export guidelines.³⁷

³⁵ Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs Julia Frifeld. Letter to Senator Bob Corker, Chairman Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. June 17, 2015. Enclosure to letter: Department of State. Determination and Certification pursuant to the National Defense Authorization Act of FY2012. Undated.

³⁶ Such cooperation would include “modern light water power and research reactors and associated equipment, and the supply of modern nuclear fuel as well as agreed” research and development practices.

³⁷ For information about the Nuclear Suppliers Group, see CRS Report RL33865, *Arms Control and Nonproliferation: A Catalog of Treaties and Agreements*, by Amy F. Woolf, Paul K. Kerr, and Mary Beth D. Nikitin.

P5+1–Iran negotiations on a comprehensive settlement began in February 2014 and made progress, although insufficient to meet the July 20, 2014, and subsequent November 24, 2014, deadlines for a JCPA. On November 24, 2014, Iran and the P5+1 announced that they were extending the talks—and all provisions of the JPA—with the intent of finalizing a detailed agreement by June 30, 2015. The parties stated they would first attempt to reach an overarching framework and roadmap for the agreement “within four months” and would conclude the technical details of a comprehensive agreement by June 30, 2015. The framework accord was agreed on April 2, 2015, in Lausanne, Switzerland.³⁸ The parties strived to meet the June 30 deadline to finalize a JCPA to meet a congressional requirement for a 30-day review period under the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (P.L. 114-17). Submitting an agreement (and all annexes) to Congress after July 10 would (and in the event, did) trigger a 60-day review period under that act, thus likely delaying implementation of U.S. sanctions relief that will be part of any deal.

Overview Timeline of Implementing the JCPA

The JCPA outlines specified steps that are to take place, as follows:

- **Finalization Day: July 14, 2015.** Iran, China, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States, with the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Iran endorse the JCPA. A U.N. Security Council Resolution that will endorse the JCPA is to be submitted for adoption.
- **Adoption Day/New U.N. Security Council Resolution.** The JCPA formally comes into effect 90 days after endorsement of JCPA by U.N. Security Council, or earlier by mutual consent. Resolution 2231, for that purpose, was adopted on July 20, 2015. The Administration asserts that the 90 day time frame between the adoption of Resolution 2231 and the entry into force of the JCPA allows time for review of the JCPA by Congress under the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (P.L. 114-7) and any other legislature of Iran or the other P5+1 states.
- **Implementation Day.** Upon IAEA-verified implementation by Iran of nuclear-related the several stipulated nuclear related measures (ex. reducing centrifuges), the United States, the U.N. and the EU will cease application of specific sanctions (see text below). The U.N. Security Council will terminate the provisions of its resolutions on Iran: 1696 (2006), 1737 (2006), 1747 (2007), 1803 (2008), 1835 (2008), 1929 (2010) and 2224 (2015).
- **Transition Day.** Represents initial stages of Iran’s emergence from U.N. Security Council scrutiny. Transition Day is eight years from Adoption Day—or upon “Broader Conclusion” report from the IAEA Director General to the IAEA Board of Governors and U.N. Security Council—whichever is earlier. As of Transition Day, additional EU entities to be removed from sanctions, the United States is required to remove from designation specified additional Iranian entities

³⁸ The text of the framework accord is at The White House. “Parameters for a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action Regarding the Islamic Republic of Iran’s Nuclear Program.” April 2, 2015. U.S. Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz described this timeline as “very, very conservative” in an April 2015 interview (Michael Crowley, “Ernest Moniz: Iran Deal Closes Enrichment Loophole,” *Politico*, April 7, 2015).

subjected to sanctions. The Administration is also required to seek legislative termination of sanctions that were suspended on Implementation Day.

- **UNSCR Termination Day.** 10 years from Adoption Day. Provisions and measures imposed in U.N. Security Council Resolution endorsing JCPA would terminate and the Security Council would not be involved in the Iran nuclear issue.

Major Nuclear Provisions of the JCPA

The JCPA places constraints on Iran's enrichment and heavy water reactor programs and includes monitoring provisions designed to detect Iranian efforts to produce nuclear weapons using either declared or covert facilities. The nuclear-related provisions of the agreement will, according to the Obama Administration, extend the amount of time that Iran would need to produce enough weapons-grade HEU for one nuclear weapon to a minimum of one year, for a duration of at least 10 years.³⁹ In addition to the restrictions on activities related to fissile material production, the JCPA prohibits Iranian "activities which could contribute to the design and development of a nuclear explosive device," including research and diagnostic activities. The nuclear provisions agreed in the JCPA appear to be generally consistent with the nuclear provisions of the April 2 framework accord.

Enrichment Program

The JCPA sets out specific limitations on Iran's enrichment of uranium for fixed durations. Iran must be reported by the IAEA to have completed most of the tasks below before qualifying for sanctions relief specified on Implementation Day.

- **Centrifuge Limitation.** Tehran is to use no more than 5,060 IR-1 centrifuges to enrich uranium for 10 years, and to install only IR-1 centrifuges in the facility. All excess centrifuges are to be used only as replacements for operating centrifuges and equipment.
- **Level of Enrichment Limitation.** Iran has agreed to refrain from producing enriched uranium containing more than 3.67% uranium-235 for at least 15 years.
- **Facility Limitation.** Iran has agreed to enrich uranium only at the Natanz commercial-scale facility for 15 years and to refrain during that time from building any new enrichment facilities.
- **LEU Stockpile Limitation.** Iran has agreed to reduce its LEU stockpile to 300 kilograms of LEU containing 3.67% uranium-235 for a 15 year period. Tehran has three options for disposing of the remaining portion of its current LEU stockpile: diluting the material so that it contains the same levels of uranium-235 found in natural uranium; selling the LEU to another country; or selling it to an international LEU bank recently established by the IAEA. Iran's LEU containing between 5% and 20% uranium-235 is to be "fabricated into fuel plates for the

³⁹ "Background Conference Call by Senior Administration Officials on Iran," July 14, 2015. U.S. Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz described this timeline as "very, very conservative" in an April 2015 interview (Michael Crowley, "Ernest Moniz: Iran Deal Closes Enrichment Loophole," *Politico*, April 7, 2015).

Tehran Research Reactor or transferred, based on a commercial transaction, outside of Iran or diluted” so that it contains a maximum of 3.67% uranium-235. Iran is to export LEU that cannot be fabricated into fuel for the Tehran Research Reactor or dilute that LEU so that it contains a maximum of 3.67% uranium-235.

- **Fordow Conversion.** Iran has agreed to convert its Fordow enrichment facility into “a nuclear, physics, and technology centre.” For 15 years, Iran will maintain no more than 1,044 IR-1 centrifuges at the facility. For that same duration, Iran will not conduct uranium enrichment or related research and development (R&D) at the facility, which will not contain any nuclear material. 348 of the IR-1 centrifuges may be used to produce stable nuclear isotopes for medical and industrial uses.
- **Centrifuge Production.** With regard to centrifuge manufacturing, Iran for 10 years is to use the excess IR-1 centrifuges from the Natanz and Fordow facilities “for the replacement of failed or damaged machines.” Tehran may resume producing IR-1 centrifuges if its stock of replacement centrifuges “falls to 500 or below.” After eight years, Iran can begin to manufacture two types of advanced centrifuges; after 10 years, Iran can produce complete versions of those centrifuges and store them under IAEA monitoring “until they are needed for final assembly.”
- **Centrifuge R&D.** The JCPA also contains detailed restrictions on centrifuge R&D which last for at least 10 years. Moreover, Iran is to refrain for 10 years from pursuing R&D on any technologies other than gas centrifuge enrichment.

Arak Reactor

Pursuant to provisions similar to those of the April 2 framework accord, Iran is to redesign and rebuild the Arak reactor based on a design agreed to by the P5+1 so that it will not produce weapons-grade plutonium. Iran is to export the spent fuel from this reactor and all other nuclear reactors. Tehran is to render the Arak reactor’s original core inoperable. Iran will manage an international project to redesign and construct the replacement reactor. Iran is required to begin, but not complete, the redesign process to qualify for sanctions relief under the Implementation Day stipulations of the JCPA.

Iran commits, for 15 years and pledges to indefinitely thereafter, to refrain from reprocessing spent reactor fuel. Furthermore, Tehran has also committed to refrain from accumulating heavy water “beyond Iran’s needs”; Iran is to “sell any remaining heavy water on the international market for 15 years” and to refrain indefinitely from building heavy water-moderated reactors.

Other Provisions

Verification

According to the JCPA, the IAEA will monitor Iranian compliance with the provisions concerning its enrichment program and the Arak program. The IAEA will increase its number of inspectors in Iran and use modern verification technologies. In addition, Tehran “has agreed to implement” the Additional Protocol to its safeguards agreement. Iran is also to implement the modified code 3.1 of the subsidiary arrangements to its IAEA safeguards agreement. It is worth

noting that Iran's IAEA safeguards obligations last for an indefinite duration. Potential nuclear-related exports to Iran would remain subject to the Nuclear Suppliers Group's export guidelines.⁴⁰

The JCPA also describes other monitoring and inspections. For 15 years, the IAEA will monitor the stored Iranian centrifuges and related infrastructure. During this time, Iran will also permit the IAEA "daily access" to "relevant buildings" at the Natanz facilities. For 20 years, Tehran will allow the agency to verify Iran's inventory of certain centrifuge components and the manufacturing facilities for such components. Additionally, Iran is to allow the IAEA to monitor the country's uranium mills for 25 years and to monitor Iran's plant for producing heavy water.⁴¹ IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano told reporters on July 14, 2015, that the agency's "workload will increase" under the JCPA. Amano intends to request additional resources from the agency's Board of Governors.⁴²

Access to Other Sites. The JCPA also describes arrangements for the IAEA to gain access to Iranian sites other than those Tehran declares to the agency "if the IAEA has concerns regarding undeclared nuclear materials or activities, or activities inconsistent with" the JCPA. If the IAEA has such concerns at one of these sites, the agency "will provide Iran the basis for such concerns and request clarification." The IAEA could request access to the site if Iran's explanation did not provide sufficient clarification. Tehran may respond to such a request by proposing "alternative means of resolving the IAEA's concerns." If such means did not resolve the IAEA's concerns or the two sides did not "reach satisfactory arrangements ... within 14 days of the IAEA's original request for access," Iran "would resolve the IAEA's concerns through necessary means agreed between Iran and the IAEA." Tehran would make such a decision "in consultation with the members of the Joint Commission" established by the JCPA. If the two sides cannot reach agreement, the commission "would advise on the necessary means to resolve the IAEA's concerns" if at least a majority of the commission's members agreed to do so. The Joint Commission would have 7 days to reach a decision; "Iran would implement the necessary means within three additional days." (The total time for the stipulated procedures would be 24 days.)

The JCPA contains several provisions apparently designed to address Iranian concerns that IAEA inspectors may try to obtain information unrelated to the country's nuclear program. For example, the IAEA may only request access to the types of facilities described above "for the sole reason to verify the absence of undeclared nuclear materials and activities or activities inconsistent with the JCPOA." In addition, the agency would provide Iran with written "reasons for access" and "make available relevant information."

Procurement Channel to Be Established. The U.N. Security Council resolution endorsing the JCPA is to establish a "procurement channel" for Iran's nuclear program. The Joint Commission established by the JCPA will monitor and approve transfers made via the channel. IAEA officials will have access to information about, and may participate in meetings regarding such transfers when they are proposed.

The JCPA also indicates that the IAEA will pursue drawing a "Broader Conclusion that all nuclear material in Iran remains in peaceful activities" According to the IAEA, the agency can

⁴⁰ For information about the Nuclear Suppliers Group, see CRS Report RL33865, *Arms Control and Nonproliferation: A Catalog of Treaties and Agreements*, by Amy F. Woolf, Paul K. Kerr, and Mary Beth D. Nikitin.

⁴¹ This plant is currently not under IAEA safeguards.

⁴² "IAEA Director General Amano's Remarks to the Press on Agreements with Iran," July 14, 2015.

draw such a conclusion for states with comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols in force. According to the IAEA,

The conclusion of the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities is drawn when the activities performed under an additional protocol have been completed, when relevant questions and inconsistencies have been addressed, and when no indications have been found by the IAEA that, in its judgement [sic], would constitute a safeguards concern.⁴³

International Cooperation

The JCPA also discusses a variety of nuclear projects in Iran which would include other countries. These include the Arak reactor project; research at the Fordow facility; other nuclear reactor projects; nuclear medicine; nuclear safety; and the supply of nuclear fuel. This latter form of cooperation is presumably designed to obviate the need for Iran to produce its own nuclear fuel. Some, but not necessarily all, of the P5+1 will participate in these projects. U.S. entities are prohibited from engaging in most forms of nuclear cooperation with Iran. In addition to these forms of cooperation, the JCPA envisions forms of technical cooperation between Iran and the IAEA. The Administration argues that international nuclear cooperation will provide additional transparency into Iran's nuclear program.⁴⁴

Resolving Questions of Past Nuclear Research

Regarding the outstanding issues in the IAEA's investigation of Iran's nuclear program, the JCPA states that Tehran will "complete" a series of steps set out in an Iran-IAEA "Roadmap for Clarification of Past and Present Outstanding Issues." According to IAEA reports, the agency has evidence that Iran may have conducted work relevant to nuclear weapons, such as research about a nuclear payload for missiles. U.N. Security Council resolutions require Iran to resolve these questions by providing full information to the IAEA, and the agency has held regular talks with Iran to chart a path forward. But a May 2015 report from Amano to the agency's Board of Governors said that, although the IAEA could verify that there was no diversion of nuclear material from Iran's declared nuclear facilities, it could not conclude that no nuclear weapons-related activity was taking place in the country, due to the lack of access to documentation, material, and personnel.⁴⁵

According to Amano, this road map "sets out a process, under the November 2013 Framework for Cooperation, to enable the Agency, with the cooperation of Iran, to make an assessment of issues relating to possible military dimensions to Iran's nuclear programme."⁴⁶ The November 2013 framework specified measures to address the outstanding questions. According to the road map, Amano is to present a report to the IAEA Board of Governors by December 15, 2015, which

⁴³ 2001 IAEA Safeguards Glossary.

⁴⁴ "Background Conference Call by Senior Administration Officials on Iran," July 14, 2015.

⁴⁵ *Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and relevant provisions of Security Council resolutions in the Islamic Republic of Iran*, Report of the Director General, International Atomic Energy Agency, GOV/2015/34, May 29, 2015.

⁴⁶ "IAEA Director General Amano's Remarks to the Press on Agreements with Iran," July 14, 2015.

contains the agency’s “final assessment on the resolution” of the aforementioned outstanding issues.⁴⁷

The significance of resolving these issues for ensuring that Iran’s current program is for purely peaceful purposes is unclear. Former IAEA Deputy Director General Olli Heinonen argued during a July 2014 Senate hearing that gaining full understanding of Iran’s past suspected nuclear weapons program is important for determining that Iran is not reconstituting that program and also for determining the probability that Iran will use a future centrifuge program to produce nuclear weapons.⁴⁸ However, Jofi Joseph, a former Obama Administration official whose portfolio included the Iranian nuclear issue, argued this past April that

Some argue that it will be very difficult to identify future covert Iranian nuclear weapons efforts without a detailed understanding of what happened before. I’m not so sure. It is not clear if the individuals involved with the previous [nuclear weapons program] would be the ones tapped again for a future covert program or whether a clear understanding of their previous actions would help identify future efforts.⁴⁹

Sanctions Relief under the JCPA

The easing of sanctions under the JCPA is relatively consistent with the stipulations of the framework accord, but the great bulk of sanctions relief occurs at the Implementation Day of the JCPA—the day when the IAEA certifies that Iran has completed stipulated core nuclear tasks. According to the text of the JCPA, the following sanctions are to be eased:⁵⁰

- **Sanctions Relief Timeframe.** Many U.S., virtually all EU, and most U.N. sanctions are to be suspended after the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has verified that Iran has taken certain key nuclear-related steps that are stipulated in an Annex of the JCPA (primarily reducing the size and scope of its enrichment of uranium). The U.N. Security Council resolution draft that is under consideration contains this provision, according to drafts of the document that have been released.⁵¹
- The U.S. sanctions that are to be suspended are primarily those that sanction foreign entities and countries for conducting specified transactions with Iran (so-called “secondary sanctions”). U.S. sanctions that generally prohibit U.S. firms from conducting transactions with Iran are not being altered under the JCPA. However, the JCPA does commit the United States to licensing the sale to Iran of commercial aircraft, and the importation of Iranian luxury goods such as carpets, caviar, and some fruits and nuts.⁵²

⁴⁷ “Road-map for the Clarification of Past and Present Outstanding Issues Regarding Iran’s Nuclear Program,” July 14, 2015.

⁴⁸ *Iran: Status of the P-5+1, Panel 2*, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Hearing, July 29, 2014.

⁴⁹ “Jofi Joseph on the Iran Deal,” Arms Control Wonk, April 7, 2015. Available at <http://lewis.armscontrolwonk.com/archive/7623/jofi-joseph-on-the-iran-deal>.

⁵⁰ <http://www.politico.com/story/2015/07/full-text-iran-deal-120080.html>

⁵¹ <http://www.scribd.com/doc/271711382/Iran-Deal-Draft-UNSC-Resolution-as-Uploaded-by-Inner-City-Press>.

⁵² The U.S. importation of these luxury goods was permitted during 2000-2010, under a modification to the Executive Order 12959 that imposed a ban on U.S. trade with Iran.

- The U.S. sanctions to be suspended are mostly those imposed since U.N. Security Council Resolution 1929 was enacted in June 2010.⁵³ That resolution identified Iran’s energy sector as a potential contributor to Iran’s “proliferation-sensitive nuclear activities.”⁵⁴
- **Type of Sanctions to Be Removed or Suspended.** The sanctions relief in the JCPA include⁵⁵ (1) energy sanctions, including those that limit Iran’s exportation of oil and sanction foreign sales to Iran of gasoline and energy sector equipment, and which limit foreign investment in Iran’s energy sector; (2) sanctions on foreign banks that conduct transactions with Iranian banks; (3) sanctions on Iran’s auto sector and trading in the *rial*; (4) the EU ban on purchases of oil and gas from Iran; and (5) the ban on Iran’s use of the SWIFT electronic payments system that enables Iran to move funds from abroad to its Central Bank or its commercial banks.
- **U.S. Laws to Be Waived and Executive Orders to Terminated.** The suspension of U.S. sanctions as required under the JCPA will necessitate: exercising presidential authority to waive sanctions mandated by the core provisions of the Iran Sanctions Act (P.L. 104-172 as amended; Section 1245(d)(1) of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY2012 (P.L. 112-81); the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act (P.L. 112-158); the Iran Freedom and Counter-Proliferation Act (Subtitle D of P.L. 112-239); and the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 (CISADA, P.L. 111-195). The statutory basis for the sanctions would remain unchanged by the agreement. Implementing the U.S. commitment will also require terminating the provisions of the following Executive Orders: 13574, 13590, 13622, 13645, and sections 5-7 and 15 of Executive Order 13628.⁵⁶
- Under the JCPA, the United States is to revoke the designations made under various Executive Orders of numerous specified Iranian economic entities and personalities (listed in Attachment III of the JCPA), including the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), various Iranian banks, and many energy and shipping-related institutions. That step would enable foreign companies to resume transactions with those Iranian entities without risking being penalized by the United States.
- **Request for Congress to Lift Sanctions Outright.** The JCPA requires the U.S. Administration, within eight years, to request that Congress lift virtually all of the sanctions that will be suspended under the JCPA. The JCPA requires all U.N. sanctions to terminate after 10 years of adoption of the JCPA. Under the JCPA, the eight year mark after JCPA adoption is known as the Transition Day and the 10-year mark is known as the Termination Day.

⁵³ The exact U.S. sanctions laws whose provisions might be waived are discussed in: CRS Report RS20871, *Iran Sanctions*, by Kenneth Katzman, and CRS Report R43311, *Iran: U.S. Economic Sanctions and the Authority to Lift Restrictions*, by Dianne E. Rennack.

⁵⁴ The text of the Resolution is at https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/unsc_res1929-2010.pdf

⁵⁵ <http://iranmatters.belfercenter.org/blog/translation-iranian-factsheet-nuclear-negotiations>; and author conversations with a wide range of Administration officials, think tank, and other experts, in Washington, DC. 2015.

⁵⁶ For more information on these Executive Orders and their provisions, see CRS Report RS20871, *Iran Sanctions* and CRS Report R43311, *Iran: U.S. Economic Sanctions and the Authority to Lift Restrictions*.

- **U.S. Sanctions to Remain in Place.** Other U.S. sanctions that are not required to be suspended, according to the JCPA, include (1) E.O. 13224 sanctioning terrorism entities (not specific to Iran); (2) the Iran-Iraq Arms Non-Proliferation Act that sanctions foreign firms that sell arms and weapons of mass destruction-related technology to Iran; (3) the Iran-North Korea-Syria Non-Proliferation Act (INKSNA);⁵⁷ and (4) the Executive Orders and the provisions of CISADA and the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act that pertain to human rights or democratic change in Iran. Iran also will be remaining on the “terrorism list” and all sanctions triggered by that designation will remain in place, at least for now.
- The JCPA does not commit the United States to suspend U.S. sanctions on Iran for terrorism or human rights abuses, and on proliferation-sensitive technology. As an example, the U.S. Administration has not pledged to revisit, as a direct consequence of a nuclear accord, Iran’s designation as a state sponsor of terrorism. That designation triggers numerous U.S. sanctions, including a ban on any U.S. foreign aid to Iran and on U.S. exportation to Iran of controlled goods and services, and a prohibition on U.S. support for international lending to Iran.
- **U.N. Sanctions on Arms Sales and Ballistic Missiles to Be Terminated After Several Years.** One issue that arose during final negotiations on the JCPA was the suspension of U.N. sanctions on Iran’s development of nuclear-capable ballistic missiles and on Iran’s importation or exportation of conventional weaponry. The April 2 framework accord indicated that these sanctions would remain in place in the JCPA. However, as subsequently negotiated, the ban on Iran’s development of nuclear-capable ballistic missiles is to be lifted within eight years of the JCPA and the ban on conventional arms sales to Iran is to be lifted in five years.⁵⁸ These provisions are included in the draft U.N. Security Council resolution under consideration.⁵⁹

Automatic Reimposition of Sanctions (“Snap-Back”)

In the course of negotiating the JCPA, President Obama reportedly directed U.S. negotiators to try to focus on ways to put sanctions back in place (“snap back”) if Iran violates the terms of the deal, rather than focus on delaying sanctions relief.⁶⁰ According to the April 2 framework agreement, if a dispute over Iran’s compliance with the accord cannot be resolved through a specified dispute resolution mechanism, all U.N. sanctions “could” be reimposed. Treasury Secretary Lew said on April 29, 2015, that this provision for a “snap back” of U.N. Security Council sanctions would not be subject to a veto by any permanent member of the U.N. Security Council.⁶¹

⁵⁷ The JCPA does commit the United States to terminate sanctions with respect to some entities designated for sanctions under INKSNA.

⁵⁸ <http://www.scribd.com/doc/271711382/Iran-Deal-Draft-UNSC-Resolution-as-Uploaded-by-Inner-City-Press>.

⁵⁹ <http://www.scribd.com/doc/271711382/Iran-Deal-Draft-UNSC-Resolution-as-Uploaded-by-Inner-City-Press>.

⁶⁰ Peter Baker. “President Favors Way to Give Iran Political Cover.” *New York Times*, April 18, 2015.

⁶¹ Department of the Treasury. Remarks of Secretary Jacob J. Lew at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy 30th Anniversary Gala. April 29, 2015.

The JCPA (paragraph 36 and 37) contain a mechanism for the “snap back” of U.N. sanctions if Iran does not satisfactorily resolve a compliance dispute. According to the JCPA, the United States (or any veto-wielding member of the U.N. Security Council) would be able to block a U.N. Security Council resolution that would continue the lifting of U.N. sanctions despite Iran’s refusal to resolve the dispute. In that case, “... the provisions of the old U.N. Security Council resolutions would be reimposed, unless the U.N. Security Council decides otherwise.” These provisions are included in the reported U.N. Security Council resolution draft that is under consideration.⁶²

However, the JCPA also contains language requiring that the parties to the agreement not reimpose the sanctions that will be suspended, as long as Iran is complying. The agreement states that if U.S. sanctions are reimposed (other than through reimposition on the grounds of Iranian noncompliance), Iran would not be bound by its nuclear commitments. However, there does not appear to be a specific prohibition on enacting U.S. sanctions, other than those being suspended, for reasons such as to sanction arms sales to Iran, human rights violations, and Iranian support for terrorism or armed factions in the region.

A related question is whether the effect of sanctions currently realized could ever be reconstituted if U.N. sanctions are lifted but U.S. sanctions are reimposed. The effect of all sanctions has depended on the substantial degree of international compliance and cooperation with the sanctions regime that has taken place since 2010. A wide range of countries depend on energy and other trade with Iran and might be reluctant to resume cooperating with U.S. sanctions unless Iran commits clear and egregious violations of its commitments. Countries that do not wish to reimpose their sanctions on Iran could argue that, because U.N. Security Council sanctions are lifted, they are no longer bound to cooperate with U.S. sanctions.

Implications

The suspension of sanctions on Implementation Day would likely have significant implications for Iran’s economy, including the following:

- Iran will be able to export crude oil without restriction. Iranian energy officials estimate that Iran could double its oil exports from the 1.1 mbd level of the JPA period within about six months. Significant quantities of Iranian oil will likely hit the market immediately after sanctions suspension because Iran has as much as 50 million barrels of oil stored.
- Iran will have access to about \$100 billion to \$150 billion in hard currency—mainly oil sales proceeds—that it has been unable to repatriate to its Central Bank. The banks around the world, and particularly in South Korea and Japan,⁶³ that hold the monies have been cooperating with U.S. sanctions by refusing to transfer those assets to Iran.
- Economists estimate that Iran’s economy could grow as much as 7% after sanctions are suspended.⁶⁴ Iran’s energy sector, automotive production sector, and other industrial sectors are likely to rebound strongly as importation of parts becomes easier to finance. Some assert that Iran will use the additional economic

⁶² <http://www.scribd.com/doc/271711382/Iran-Deal-Draft-UNSC-Resolution-as-Uploaded-by-Inner-City-Press>.

⁶³ Author conversations with diplomats from East Asia. 2014-15.

⁶⁴ <http://www.businessinsider.com/baml-chart-on-irans-economy-2015-7>.

resources generated by the deal to enhance its regional position. The Administration acknowledges Iran might steer some extra funding to regional allies but argues that Iran will use the great bulk of the additional funds to invest in its domestic economy which has been starved by sanctions for several years.

- Iran is likely to seek to purchase significant quantities of commercial aircraft because of the advanced age of most of the aircraft used by its airlines. The deal commits the United States to license commercial aircraft sales to Iran, including U.S.-made aircraft.
- Even though the agreement commits to an easing of the U.N. ban on arms sales to Iran and Iran's development of nuclear-capable missiles, U.S. sanctions on foreign firms will remain in place, likely deterring at least some sales of weaponry and missile technology to Iran. According to available information from sources such as the International Institute of Strategic Studies and Jane's, Iran has not imported any major combat systems since the early 1990s, probably in part due to U.S. sanctions. The U.N. ban on arms sales to Iran did not go into effect until 2010.

Selected Regional Reaction to the Agreement

The JCPA could have profound implications for the Middle East, and particularly for Israel and for the states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, UAE, Qatar, and Oman). On the one hand, an Iran nuclear agreement that removes the threat of a nuclear-armed Iran has the potential to lower regional tensions. On the other hand, the sanctions relief of the JCPA will presumably increase the economic resources available to Iran to promote its interests in the region, most of which are remain inimical to the interests of the United States and its allies.

Gulf States

The GCC states have publicly accepted the JCPA but express concern that the deal could lead Iran to expand its regional influence, in part because Iran will have more funds to provide to its regional allies. Some GCC leaders have publicly associated the U.S.-Iran nuclear talks with U.S. reticence to act to try to oust the government of Syrian President Bashar Al Assad, the U.S. pullout of all troops from Iraq in 2011, and U.S. assertions that it will not deploy ground combat troops to battle the Islamic State organization in Iraq or Syria. The GCC leaders assert that Iran is pursuing a sectarian agenda aimed at empowering Shiite Muslims in the region at the expense of Sunnis. Since the JPA was agreed in November 2013, there have been exchanges of high-level visits between Iran and some of the GCC states, including a visit to Iran by Kuwait's ruler Amir Sabah al-Ahmad Al Sabah and a visit by President Rouhani to Oman. Oman also hosted sessions of the P5+1-Iran talks on the JCPA.

In an apparent attempt to assuage GCC concerns about U.S. resolve and the tentative accord with Iran, President Obama met with GCC leaders at Camp David during May 13-14, 2015. The meeting resulted in statements of additional U.S. support for the security of the GCC states, and the leaders and deputy leaders who attended the meetings reportedly expressed substantial satisfaction with the results. For additional information on the U.S.-GCC summit and its results, see CRS Report RL32048, *Iran, Gulf Security, and U.S. Policy*, by Kenneth Katzman.

Because the JCPA would leave Iran with a nuclear infrastructure, some experts speculate that Saudi Arabia and other GCC or regional states might seek to develop nuclear programs. Some GCC officials have also expressed concerns about a “double standard” in which Iran is allowed by the JCPA to continue enriching uranium, whereas the United States insists that civilian nuclear programs in the Gulf, such as that in UAE, not include indigenous production of nuclear fuel.⁶⁵

Some regional governments generally friendly to Tehran, such as that of Syria, welcomed the accord, at least in part because sanctions relief could provide Tehran with additional resources to help those governments battle Sunni-led rebellions. One threat common to Iraq, Syria, Iran, and to the Gulf states is the threat posed by the Islamic State organization that has captured substantial territory in both Iraq and Syria.

Israel

Israel’s leaders routinely assert that their country is uniquely threatened by the possibility that Iran might eventually obtain nuclear weapons, despite limitations and safeguards in any comprehensive accord. Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, including in a speech to a joint session of Congress on March 3, 2015, has repeatedly warned of the alleged perils of a deal that would in any way ease the international sanctions regime against Iran and accept Iran’s retention of enriched uranium or of infrastructure potentially usable for the generation of fissile material. Netanyahu stated, the day the JCPA was announced, that the deal is a “historic mistake” and that Israel would “not be bound” by the accord.⁶⁶ His critical view of the deal is widely shared across the Israeli political spectrum.

Some Israeli commentators are calling on Netanyahu to refrain from all-out efforts to thwart congressional acceptance of the deal given their skepticism about his ability to decisively influence the process and worries they assert about possible damage or missed opportunities relating to strategic arrangements with the United States.⁶⁷ Before the JCPA was announced, Israel and the United States reportedly began preliminary consultations on an aid and arms sales package to assuage Israeli concerns regarding the deal and address “qualitative military edge” requirements regarding newly considered U.S. arms sales to Gulf Arab states.⁶⁸

Implications for U.S.-Iran Relations⁶⁹

There is debate over whether the JCPA will alter the broader U.S.-Iran relationship. Iran and the United States have been mostly at odds since the February 1979 Islamic revolution, and came into limited naval conflict during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq War, when U.S. forces defended the GCC

⁶⁵ Author conversations with Gulf diplomats. 2011-2015.

⁶⁶ CRS Report RL33476, *Israel: Background and U.S. Relations*, by Jim Zanotti.

⁶⁷ See, e.g., Ben Caspit (translated from Hebrew), Netanyahu threatens to ‘kill himself’ in order to stop Iran deal,” *Al-Monitor Israel Pulse*, July 15, 2015; Yossi Verter, “Netanyahu lost his Iran bet, but his next gamble may be disastrous,” *haaretz.com*, July 15, 2015.

⁶⁸ The sources for this paragraph are Amos Harel, “Washington, Jerusalem discussing massive compensation for Iranian nuclear deal,” *haaretz.com*, May 20, 2015; and Leslie Susser, “The Challenge: Getting the US Back in Israel’s Corner,” *Jerusalem Report*, May 18, 2015. On May 19, 2015, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency published a notification of a proposed U.S. sale to Israel of \$1.879 billion worth of munitions and associated parts.

⁶⁹ For detail on U.S.-Iran relations, see CRS Report RL32048, *Iran, Gulf Security, and U.S. Policy*, by Kenneth Katzman.

states from attack by Iran. In 1984, the United States placed Iran on its list of “state sponsors of terrorism” and has accused Iran of numerous acts of terrorism against the United States and its interests. Iran is holding four dual U.S.-Iran nationals in Iran on charges that U.S. officials say have no merit, but this issue was not part of the JCPA.

Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamene’i, who reportedly is concerned that the nuclear deal could increase U.S. cultural, political, social, and economic influence in Iran, has asserted that a JCPA will not be accompanied by a breakthrough in U.S.-Iran relations. The United States has publicly asserted that the nuclear negotiations center only on that issue, and do not seek to resolve all the issues in U.S.-Iran relations. However, in interviews after the April 2 framework deal was announced, President Obama stated that he hopes that a finalized deal “ushers in a new era in U.S.-Iran relations.”⁷⁰ A September 27, 2013, phone call President Obama placed to Rouhani represented the first direct contact between presidents of the two countries since the 1979 Islamic revolution.

A nuclear deal could build on the growing, tacit cooperation between the United States and Iran on several regional issues. U.S. diplomats negotiated with Iranian officials to form the post-Taliban government in Afghanistan in late 2001, and Iran and the United States have tacitly cooperated in the formation of virtually all post-Saddam governments in Iraq. U.S. officials acknowledge that bilateral meetings on the comprehensive accord have discussed the threat posed by the Islamic State organization, the situation in Bahrain, and the fate of three American nationals confirmed or believed held by Iran. On Iraq, the United States and Iran are indirectly cooperating to support the Shiite-dominated government of Prime Minister Haydar Al Abbadi against Islamic State forces. On Syria, Iran continues to support the government of President Al Assad, although some U.S. diplomats are said to perceive that Iran might yet be persuaded to help move Assad aside in order to blunt the appeal of the Islamic State.

A possible hindrance to any post-nuclear agreement U.S.-Iran rapprochement will be remaining U.S. sanctions and issues unrelated to nuclear issues. U.S. officials have stressed that no sanctions that address long-standing U.S. concerns about Iran’s use of terrorism or its human rights abuses will be eased as part of a nuclear deal with Iran. U.S. officials also maintain that a nuclear deal will not cause the United States to cease its public criticism of Iran’s human rights practices and its detention of U.S. citizens.

Formal Congressional Review

Legislation providing for congressional review was enacted as the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015 (P.L. 114-17). Because the agreement was reached after July 10, the congressional review period is 60 days from the date of submission to Congress, which is to be within five days of finalization of the accord. The transmission is to include a report assessing the degree to which the United States will be able to verify Iranian compliance, as well as all annexes. No statutory sanctions can be waived during the review period. However, the JCPA does not provide for any sanctions relief earlier than 90 days from the adoption of the U.N. Security Council resolution under consideration. If a congressional resolution of disapproval is passed by both chambers, President Obama could not waive sanctions for another 12 days during which he would presumably exercise his threat, stated on July 14, to veto a resolution of disapproval.

⁷⁰ Roger Cohen. “U.S. Embassy, Tehran.” *New York Times*, op-ed. April 8, 2015.

Congress would then have 10 days to try to override the veto, during which sanctions could not be waived. So, the maximum period during which statutory sanctions could not be waived is 82 days after receipt of the agreement. For other provisions of that law, please see CRS Report RS20871, *Iran Sanctions*, by Kenneth Katzman.

Appendix A. Chart on the JCPA⁷¹

Table A-I. Summary of Timeline

IMPLEMENTATION	COMPONENTS	DATE/EXPECTED
Finalization Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date on which JCPA announced. • Joint Commission established comprised of representatives of Iran and the P5+1, with the EU High Representative. • Coordination led by EU High Representative. • Meet on quarterly basis or at request of any JCPA participant. • Decision and work subject to U.N. rules of confidentiality. • Among other things, in charge of dispute resolution and establishing procurement channel. 	July 14, 2015
JCPA submitted to U.N. Security Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P5+1 will “promptly” send JCPA to U.N. Security Council (UNSC) for review and adoption “without delay.” 	Resolution 2231 submitted on July 15 and adopted on Monday, July 20, 2015
Adoption Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90 days (or earlier if agreed by P5+1 and Iran) after endorsement of JCPA by the UNSC. From this date, participants start making preparations for implementing commitments. • EU to adopt regulation terminating nuclear-related sanctions with effect from Implementation Day. • U.S. President to issue sanctions waivers to take effect on Implementation Day. • Iran to prepare nuclear related commitments and notify IAEA that it will apply Additional Protocol provisionally with effect from Implementation Day. 	Expected mid-October 2015
Implementation Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simultaneously with IAEA report verifying implementation by Iran of the nuclear-related measures, U.N. sanctions terminate, EU sanctions terminate (in some cases only suspended), U.S. “ceases” application of nuclear related sanctions. 	Not tied to any date, but expected to occur within 4-6 months from Adoption Day. Roughly in the first half of 2016.
Transition Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 years after Adoption Day or the date when IAEA submits a report that all nuclear material in Iran remains in peaceful activities (whichever is earlier). EU terminates remaining sanctions. U.S. terminates or modifies remaining sanctions. Iran ratifies Additional Protocol. 	Expected mid-October 2023
U.N. Security Council Resolution Termination Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 years from Adoption Day, the UNSC resolution endorsing JCPA terminates—provided no U.N. sanctions have been reimposed. UNSC “would no longer be seized of the Iran nuclear issue.” 	Expected mid-October 2025

⁷¹ Appendix prepared by Christopher Mann, Research Assistant, CRS; adapted from European Council on Foreign Relations.⁷¹

Table A-2.JCPA Commitments

COMMITMENTS	COMPONENTS	TIMEFRAME
U.N. Security Council Resolution endorsing the JCPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> U.S. Congress will be faced with a UNSC Resolution endorsing JCPA before casting votes on the deal 	<p>Resolution 2231 adopted on July 20, 2015.</p> <p>Comes into force within 90 days.</p>
Nuclear-Related: to be Carried Out by Iran		
Iran-IAEA Roadmap on Possible Military Dimension (PMD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursuant to Roadmap agreed between Iran and IAEA on 20 July 2015 (confidential document). Iran will provide IAEA explanation on outstanding issues. There will be technical and political meetings. Arrangements in place regarding the issue of Parchin (there has been previous access to this military site). All steps in Roadmap must be fulfilled before Implementation date. 	<p>Iran submits written answers by August 15, 2015.</p> <p>IAEA has one-month review.</p> <p>IAEA resolves remaining PMD issues/questions by October 15, 2015.</p> <p>IAEA presents report on PMD by December 15, 2015.</p>
Enrichment only at Natanz—preventing “uranium path to weaponization”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For 10 years: centrifuges reduced to 5,060 IR-1. Excess centrifuges stored under IAEA monitoring. For 15 years: level of uranium enrichment capped at 3.67%. For 15 years: Natanz is Iran’s only enrichment facility. Between years 11-15: Iran can replace IR-1 centrifuges at Natanz with more advanced ones. 	Implementation Day
Enriched Uranium Stockpile—preventing “uranium path to weaponization”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For 15 years: stockpile kept under 300 kg up to 3.67% enriched uranium hexafluoride (UF₆) or the equivalent in other chemical forms (this is a 98% reduction from existing stockpiles). Excess sold based on international prices. Uranium oxide enriched 5-20% fabricated into fuel for Tehran Research Reactor. 	Implementation Day
Fordow—“uranium path to weaponization”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Converted to research facility. No more enrichment or R&D at this facility. 1,044 IR-1 centrifuges in six cascades will remain here, but cannot enrich uranium. 	Implementation Day
Research & Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For 10 years: R&D with uranium will only include IR-4, IR-5, IR-6 and IR-8 centrifuges. After 8 years: Iran starts manufacturing agreed numbers of IR-6 and IR-8 centrifuges without rotors. After 10 years: begin phasing out IR-1 centrifuges. Manufacture advanced centrifuge machines only for the purposes specified with P5+1. 	Implementation Day

COMMITMENTS	COMPONENTS	TIMEFRAME
Arak Heavy Water Reactor—preventing “plutonium path to weaponization”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Iran will redesign and rebuild reactor into lower power research reactor with P5+1 partnership. Iran would take out the original core of the reactor; this will become unusable. Permanent: Iran will not produce weapons grade plutonium. For 15 years: no heavy water reactors in Iran. Permanent: Iran ships out all spent fuel from Arak reactor. 	Implementation Day Before Implementation date, Iran and P5+1 agree on joint venture.
Transparency—preventing “covert path to weaponization”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By October 15, 2015: Iran clears up questions about its alleged past research on nuclear weapons (Possible Military Dimensions, or PMD) Permanently: Additional Protocol measures - Iran will provisionally apply this and eventually its parliament will ratify it. Permanently: full implementation of modified Code 3.1 of the Subsidiary Arrangements to its Safeguards Agreement. For 20-25 years: IAEA has access to Iran’s supply chain for its nuclear program and has continuous surveillance of centrifuge manufacturing and storage facilities. Procurement channel created for Iran’s purchase of nuclear related equipment and material. 	Implementation Day PMD measures by October 15, 2015.
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requests for access to suspect sites will be made in good faith by IAEA. Not aimed at interfering with Iranian military/national security activities. IAEA provides Iran reasons for concerns regarding undeclared nuclear materials or activities and request access to those locations. Iran may propose to the IAEA alternative means of resolving the IAEA’s concerns. If cannot agree within 14 days of original IAEA request, the Joint Commission will adjudicate and if needed decision made by majority vote. Consultation with, and voting by Joint Commission must happen within 7 days. Iran would implement decision within 3 days (total of 24 days after original IAEA request). <p style="text-align: center;">Sanctions Relief to be Carried Out by P5+1</p>	Implementation Day
U.N.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNSCR Resolution 2231 endorsing JCPA goes into effect to terminate all previous resolutions targeting Iran’s nuclear program - 1696 (2006), 1737 (2006), 1747 (2007), 1803 (2008), 1835 (2008), 1929 (2010) and 2224 (2015). Subject to snap-back under dispute resolution process (Preamble to agreement, paragraphs 36 and 37) 15 days for review by: Joint Commission assesses dispute. Time for review can be extended by mutual consent. If unresolved, 15 days for review by Ministers of Foreign Affairs. 	Implementation Day

COMMITMENTS	COMPONENTS	TIMEFRAME
USA	<p>Any participant could refer the issue to the Ministers. Time for review can be extended by mutual consent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If unresolved, 15 days for review by: Advisory Board (three members, one each appointed by the participants in the dispute and a third independent member). Will provide non-binding decision. • Joint Commission has 5 days to review decision of Advisory Board. If no resolution and complaining party sees action as “significant non-performance” - unresolved issue can be treated as grounds to cease performing commitments in whole or part. Complaining party will notify UNSC. • UNSC will then votes on a resolution as to continuing lifting of sanctions. If resolution not adopted by 30 days, old UNSC resolution sanctions snap-back. China and Russia cannot veto. Iran will cease to perform its obligations if sanctions snap back. • Sanctions snap-back not applicable with retroactive effect to contracts signed between any party and Iran. • After 5 years: U.N. sanctions on conventional weapons that were linked to Iran’s nuclear activities terminate. • After 8 years: U.N. sanctions on Iran’s missile program that were linked to Iran’s nuclear activities terminate. • U.S. and international sanctions on Iran’s conventional weapons and missile capabilities remain. <p>Under easing of U.S. and EU sanctions, Iran will be allowed access to roughly \$100 billion revenues frozen abroad in a special escrow.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cease the application of economic sanctions against Iran’s oil and banking sector allowing Iranian banks and companies to reconnect with international systems (see CRS Report RS20871, <i>Iran Sanctions</i>). • Will remove designation of certain entities and individuals (Attachment III). • Allows for license non-U.S. persons that are owned or controlled by a U.S. person to engage in activities with Iran permitted under JCPA. • Allows for the sale of commercial passenger aircraft to Iran. • Allows for license for importing Iranian-origin carpets and foodstuffs into U.S.. • U.S. takes appropriate measures to address laws at state or local level preventing full implementation of JCPA—U.S. will actively encourage officials to adhere to JCPA policy. • 8 years after Adoption date—if IAEA concludes that all nuclear activity in Iran remains peaceful—U.S. will seek legislative action to terminate/modify nuclear related sanctions. • U.S. sanctions on Iran targeting human rights, terrorism and missile activities remain. 	Implementation Day

COMMITMENTS	COMPONENTS	TIMEFRAME
EU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terminate all provisions of the EU Regulation related to Iran's nuclear program. • Includes: financial and banking transactions; transactions in Iranian Rial; provision of U.S. banknotes to Iranian government; access to SWIFT; insurance services; efforts to reduce Iran's crude oil and petrochemical product sales; investment; transactions with Iran's energy and shipping sector; trade in gold and other precious metals; trade with Iran's automotive sector. • Removes individuals and entities designated under sanctions (Attachment I) • EU refrains from reintroducing sanctions terminated under JCPA (Iran views any reintroduction as grounds to cease performing its commitments). • Refrain from policy intended to adversely affect normalization of economic relations with Iran. • For 8 years after Implementation date: EU's arms embargo and restrictions on transfer of ballistic missiles remain. 	Implementation Day
Congressional Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 days: Vote to approve or disapprove agreement. • 12 days: President has 12 days to veto. • 10 Days: Congress has 10 days to override presidential veto. • Every 90 days after the review period, the Administration is required to certify Iran is fully complying with the agreement. If such certification is not made, Congress has the opportunity to enact a resolution snapping back U.S. statutory U.S. sanctions. 	<p>Thursday, September 17, 2015: congressional approval/disapproval deadline.</p> <p>Tuesday, September 29, 2015: deadline for presidential veto.</p> <p>Friday, October 9, 2015: congressional deadline for overriding presidential veto.</p>

Appendix B. Nuclear Weapons Development⁷²

An effective nuclear weapons capability has three major elements: producing fissile material in sufficient quantity and quality for a nuclear explosive device; designing and weaponizing a survivable nuclear warhead; and producing an effective means for delivering the weapon, such as a ballistic missile.⁷³ The U.S. government assesses that, although Iran could eventually produce nuclear weapons, it has not yet decided to do so and has not mastered all of the necessary technologies for building a nuclear weapon. Tehran had a nuclear weapons program but halted it in 2003, according to U.S. government estimates.⁷⁴

Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman explained during an October 3, 2013, Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing that Iran would need as much as one year to produce a nuclear weapon if the government made the decision to do so.⁷⁵ This estimate takes into account the amount of time that Iran would need to produce a sufficient amount of weapons-grade highly enriched uranium (HEU), which is widely regarded as the most difficult task in building nuclear weapons, as well as to develop the other components necessary for a nuclear weapon. This estimate does not include the time that Iran would need to be able to render a nuclear weapon deliverable by a ballistic missile. Then-Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta stated in January 2012 that Iran would need “possibly ... one to two years in order to put [a nuclear weapon] on a deliverable vehicle of some sort.”⁷⁶

A senior intelligence official explained during a December 2007 press briefing that the “acquisition of fissile material” was the “governing element in any timelines” regarding Iran’s production of a “nuclear device.”⁷⁷ However, the estimate articulated by Sherman assumes that Iran would need two to three months to produce enough weapons-grade HEU for a nuclear weapon.⁷⁸ This estimate also apparently assumes that Iran would use its declared nuclear facilities to produce fissile material for a weapon.⁷⁹ The other assumptions behind the estimate are not clear.⁸⁰

⁷² For more information about Iran’s ballistic missile program, see CRS Report R42849, *Iran’s Ballistic Missile and Space Launch Programs*, by Steven A. Hildreth.

⁷³ For a more detailed discussion, see Office of Technology Assessment, *Technologies Underlying Weapons of Mass Destruction* (OTA-BP-ISC-115), December 1993.

⁷⁴ A 2007 National Intelligence Estimate defined “nuclear weapons program” as “nuclear weapon design and weaponization work and covert uranium conversion-related and uranium enrichment related work.”

⁷⁵ “Reversing Iran’s Nuclear Program,” Hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, October 3, 2013.

⁷⁶ Transcript of remarks by Secretary Panetta from CBS’s 60 Minutes interview, January 29, 2012.

⁷⁷ “Unclassified Key Judgments of the National Intelligence Estimate: Iran: Nuclear Intentions and Capabilities,” Background Briefing with Senior Intelligence Officials, December 3, 2007.

⁷⁸ The White House. “Parameters for a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action Regarding the Islamic Republic of Iran’s Nuclear Program.” April 2, 2015.

⁷⁹ It is worth noting that no country has ever used a centrifuge facility designed and built for low-enriched uranium production to produce weapons-grade HEU. Therefore, Iran may need a trial-and-error period to determine the proper modifications for its own centrifuge facilities, were Tehran to adapt them for such a purpose.

⁸⁰ For a detailed discussion of the variables such estimates must take into account, see *Iran’s Nuclear, Chemical, and Biological Capabilities: A Net Assessment*, International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2011, pp. 69-70 and William C. Witt, Christina Walrond, David Albright, and Houston Wood, *Iran’s Evolving Breakout Potential*, Institute for Science and International Security, October 8, 2012.

Tehran would probably use covert enrichment facilities to produce fissile material for nuclear weapons—a tactic that would require a longer period of time, according to testimony from Director of National Intelligence James Clapper during an April 18, 2013, Senate Armed Services Committee hearing. In his testimony to Congress in March 2013, Director Clapper said that “Tehran has the scientific, technical, and industrial capacity to produce nuclear weapons. This makes the central issue its political will to do so. Such a decision will reside with the supreme leader, and at this point we don't know if he'll eventually decide to build nuclear weapons.”⁸¹ As noted in the body of this report, U.S. officials have argued that the International Atomic Energy Agency would likely detect an Iranian attempt to use its safeguarded facilities to produce weapons-grade HEU. They have also expressed confidence in the United States' ability to detect covert Iranian enrichment plants.

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⁸¹ Senate Select Intelligence Committee Hearing on National Security Threats to the United States, March 12, 2013.